

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	CON.I
Historic Name:	Concord Reformatory
Common Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	Concord
Village/Neighborhood:	West Concord
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	
Use(s):	Other Institutional; Penal Institution; Residential District; Workers Housing
Significance:	Architecture; Community Planning; Politics Government; Social History
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM A - AREA

CON. F

Area Letter Form numbers in this Area

I	
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Town West Concord

Name of Area (if any) _____

Reformatory

Present Use Residential and

institutional, (prison)

General Date or Period 18th -late 19th
century

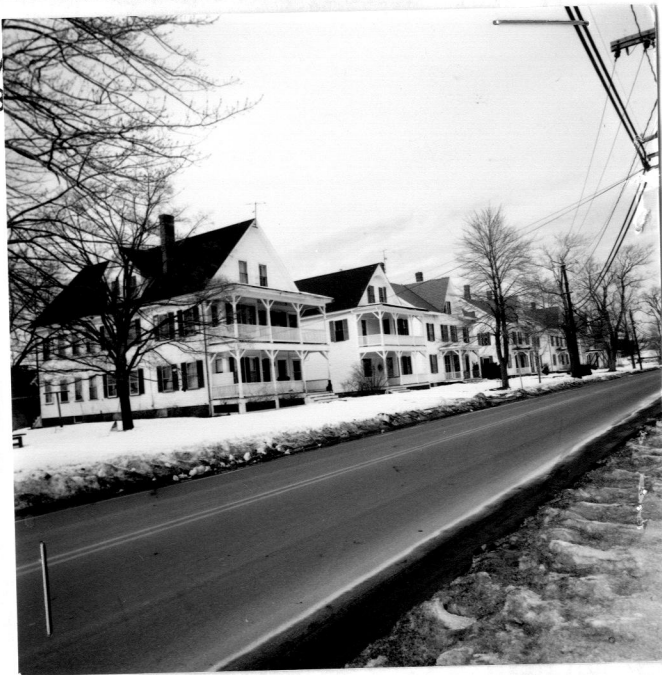
General Condition poor to fair

Acreage Approximately 45 acres

Recorded by A. Forbes

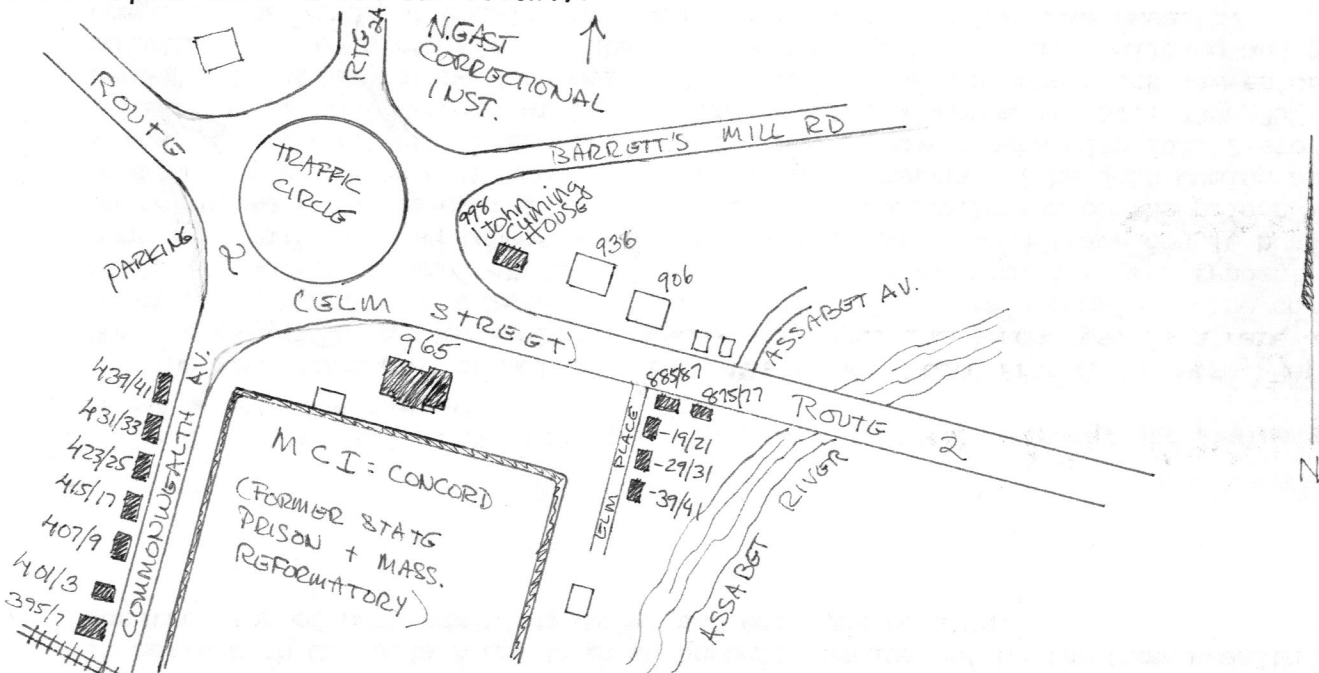
Organization for Concord Hist. Comm.

Date 3/18/88



395-439 Commonwealth Avenue

Sketch Map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient).



UTM REFERENCE _____

USGS QUADRANGLE _____
SCALE _____

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

In the retention of both its main public building and most of its employee housing in nearly unaltered condition, the Mass. Reformatory area still possesses integrity as a rare example of a complete late 19th-century prison administration and housing complex. It meets Criterion A both as a symbol of the penal reform attitudes of its time, and for its direct association with Concord's development in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. It meets both Criteria A and C as an unusual involvement by the Commonwealth in the construction of both administrators' and employee housing.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The area comprised of MCI-Concord, (the former State Prison and Mass. Reformatory for Men,) and its associated employee houses and adjoining landscape, is a rare and outstanding example of a late 1870's and early '80's prison complex. The ceremonial, official self-importance of the brick and stone Second-Empire Superintendents' House contrasts with the simple volumes of ten pitched-roof, wood-frame double houses situated on the streets to its east and west. A sense of the evolution of the prison property is provided by a mid-late 18th-century wood-frame farmhouse, (the John Cuming house--NR), across Rte. 2, and two later-19th-century, wood-frame houses with full 2-story verandas located on prison property at 395/397 and 401/403 Commonwealth Av.; #395/397 originally housed "the prison store," as well. Two mid-twentieth-century brick law-enforcement buildings on the north side of Rte. 2, the state police office building and garage, complete the sense of consistent, uninterrupted use by the Commonwealth.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain historical importance of area and how the area relates to the development of other areas of the community.

The Reformatory area is important at the national, state, and local levels. Originally built in 1878 as "the New State Prison," to replace the deteriorating, early-19th century facility in Charlestown, the siting of such a major penal institution in an open area of a country village was unprecedented in Massachusetts. Great apprehension at such a location was expressed by both the legislature and the employees who had to move their families here. But the presence of 3 major railway lines promised the efficient transport of personnel and supplies, a design competition, (won by Boston architect George Ropes,) was held to achieve the very latest in prison design, and the fears of the officers were alleviated by additional appropriations voted by the legislature for the construction of ten double houses for employees. Five of them, #s 407-441 Commonwealth Av., still stand. In 1884, the Commonwealth built six more houses for the staff; located just to the east of the prison wall, five of them remain, in various states of disrepair. By 1880, the area also possessed a train station/hotel/restaurant-- "Reformatory Station," and "the Central House"--(now demolished,) opposite the prison entrance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Mass State Documents, 1873-84, including annual reports of the State Auditor, the Committee on Prisons, the State Prison, and the Mass. Reformatory.
- The Concord Freeman. 1875-84.
- The Concord Enterprise. 1890-1905.
- TOWN MAPS, DIRECTORIES, AND TAX RECORDS

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: W. CONCORD	Form No: I
Property Name: Reformatory	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.:

Although many are in deteriorated condition, all the early buildings retain their original fabric and configuration to a remarkable degree. Remarkable, too, is the retention of over 150 acres of adjoining agricultural landscape associated with the prison complex. The cornfields to the west, now farmed by labor from the Northeast Correctional Center, appear today much as they did when worked by inmates from the Reformatory in the 1880's.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.:

The area as it stands today is still an eloquent illustration of late 19th-century attitudes toward prison design--attitudes that expected the institution to present an imposing, monumental exterior, while providing simple, low-cost, yet comfortable lodgings for its employees.

Along with the construction of the Mass. Reformatory for Women in Sherborn in 1876, the facility at Concord made the Massachusetts penal system a national model for prison reform when, in 1884, under Gov. Butler, it became the Mass. Reformatory for Men. The new reform philosophy called for a radical restructuring of prison life, in which inmates were to be rehabilitated academically, professionally, and morally. The result for West Concord was a deep involvement between the Reformatory and the community. The institution's staff mushroomed, as local residents were hired to teach in the trade departments and evening classes, and local companies such as Phoenix Rattan and the Waring Hat Factory employed inmate labor for their products. During the 1880's, before its move to Concord Junction, the Boston Harness Co. was located at the Reformatory. Attending Sunday services in the prison chapel even became popular with the growing West Concord population, which had no church of its own.

More than any other single group, Reformatory personnel and their families shaped West Concord's rapid development at the close of the 19th century. Riverside Park, much of upper Commonwealth Av., and large sections of Concord Junction were developed by its staff members, (such as Joseph Scott and George Russell,) and filled with houses occupied by its employees. Every one of the founders of the Union Church was connected with the Reformatory, as were most of the leaders of West Concord's early social, sports, and philanthropic organizations. A case in point is the West Concord Women's Club, founded in 1902 by the wives of three Reformatory officers, which is still active today.

WEST CONCORD AREA I: REFORMATORY. AREA LIST

Page 1

Street numbers marked with an asterisk, (*,) indicate properties which also appear on Streetscape Forms; those with two asterisks, (**,) appear on individual forms; National Register-listed properties are marked "NR".

Elm St.

1735 *875/877 Elm St. (DEMOLISHED)
1883-84 2-story vernacular Italianate double-house, built by Commonwealth of Massachusetts to house State Prison employees. Wood clapboard.

1736 *885/887 Elm St. (DEMOLISHED)
Identical to #875/877 Elm.

1737 906 Elm St.--NON-CONTRIBUTING
Mid-20th century 2-story, hip-roofed brick State Police office building.

1738 936 Elm St.--NON-CONTRIBUTING
Mid-20th century, 1-story State Police garage. Brick.

*965 Elm St.
2-story brick Second-Empire MCI-Concord administration building. Built in 1877/78; designed by George Ropes.

NR: 998 Elm St.
The John Cuming House. Late 18th-century 2-story, pitched-roof wood-frame farmhouse. Wood clapboard.

Elm Place

1739 *19/21 Elm Place
Identical to 875/877 Elm St.

1740 *29/31 Elm Place
Identical to 875/877 Elm St.

1741 *39/41 Elm Place
Identical to 875/877 Elm St.

DEMOLISHED

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE (DEMOLISHED)

1742 *395/397 Commonwealth Av.
2 1/2-story, gable-front Victorian vernacular 2-family house with 2-story, facade-width verandas. Ca. 1880, with later alterations. Formerly Flagg & Russell's, (later George Russell's) "prison" store. Wood clapboard.

1743 *401/403 Commonwealth Av.
Ca. early 1890's 2-family house. See general description for
#395/397 Commonwealth, above. Wood clapboard.

1744 *407/409 Commonwealth Av.
2-story vernacular Victorian double house; pitched-roof with
center facade gable; 1-story rear ell. Wood clapboard. Built
1877-78 by Luther Bailey and completed by Fuller and Davis for the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as housing for State Prison
employees.

1745 *415/417 Commonwealth Av.
See description for #407/409 Commonwealth, above.

1746 *423/425 Commonwealth Av.
See description for #407/409 Commonwealth.

1747 *431/433 Commonwealth Av.
See description for #407/409 Commonwealth.

1748 *439/441 Commonwealth Av.
See description for #407/409 Commonwealth. (Demolished)

Demolished

AREA I
 PL - WEST CONCORD
 USGS - MAYNARD
 SECTION - A

1735 - 875-877	ELM ST	(ALSO CT)	Demolished
1736 - 885-887	" "	(ALSO CT)	
1737 - 906	" "		
1738 - 936	" "		
1739 - 19-21	ELM PL	(ALSO CT)	
1740 - 29-31	" "	(ALSO CT)	
1741 - 39-41	" "	(ALSO CT)	
1742 - 395-397	COMMONWEALTH AVE	(ALSO CV)	
1743 - 401-403	"	(ALSO CV)	Demolished
1744 - 407-409	"	(ALSO CV)	
1745 - 415-417	"	(ALSO CV)	
1746 - 423-425	"	(ALSO CV)	
1747 - 431-433	"	(ALSO CV)	
1748 - 439-441	"	(ALSO CV)	

Demolished



395/97 + 401/403 Commonwealth Avenue
(CON. 1742 + CON. 1743)



19-41 Elm Place



441-407 Commonwealth Avenue



Elm Street at Reformatory, looking East



Edm Street at Reformatory, Looking West

DRAFT

HISTORICAL EVALUATION

STUDY FOR A TRAINING ACADEMY AND FOR
THE WHITE ROW AND GREEN ROW AT CONCORD

MASS. STATE PROJECT #P87-16 STU
OLIVIER LESSER, STUDY MANAGER
DIVISION OF CAPITAL PLANNING & OPERATIONS

CANDACE JENKINS
PRESERVATION CONSULTANT
17 SLADE ST., BELMONT, MASS.

FOR

SUNSET STREET ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS
678 MASS. AVE., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

INTRODUCTION:

This historical evaluation of the White and Green Rows at MCI Concord has been undertaken as part of the architectural survey. Its purpose is to document the history and architecture of the Rows, to determine whether they are eligible for listing in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and to define what features should be preserved if rehabilitation is undertaken. The text is divided into six sections:

1. Methodology
2. Summary of Significance
3. Historical Background
4. Description
5. Preservation Considerations
6. Bibliography

METHODOLOGY:

The history of MCI Concord is well documented in the written record and through historic photographs. The key primary sources are architect's specifications, agency annual reports, documents of the General Court, local newspapers, and historic maps/atlas. A secondary source that has proved especially useful is Marden's 1880 Souvenir History of the Commonwealth which includes chapters on the prisons at Concord, Charlestown and Framingham. David J. Rothman's 1971, The Discovery of the Asylum has provided the context for 19th century prison reform in the United States.

The White and Green Rows of workers' housing which frame the east and west sides of the prison yard have received substantially less attention, although they are mentioned in the sources noted above. The most comprehensive history of these late-19th century wood-frame houses is the excellent 1987 paper by Anne McCarthy Forbes entitled, "The White Ladies": And "The Green Row": Prison Workers' Houses in Concord, MA, by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This report has relied heavily on the Forbes paper for historical information about the White and Green Rows, and about the prison in general. Unless otherwise cited, this should be considered as the source of specific details. Footnotes to sources such as annual reports and local newspapers are found in the Forbes report. Most of the judgements concerning the physical evolution of the houses rely on observation of extant features and knowledge about what historical periods produced those features. The observations were made during the course of several visits which entailed walk-throughs of all vacant units, and exterior inspections of all units.

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE/ RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA:

On July 8, 1975, the members of the Massachusetts Historical Commission formally voted MCI Concord eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. At that time, the nomination included the prison, prison yard and associated workers' housing (see

map). The nomination process was then put on hold, pending a major reconstruction effort which resulted in demolition of much of the prison proper. More recently (1985-present), MHC staff have expressed the opinion that the White and Green Row houses are eligible for listing in the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Thus they have requested that DCPO/DOC enter into consultation with them concerning the future of the houses. The Concord Historical Commission and the Board of Selectmen have expressed similar concern.

This report examines the history, architecture and potential significance of the worker's housing which, along with the Warden's House (now Administration), are the only remaining buildings associated with the 19th century prison. The conclusions of this report concur with MHC's assertion that these buildings are eligible for the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The facility now known as MCI Concord was constructed in 1873-78 as the second state prison in Massachusetts (after Charlestown, 1806, no longer extant). In 1884, it became the state's first reformatory for men. The historical significance of the facility within the development of the Massachusetts penal system is unquestionable. Establishment of MCI Concord also had a major impact on the West Concord community, acting as an important stimulus in its development.

The history of the twelve wood-frame double-houses that constitute the White and Green Rows at MCI Concord is intimately associated with that of the prison. They are also intact examples of late 19th century workers' housing and represent an unusual if not unique incursion of the state into this type of housing. Their significance is heightened by the fact that, along the former Wardens' house, they are the only extant features of the 19th century prison.

The remaining 19th century components of MCI Concord--the Warden's House and the White and Green Rows--possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association as specified by the National Register criteria. Integrity of setting has been somewhat disrupted by the reconstruction of the prison yard in the mid-1970s. As a group, these buildings appear to be eligible for the National and State Registers of Historic Places under criteria A ("associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history") and C ("embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction...and represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction").

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The State Prison at Concord:

The correctional facility now known as MCI Concord originated in the mid-1870s as the second state prison in Massachusetts. At that time, the Commonwealth's penal system consisted of a deteriorated and overcrowded state prison at Charlestown (1806; Charles Bulfinch) supplemented by several local and county jails. The state prison was devoted to inmates serving long term sentences.

Construction of the prison at Concord was preceded by several years of vehement debate about the need for such a facility, the potential number of inmates to be accommodated, the amount to be expended, and possible locations. Finally, in 1874, a 137 acre site in rural West Concord was selected from a field of 58. Factors in its favor were similar to those which governed selection of contemporary State Hospital sites: proximity to rail lines, good drainage, availability and low cost of land, and lack of local opposition.

George Ropes, a Boston architect, was selected from over thirty competitors as designer of the new prison. Built of brick with granite trim, the prison included a mansard roofed warden/deputy warden's house standing in front of walls which enclosed cell blocks, support facilities and workshops. Only the warden's house remains today. Construction began in August, 1875, and the prison was officially opened on May 16, 1878. Its capacity was 750 prisoners. The final cost of construction was \$25,000 under the authorized budget of \$1,000,000 (Marden).

Within a few years of its opening, Concord State Prison was cited for numerous problems including overcrowding, impure and inadequate water supply, chronic debt, and a high death and disease rate. By 1882, it was the subject of a Senate investigation which led to dismissal of its second warden, Ralph Earle, the following year.

The Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Men at Concord:

During this period, the Commonwealth was being influenced by a second wave of prison reform aimed at counteracting the increasingly custodial nature of the penal system. Thus, in 1884, the Senate Committee on Prisons recommended the establishment of a reform facility for men, influenced by the successful examples of the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women at Sherborn of 1877, and the men's reformatory at Elmira, New York. It was decided to move the State Prison back to Charlestown, and to convert the Concord facility to the new Reformatory. By the fall of 1884 the move had been accomplished, and the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Men opened at Concord in December.

Recognizing that many prisoners lacked both formal education as well as training in any useful occupation, and that this was a serious hindrance to their rehabilitation, the reformatory routine sought to remedy the situation. This change in prison philosophy had a major impact on the surrounding community, leading to greater integration. Teachers were hired at \$1,000/year, arrangements for employment with local industries were made, and the number of prison employees in general mushroomed.

History of the White and Green Row Houses:

West Concord was almost entirely undeveloped in the early 1870s with the exception of Warner's pail factory. Thus, housing for prison guards became a matter of concern, and provision of such facilities was authorized as part of the prison legislation. After initial confusion about the number and type of accommodations to be provided, it was decided in 1875 to build twenty-two family dwellings along the western edge of the prison. Luther Bailey, a contractor from West Newton, was selected from among twenty bidders on October 19, 1876. By that time, the total number of houses had been cut to ten and the budget had been set at \$34,710.

Construction began in April of 1877 with several crews working under Bailey and his brother. The Concord Freeman reported that eight of the houses were standing on June 14, 1877. By fall however, Bailey was bankrupt, owing his sub-contractors as well as local merchants. Auditors' accounts indicate that the job was completed by the firm of Fuller & Davis.

The Acton Patriot reported that the row of houses, by then known as "Commonwealth Row", was completed in time for the prison opening in the spring of 1878. Before that time, the Governor had granted an extra \$3,000 for wallpapering and finishing the interiors. Rent was set at \$150/year for each of the twenty units.

The ten Commonwealth Row dwellings were identical wood-frame double-houses rising 2 and 1/2 stories from brick foundations to slate gable roofs. They were fronted by simply detailed porches and extended to the rear by kitchen ells. Thus, they continued the traditional form that had evolved for such dwellings since the beginning of the 19th century (see Description for additional detail).

Although there was a documented need for additional housing for prison employees, no action was taken until 1884 when the State Prison became the State Reformatory. At that time, the corner of Elm Street and Elm Place was developed with six more double houses which were probably constructed by low-bidder C.H. Chandler of Malden. The rent remained at \$150/year for each unit.

The Elm Street/Elm Place houses were very similar to their predecessors on Commonwealth Avenue. They were also 2 and 1/2 story, wood-frame double-houses with front porches and rear kitchen ells. Presumably to cut expenses, they were originally roofed with wood shingles; in 1897, the shingles were replaced with more durable slate (see Description for additional detail).

By the turn-of-the-century, two additional houses had been added to the south end of Commonwealth Row, on prison property where Flagg and Russell's grocery store had been located. The documents studied for this report and for the Forbes paper are unclear as to the specific origins however. It is not known whether they were constructed as additional employee housing in response to the constant requests made by the Superintendent in his annual reports, or for some other purpose. Because they were constructed on state property, it appears likely that they were sponsored by the Commonwealth which remains the owner today.

These two dwellings were also 2 and 1/2 story, wood-frame two-family houses which maintained the scale and siting of their neighbors. They differed primarily in their duplex (one unit placed above the other) rather than double-house (units placed side by side) plan. Exterior features that reflected this interior arrangement of space, were the two-story front porches, and lack of rear kitchen ells.

Some indication of late-19th century improvements to the White and Green Row houses can be found in the annual reports and have been cited by Forbes. "By the mid-1880s, all the officers' houses were heated with steam directly from the prison. In 1885 the houses on Commonwealth Row were connected to the reformatory's sewage system and fitted out with 'w.c.'s and bathtubs, and sidewalks were installed for both groups of dwellings. In 1889, grass, elm trees, street lights, and a new brick sidewalk, part of which remains today, were installed along Commonwealth Row. In 1897 the bathrooms were again improved with hot water and showers, and the roofs of houses to the east of the main prison were changed from shingle to slate."

The Prison/Reformatory and the West Concord Community

When the State Prison opened in 1878, Concord was a small rural town whose population had remained stable at c2250 for over twenty years. West Concord was known primarily as an industrial village whose economy was founded on the Damon cotton mill (NR) and Warner's pail factory. The latter was directly south of the prison, near the tracks of the Boston & Fitchburg Railroad. Opening of the prison led to an immediate population increase of approximately 1,000 including 750 prisoners, plus the 55 employees and their families.

Establishment of the prison helped to extend the boundaries of "Warnerville" or Concord Junction northward. A new school and post office were soon added to the community, and a new railroad station was erected across from the prison entrance on Elm Street. Flagg & Russell's prison store and grocery opened in 1878 in two buildings on prison property just south of the Commonwealth Row houses (it is possible that these are incorporated into 395-97 and 401-03 Commonwealth Row). Prison employees who could not be accommodated by the limited state sponsored housing found lodgings at the new prison station hotel and at Mrs. Hampson's Boarding House. Additionally, some residents, including Ralph Warner, constructed rental housing on Commonwealth Row.

The prison's impact on the surrounding community became even more profound after its conversion to the State Reformatory in 1884. The new emphasis on formal education of prisoners coupled with training in job skills led to the need for teachers and for cooperative arrangements with local industries. Teachers were hired at the generous rate of \$1,000/year. The reformatory quickly became the town's largest employer and offered some of the highest salaries.

By the 1880s, prison officers who rented the state houses began to appear as officers and board members of local organizations indicating a full integration into the community. One example is the West Concord Women's Club which was established in 1902 by the wives of three prison officers living on Commonwealth Row.

MCI Concord in the Twentieth Century:

Several important changes have occurred at the prison in the second half of the 20th century. As part of a system-wide reorganization, it was redesignated MCI Concord by Chapter 770 of the Acts of 1955. At about the same time, upgrading of Elm Street as Route 2 led to the demolition of the five northernmost houses on Commonwealth Row (see historic photo). The easternmost house on Elm Street may have been lost at the same time. Finally, a major rebuilding campaign in the mid-1970s led to the demolition of most of the surviving prison buildings (see 1975 draft National Register form). Today, only the brick warden's house, and the twelve wood-frame officers' houses remain, as reminders of this important chapter in Massachusetts penal history.

Description:

General area:

MCI Concord is located on the south side of State Route 2 just east of the Concord rotary. It faces a mid-20th century state police office building and garage on north side of Route 2. The associated prison farm is located north of rotary. Wood-frame two-family houses, historically constructed for prison employees, flank the east and west sides of the prison yard. On the west, the prison yard is bounded by Commonwealth Row which links the Route 2 rotary with the center of West Concord. The five earliest houses (1877) and the two latest houses (c1900) stand side-by-side on the west side of Commonwealth Row facing the wall of the prison (photo #1). To the rear they overlook the pastoral scene provided by woods, fields and Warner's Pond (photo #2). Elm Place defines the east side of the prison yard. Five additional houses dating from 1884 stand at the corner of Route 2 (Elm Street) and Elm Place. The three houses on Elm Place face the landscaped front yard of the prison complex. All five overlook woods, fields and the Assabet River to the rear. Housing similar to that of the prison is found in the West Concord village area. The prison housing, which can be categorized as three basic types, is described below:

Type I: White Row including 407-441 Commonwealth Row

These five houses all date from 1877 and the original opening of the prison. They are the northernmost houses on Commonwealth Row. They are bordered by a parking lot (North), Type III houses (South), and a wooded area (West); they face the blank prison wall across Commonwealth Row (East). Five identical houses, located on the present parking lot, were demolished in the 1950s during the upgrading of Elm Street to a state highway (see historic photo).

Exterior Appearance:

Typically, this is a wood-frame double-house that rises 2 and 1/2 stories from a brick and stone foundation to an overhanging slate gable roof with interior stove chimneys. The house is sheathed with clapboards and trimmed with cornerboards, watertable and fascia with half-round moldings underlining the entire roof profile. Fenestration is regular, and aligned at the first and second stories; windows are trimmed with molded frames, bracketed sills, louvered shutters, and contain 2/2 double-hung sash (photo #7).

A central facade gable containing paired windows with narrow 1/1 lights is the dominant element of the four bay front (East) elevation (photo #3). At the first story, paired entries occupy the central bays while single windows occupy the outer bays. The entries have molded frames and contain glazed and paneled double-leaf doors (photos #4, 5, 6). They are fronted by a single porch whose shallow hip-roof is supported by three evenly-spaced chamfered posts with diagonal brackets. Rails with simple square balusters run along the sides of the porch and down the four steps that lead up to the porch (photos #4, 5, 6). Four windows are aligned at the second story.

Side elevations contain two windows at each story, with those in the attic more closely spaced (photos #8, 9).

The rear (West) elevation is dominated by a one story kitchen ell with a tall stove chimney supported by diagonal braces attached to the two main chimneys (photos #9, 10). The ell is centered on the rear elevation which contains single windows in the outermost bays. At the intersection of the ell and the main house are small rectangular sheds that contain entries to the basement (photo #11). Both sides of the ell consist of two bays containing a window (East) and a paneled entry with two light transom and bracketed shed roof (West; photo #12). The rear of the ell contains two windows. Above the ell, at the second story, are four evenly spaced windows (photo #13).

Free standing, gable roofed, wood frame garages that probably date from the 1920s or 1930s are located behind the houses (photo #14). These garages do not contribute to the historic/architectural significance of the White Row.

Interior Appearance:

The Type-I house is a double house consisting of two mirror image dwellings connected by a central party wall. Common living spaces occupy the first story with bedrooms at the second and attic stories. Rooms are generously sized with high ceilings; oversized windows admit abundant light. Interior finishes include lath and plaster walls (condition varies from good to poor) and ceilings (pressed tin ceiling is found in one kitchen), wood floors, and heavy molded window and door casings (photos #15, 16, 17) whose bold profiles are reminiscent of the early-mid 19th century Greek Revival style. The newel posts and balusters are turned with heavy proportions (photo #18). Interior doors are four paneled with long narrow panels over squared panels; this is a typical later 19th century form (photo #19).

The plan is typical of those developed for this house type during the 19th century (Plan #). The main entrance leads into a stairhall adjacent to the party wall. Behind the stairhall is a narrow corridor that leads to the kitchen which occupies the one story rear ell. Adjacent to the stairhall are the living room or parlor and dining room which occupy the prominent and well lighted corner spaces.

Typically, the front room is a living room with a passageway leading to the dining room directly behind. The dining room is equipped with a built-in storage closet (photo #20) and has direct access to the kitchen. Both were originally heated by stoves served by the common interior chimney. Flooring is either wide pine or narrow maple board; sometimes the maple is laid in a decorative pattern to form a frame (photo #21); sometimes the wood flooring is covered by linoleum or carpeting.

The kitchens are large rooms finished with vertical wainscoting (photo #22). They were originally equipped with stoves served by the flues on the party walls. Storage pantries are located on the interior walls (East), while working pantries and rear vestibules take up the outer (West; photo #22) walls.

At the second story, large bedrooms with original closets occupy the spaces above the living and dining rooms. They were also heated by stoves served by the interior chimneys. Smaller rooms that may originally have served for storage flank the stair; the one to the rear has been converted to bathroom use (c1885; photo #26). Finishes are similar to those of the first story with slightly simpler door and window casings (photo #23). Floors are all of wide pine boards. Corner posts are exposed in the storage rooms in a very old-fashioned manner.

The attic story is nearly identical to the second story. The bedrooms are cut somewhat short by the slope of the roof. Door and window casings are substantially simpler in profile (photo #24) as are the newel posts (photo #25).

Architectural Variations:

Most of the houses retain their original detail and are thus very similar in appearance. Some notable early interior features that are not common to all units are the decorative pressed tin ceiling in #407 (photo #27); and the plaster ceiling medallion in the dining room of #415 (photo #28). Some of the houses also display modern alterations that are out of character with the original aesthetic and materials. These include wall coverings like the fake paneling and brick seen in #401 (photo #29, 32); and the false beamed ceilings and raised paneling seen in #417 (photos #30, 31).

Type II-Green Row, Elm Street and Elm Place:

These five houses date to 1884 when Concord State Prison was redesignated as the Massachusetts Reformatory Prison for Men. A sixth house on Elm Street, adjacent to the Assabet River, was lost sometime in the 20th century. These houses are similar in scale, materials and pretension to the 1878 White Row houses described as Type I.

Exterior Appearance:

The typical Green Row structure is a wood-frame double-house that rises 2 and 1/2 stories from a brick foundation to an overhanging slate gable roof with interior stove chimneys. It is sheathed with clapboards and trimmed with cornerboards, watertable and fascia with half-round molding underlining the entire roof profile. Fenestration is regular and aligned at the first and second stories; windows are trimmed with exceptionally narrow frames and louvered shutters, and contain 2/2 double-hung sash.

The symmetrical six bay facade is focused on paired entries with molded frames that contain glazed and paneled double-leaf doors (photos #33, 34); a few of the doors retain their original etched and frosted glass (photo #35). The entries are fronted by a single porch whose shallow hip roof is supported by decorative curved brackets at the ends. A rail with simple squared posts and balusters runs along the edge of the porch and the five steps which lead up to it (photos #33, 34, 36). Paired windows occupy the outer bays. Six windows are aligned above these windows and doors at the second story.

The side elevations contain two windows at each story, with those in the attic more closely spaced (photo #37).

The rear (East or South) elevation is dominated by a one story kitchen ell with a tall stove chimney supported by diagonal braces attached to the two main chimneys (photos #38, 39). The ell is centered on the rear elevation which contains single windows in the outermost bays. A bulkhead, framed by single windows, is centered on this elevation. Both sides of the ell consist of three bays, with windows occupying the inner bays and entries in the outer bays; the entries are headed by bracketed hoods and

contain glazed and paneled doors (photo #40). Above the ell. at the second story, are four evenly spaced windows.

Free standing, gable roofed, wood frame garages that probably date from the 1920s or 1930s are located behind the two Elm Street house (photo #41). These garages do not contribute to the historic/architectural significance of the Green Row.

Interior Appearance:

The Type-II house is a double-house consisting of two mirror image units connected by a central party wall which is constructed of brick. Common living spaces occupy the first story with bedrooms at the second and attic stories. Rooms are generously sized with high ceilings; oversized windows admit abundant light. Interior finishes include lath and plaster walls and ceilings, wood floors, and molded window and door casings with bull's eye corner blocks (photo #44). The newel posts and balusters are turned with heavy proportions (photo #42). Doors are four paneled with long narrow panels over more squared panels; this is a typical later 19th century form (photo #43).

The plan is typical of those developed for this house type during the 19th century (plan #). The main entrance leads into a stairhall adjacent to the party wall. Adjacent to the stairhall are the living room or parlor, and the dining room which occupy the prominent and well lighted corner spaces. The kitchen occupies the one story rear ell.

Typically, the front room is a living room with a passageway leading to the dining room directly behind. The dining room is equipped with a built-in storage closet (photo #44) and has direct access to the kitchen. Both rooms have wood flooring and plain mopboards. Stoves served by the common interior chimney were the original heating source (photo #45).

The kitchens are large rooms finished with vertical wainscotting. They were originally equipped with stoves served by the flues on the party walls. Storage pantries are located on the interior walls adjacent to the cellar stairs (photo #46), while working pantries and rear vestibules take up the outer walls.

At the second story, large bedrooms with original closets occupy the spaces above the living and dining rooms. They were also heated by stoves served by the interior chimneys. Smaller rooms that may originally have served for storage flank the stair, the one to the rear has been converted to bathroom use (c1885). The door and window casings are identical to those of the first story as are the four panel doors; stair details are substantially simpler however (photo #47). Floors are all of wide pine boards.

The attic story follows the plan of the second story but displays substantially simpler finishes. Door and window casings are simplified to plain boards (photo #48). Four panel doors are retained, as are wide pine floors.

Architectural Variations:

Most of the houses retain their original detail and are thus very similar in appearance. Some notable early interior features that are not common to all units are the decorative pressed tin ceiling in #19 (photo #49); the plaster ceiling medallion in the upper front room of #19 (photo #50); and the plaster floral molding which encircles the dining

room approximately 20" below the ceiling to create a decorative frieze in #875 (photo #44). Some of the houses also display modern alterations, such as synthetic wall materials, that are out of character with the original aesthetic and materials. In others, important original features have been removed like the balusters from the main stair (photo #42).

Type III: White Row including 395-403 Commonwealth Row

These two houses date to c1900. Research into their origins has thus far been inconclusive, although it is likely that they were constructed by the state, since they stood on land owned by the prison. They are the southernmost houses on Commonwealth Row. They are bordered by Type I houses (North), railroad tracks (South), and a wooded area (West); they face the prison wall across Commonwealth Row (East).

Exterior Appearance:

These two houses are basically mirror-images with strong similarities in plan, elevation and detail; they are not identical as are the Type I and II houses however. Both are wood-frame duplexes that rise 2 and 1/2 stories from either a brick (#395-97) or uncoursed granite (#401-03) foundation to an overhanging asphalt roof (photo #63). Both face gable end to the street. They are sheathed with clapboard, and are trimmed with watertables, cornerboards and molded fascias. A decorative vergeboard and corner brackets trim the roofline of #401-03. Fenestration is generally regular, and aligned at the first and second stories. Windows are framed by molded surrounds and louvered shutters; they contain 2/2 double hung sash (photos #51, 52).

The facades are dominated by two story porches with chamfered posts and braces, and rails with square balusters (photo #53). Two story squared bays, with paired windows facing front and single windows on the sides, rise along the north (#401-03) and south (#395-97) sides of the facades (photo #54). At both stories, paired double-leaf entries occupy the remaining bays. The doors have glazed upper panels with a frame of small-paned Queen Anne sash over solid panels defined by grooved moldings with cornerblocks (photo #55). At 401-03, these outer doors open into small vestibules with similar but more simply detailed inner doors. Two windows occupy the gable to light the attic story.

Fenestration of the side elevations is irregular with at least twice as many windows on the side with the bay as the side with the entries. Although the spacing and numbers of windows is inconsistent, most of the openings are aligned at the first and second stories (photos #56, 57).

The rear elevations are quite different (photo #58). A two story stair tower dominates the rear of #401-03; windows with 2/2 sash are located on the sides of this element at the first and second stories. An entry with four panel door and braced shed roof, and a basement entry are located on the tower (photo #59). At #395-97, the stairs are contained within the building. An entry with five paneled door and braced shed roof occupies the southernmost bay with a basement door immediately adjacent to the north. The remainder of this elevation includes two windows aligned at the first and second stories, and two windows centered in the attic (photos #60, 61).

Free standing, gable roofed, wood frame garages that probably date from the 1900s or 1930s are located behind these houses (photo #62). These garages do not contribute to the historic/architectural significance of the White Row.

Interior Appearance:

The Type-III house is a duplex with identical units placed one above the other. Its straightforward plan places common living spaces along one side wall, and the entrance hall and bedrooms along the other (plan #). The bedrooms open directly into the living areas avoiding the wasted space of a corridor. All of the doors display the same four panel configuration as those in the Type I and II houses (photo #63). Wood floors are laid to create a wide outer frame (photo #64). The main stairs display slender, tapered newel posts and balusters (photo #71).

As is to be expected, the living rooms occupy the prominent front corner location with its extra windows and the added interest of the squared bay projecting onto the porch (photos #65, 66). The living room is followed by the dining room with its built-in storage consisting of glazed shelves above drawers (photo #67). At #395-97, these two rooms are connected by French doors. Window and door surrounds in these two rooms have either a heavily molded outer edge (photo #66) or moldings with bulls-eye corner blocks (photo #65).

The kitchen is located behind the dining room at the rear of the house. At #401-03, a pantry protrudes into the rear of the kitchen, and a bathroom (photo #68) and vestibule are located adjacent to the rear wall. Rear stairs are located in the external stair tower (photo #69). At #395-97, a bathroom is fitted against the forward wall of the kitchen, while a pantry and stair take up the rear wall. The kitchens are finished with vertical wainscoting and plain board surrounds for windows and doors (photo #70).

On the opposite side, the front hall and main staircase is followed by three bedrooms of equal size, all of which have small closets. Windows and doors in these rooms have cornerblock surrounds. At #395-97 there are two finished attic bedrooms (photos #72, 73).

PRESERVATION CONSIDERATIONS:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has expressed the opinion that the White and Green Rows at MCI Concord are eligible for listing in the National and State Registers of Historic Places. This opinion has been clearly stated in recent correspondence with the Division of Capital Planning and Operations and the Department of Corrections. This report concurs in that conclusion of eligibility. Thus, this section of the report outlines the standards that are applied to the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are the national standards that have been developed to evaluate the appropriateness of work on historic buildings. They are used at the federal, state and local levels. They assume that historic materials and features are important, and that thus, they should be retained wherever possible.

They also recommend a two step process for evaluation. The first is the identification of materials and features that play a key role in defining historic character. The second is the assessment of the impact of proposed work on those materials and features. The Standards specify treatments that are acceptable and unacceptable for all parts of a building. The Standards are attached as an appendix to this report.

At its most basic, the advice of the standards is to alter historic structures as little as possible while bringing them into efficient contemporary use. It is rarely if ever possible to achieve the goal of efficient contemporary use without making some changes. Changes are necessitated by numerous factors including deterioration of original materials, by the spatial requirements of a new use, by the need to meet building codes, or by the desire to make a building more energy efficient.

Most of these factors will probably come into play during a rehabilitation of these houses. Certainly some features are deteriorated and will have to be replaced. On the exterior, window sash and shutters, gutters and fascia, and porch decking and stairs are obvious examples (photos #74, 75, 34); plaster finishes are the most common interior problem (photo #76). Because these elements are important to the character of the houses, care should be taken to duplicate existing proportions and materials. Proportions are critical; in some cases alternate materials with similar visual qualities may be accepted as substitutes.

To begin to apply the Secretary's Standards to the White and Green Rows, it is necessary to identify their "character defining" elements. Below is a discussion of what makes these buildings historically significant, and a list of character defining features that should be preserved.

The twelve wood-frame double-houses which constitute the White and Green Rows are remarkably well preserved with most of their original exterior and interior features remaining intact. This high degree of preservation is unusual because of their age, because of their use by large numbers of tenants, and especially because they have generally not been perceived as historic by either their owner or their occupants.

The White and Green Row houses were constructed by the state as inexpensive and simply designed workmen's dwellings. Their very lack of fancy ornamentation or expensive materials bears testimony to their origins. In the case of simple, traditional houses such as these, it is basic elements that are central to defining historic character. These range from things like massing and proportion to specific elements like clapboard siding, slate roofs and fenestration pattern on the exterior, and door and window casings on the interior.

These common elements are important not only to the integrity of the individual houses, but to the integrity of the group as a whole. Much of their historical and architectural significance derives from their proximity and identical appearance, which clearly indicate their group origins. One of the most impressive aspects of these houses is the way in which they relate to one another not only as identical pieces of architecture, but also in their identical siting, including spacing and setback (photos #77, 78, 79). The presence of #431-33 Commonwealth Row clearly demonstrates how changes that do not recognize the importance of original identical features (here the primary problem is a reduction in window size and the substitution of 8/8 sash for 2/2) can disrupt the cohesive qualities of the ensemble (photo #80). Other seemingly small changes to either their architectural features or their siting would produce similar problems.

Features to be preserved:

Exterior: It is most important to preserve features that are visible to the public from Commonwealth Row. Thus, the facades assume primary importance with the side and rear elevations a close second.

1. clapboard siding
2. trim including cornerboards, watertable and fascias
3. windows including size and location, casings, 2/2 sash, shutters
4. doors including size and location, casings, glazed and paneled doors
5. porches including posts, braces and balustrades and trim
6. slate roofs
7. chimneys
8. kitchen ells

Interior: The basic advice of the Secretary's Standards should be heeded: do as little as possible to disrupt the plan, or remove original features while accomodating the needs of a new use. Neither the plans or interior finishes of these houses are remarkable for their period, but they do provide amenities of space and light not common in new construction. To prioritize, it is most important to preserve the plan and finishes of the first story main rooms since they are the most elaborate and the most visible. The stairhall is particularly important because it relates so strongly to the exterior entry.

1. plan
2. window and door casings
3. staircases and stairhall

The National and State Registers of Historic Places

The National Register was created by Congress in 1966 as the centerpiece of the National Historic Preservation Act. Passage of this major piece of legislation responded largely to the mass destruction of historic properties brought about by such federal demolition programs as urban renewal and interstate highway construction. From the beginning, the National Register was intended as a planning tool for use by federal agencies whose actions might damage important historic and archaeological resources. It was a red flag which required the federal agency to consider "prudent and feasible" alternatives before irrevocably destroying a piece of the nation's history. It effected projects that were funded, licensed or permitted by a federal agency.

In addition to protection from federal agencies, the National Register provides formal recognition of historic value, and allows owners of income producing properties to take advantage of federal tax incentives for approved rehabilitation work. National Register properties are also eligible for federal matching grants when funds are available.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has taken several actions to complement the federal legislation. A State Register of Historic Places, which automatically includes all National Register properties, was created by Chapter 152 of the Acts of 1982. State Register properties are protected from actions by state agencies in the same way that National Register properties are protected from federal actions. State Register properties in private non-profit or governmental ownership are eligible for a state matching grants program for approved rehabilitation work. Historic properties are also exempted from some provisions of the State Building Code by Section 436.

The process for listing a property or area in the National Register involves several steps. First is the completion of an inventory form which provides basic architectural and historic information. This is usually accomplished by a local historical commission. The form is submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC; an office of the Secretary of State) for inclusion in the Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth. The next step is an evaluation of significance by the staff of the MHC accomplished by applying the National Register criteria (see appendix). This is followed by completion of a National Register nomination form which is similar to but more detailed than the inventory form. This step is often undertaken by a local historical commission, but any interested party may complete the form. The form is reviewed for accuracy and completeness by MHC staff, and is then presented to the members of MHC for a formal vote on eligibility. The final step is submission to the Keeper of the National Register at the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. for approval at the federal level. As previously mentioned, listing in the National Register automatically means listing in the State Register. As of 1986, approximately 32,000 properties were listed in the State Register.

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Community: Concord

MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Date Received: 7/20/87

Date Reviewed: 7/29/87

Type: Individual District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name: CONCORD REFORMATORY HOUSING

Inventory Form: (ATTACHED)

Address: 395-441 Commonwealth Ave, 875-887 Elm St, 29-41 Elm Place

Requested by: Anne Forbes / Concord Historical Commission

Action: Honor ITC Grant R & C Other:

Agency: Dept. of Corrections Staff in charge of Review:

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

- ☐ Eligible
☐ Eligible, also in district
☐ Eligible only in district
☐ Ineligible
☒ More information needed

DISTRICTS

- ☐ Eligible
☐ Ineligible
☒ More information needed

CRITERIA: A B C D

LEVEL: Local State National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Katherine Boonin

The worker's housing associated with Concord Reformatory is clearly significant for the role it played in the residential development of West Concord, and as an unusual example of State-sponsored worker's housing. However, it is difficult to evaluate these houses in isolation from the prison complex itself, and other associated buildings in the immediate area. A district encompassing these houses would logically include these other buildings (at least those visible to the public - buildings within the reformatory walls could probably be excluded). More inventory is needed to determine boundaries, criteria, and dates of significance for this district.