

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## National Historic Landmark Nomination

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Weston Hospital Main Building  
other names/site number The Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains;  
West Virginia Hospital for the Insane

### 2. Location

street & number River Street  not for publication  
city, town Weston  vicinity  
state West Virginia code WV county Lewis code 041 zip code 26452

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Health Care - hospital

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

same

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century

Revivals: Jacobean

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone

walls blue sandstone

roof modern composition shingles

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### Summary

The main building at Weston as designed by Richard Snowden Andrews is massive. Built of sandstone blocks in all of its exterior walls, the structure measures nearly 1300 feet along the facade. The center unit is four stories high with a great cupola and clock tower. This section was originally designed to house offices and personnel and at one time even had such features as a large ballroom. The main hall of the center section runs in a northwest-southeast direction and is transected by the long hall that runs through the 3-1/2-story hyphens to either side. At the ends of these are smaller versions of the perpendicular center pavilion, from which branch other hyphens that connect to a final set of pavilions. Additionally, there are small wings on the north and south, slightly set back from the main facade and having three perpendicular projections to the rear.

### Additional Description:

Symmetry in design is evident throughout, and the facade is broken regularly with gables that are stepped in the lower portions. Also, there are three-sided bays at the far ends of the 3-1/2-story sections and between each of the gabled elements. Fenestration is most elaborate, the multitude of windows providing ample natural light. (There are 902 windows.)

When the building of the south one-story wing (the first completed) was undertaken in the late 1850s and early 1860s, a fine blue sandstone was brought in from a quarry at Mt. Clare in nearby Harrison County. The quality of the stone and workmanship is excellent, but as the building progressed the quality of materials lessened.

The building is of load-bearing masonry construction with most exterior walls of blue sandstone and interior walls of brick. Its main section (nearly 800 feet long) is basically a five-part composition, symmetrically arranged around a center pavilion comprised of projecting pavilions and connecting hyphens.

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One-story wings, with a high, exposed basement below that on the northeast, at the extremes of each side bring the total length to over 1200 feet. The central tower rises 200 feet from the ground and the other four towers are 150 feet high.

Each of the connecting hyphens is interrupted at mid-point by a projecting three-sided, 3-1/2-story bay that is capped with round-headed gables and a low, turret-like roof. In the original design, Andrews added further emphasis to the pavilions by placing square wooden towers with exaggerated spires along the roofline. A much larger clock tower, similar in design, though much taller and more detailed, was placed over the central pavilion.

The facade of the main block is divided into three horizontal bands by varying the texture of the sandstone masonry surface: the low, basement story is defined by a projecting water table and rusticated ashlar with broken surface; the first story uses a more refined, tooled surface of rusticated ashlar; while the second and third stories are treated as one with the use of smooth-surface ashlar. A simple projecting belt course of the same sandstone delineates the first and second stories.

The building was designed with a series of set-backs that occur where a pavilion and hyphen join. This provides some relief to the dominant horizontality of the vast facade. Also, the use of architectural detailing on the projecting pavilions is in rather marked contrast to the unadorned surfaces of the connecting hyphens. Andrews designed the asylum in the "Gothic" style with elaborate Dutch or Jacobean gables of the pre-Civil War period. Rusticated quoins define the corners and label moldings accentuate the fenestration and cap the steep-pitched gables that terminate with urn-like stone finials. The central pavilion is especially fine, with twin Jacobean gables and round-headed windows.

Except for the addition of dormers along the entire gable roof and the replacing of the original slate roof with a modern composition material, the external appearance of the building stands as it was originally constructed.

The interiors of the buildings and the grounds of the asylum in general have been modified. Fluctuating in-patient population, upgrading fire and mechanical standards, and changing concepts in treatment of the mentally ill have all influenced interior alterations. The wings projecting from the rear of the building's extreme southwest end were connected in 1879 to form an enclosed courtyard.

Over the years, several auxiliary buildings have come and gone. Presently, there is a large, 3-1/2-story (plus basement) brick unit, extending to the southeast from the extreme southern wing, that was constructed around 1935.

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To the rear of the main unit are several brick structures that house specialty sections for patients, as well as such service units as kitchen and dining facilities, laundry, shops, and storage. The latest auxiliary buildings are plaster- or stucco-covered blocks constructed during the 1950s.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D    NHL #4

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Health/Medicine

NHL Theme: XVI. Architecture

M. Period Revival

4. Jacobean

XIII: Science

F: Medicine

1: Clinical

Period of Significance

1858-1881

Significant Dates

1858, 1864

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Richard Snowden Andrews

(1830-1903)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

Since its completion in 1880-81, Weston State Hospital has been one of the largest hand-cut stone masonry buildings in the United States. Begun in 1858 following the design of Richard Snowden Andrews (1830-1903), a Baltimore architect whose commissions included the United States Customhouse in Baltimore; the Governor's Mansion, in Annapolis; and the south wing of the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington, D.C., the construction of "The Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains" went on for the next two decades. The delay was due primarily to interruption by the Civil War, the problems associated with the creation of the new State of West Virginia, and the formidable size of the project itself.

The undertaking proceeded from one end to the other rather than from the central portion to the extremities. Given the changes in architectural taste and fashion during much of the nineteenth century, it is especially noteworthy that the original 1858 plan basically was followed to its completion in 1881.

The Weston Asylum is also one of a small number of nineteenth-century institutions that survive in America to illustrate the great reforms in the treatment of mental patients. The importance of this movement attracted some of the greatest architects of the 19th century in America. The Asylum's plan conformed to the Kirkbride system, named for Dr. Thomas Kirkbride, the Philadelphia physician who first recognized insanity as an illness. Patients could be placed in the great wings of the pavilions with maximum privacy, classified by wards, and provided with quarters that were flooded with light and air. This West Virginia facility, once quite isolated, was also self sufficient and was a model architectural community that operated successfully for over 100 years.

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Not many years before the Civil War there was a change in attitudes on the part of many toward the mentally ill. Among those who helped foster a more humane form of housing and treatment were Dorothea Dix and Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride. The new outlook was soon accompanied by a surge in the construction of institutions in many of the States, and Virginia participated in this by authorizing new facilities, bringing the legislated centers to three in number by 1858. Those at Williamsburg and Staunton were older than the third asylum established at Weston, a new hospital designated under the authority of the Old Dominion not only to serve the State's insane but also to relieve some of the friction and constantly growing political differences between those to the east of the mountains and those to the west. The proposed "Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains" would be the first public institution of any size in transmontane Virginia.

Under the guidance of a board of directors, the plans of Baltimore architect Richard Snowden Andrews were accepted, and work was soon begun on what was intended to be one of the largest and most attractive stone buildings in the United States, work that would continue for more than twenty years. The influx of State funds, a grand building program, skilled labor and a greatly increased market proved a boon to the small community of Weston; economic progress allowed substantial growth in numbers and the quality of life in the area.

For decades before the Civil War there was a building of political tensions between the sections of Virginia separated by the Appalachians. Much of the outward manifestation of the controversy was in the form of requests for additional western representation in government and better internal development. The State had not undertaken the location of any wholly owned and operated institutions west of the mountains, and many must have wondered if there was a fair return on the tax dollar. Pressure from the people of the northwest had been expressed in the desire to have a new hospital for the insane built in the interior, for those at Williamsburg and Staunton were distant and crowded. Finally, on March 22, 1858, the legislature passed "an act authorizing the establishment of the Trans-Alleghany lunatic asylum."

The enabling legislation provided for the appointment of three commissioners--one from the Shenandoah Valley and two from east of the Blue Ridge--to select a suitable site west of the mountains. Sutton in Braxton County, Fayetteville in Fayette County, and Weston in Lewis County were visited, the latter receiving the most favorable report and acceptance by the Governor. A board of nine directors from the Weston area was constituted as a corporate body over "The Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains." With an initial appropriation of \$25,000 they purchased 269 acres of land and commenced to hire an architect and begin a building.

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Representatives of the directors visited several hospitals in other States. The group had plans for a building drawn up by Baltimore architect Richard Snowden Andrews, and the entire project was submitted (as required by the enabling act) to physicians who had charge of similar institutions. The latter task was assigned to Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane at Philadelphia, one of the leading personalities of his day in the theories and practices of treating the mentally ill, and Dr. Francis T. Stribling of the Western Lunatic Asylum of Virginia at Staunton. These gentlemen conferred and made many suggestions which were incorporated into the plans and specifications.

By the late 1850s the physical plant for the housing of the insane was not seen as just a building where the patients could be kept under roof. It was designed for the optimum number of 250. Unlike those places constructed more for the purposes of security and safety, this establishment was to foster the best known concepts of curing the patient. Following the "Kirkbride Plan," the asylum was located in a rural area far away from cities. Patients would be housed among strangers only, discouraged from seeing anyone they knew and loved.

The architect chosen to design the Asylum was Richard Snowden Andrews. Born in Washington, D.C., and educated at Georgetown University, he began his practice during the 1850's in Baltimore, where he designed schools and churches. During the Civil War he served with the Confederate Army.

The first report of the architect, submitted late in 1859, showed great progress in the gathering of materials and preparation of the site. A quarry at Mt. Clare in nearby Harrison County supplied a fine blue sandstone, special equipment was assembled to allow workmen to proceed in a structured manner, artisans were hired for the demanding tasks, and convict labor was brought in for the unskilled jobs. The logistics of construction taxed those in charge; they had to have items brought in from fairly distant railheads, along wagon roads and up the nearby West Fork River. Bricks for interior walls were burned on the site, as sand and clay were easily procured in the vicinity.

By June 28, 1861, the southern one-story wing was under roof, and walls for the connecting three-story section had been begun when the strife of war brought an end to the project as far as Virginia was concerned. An ordinance of that date called for all work to be suspended and the remaining moneys to be returned to the treasury. About \$98,000 had been expended and some \$27,000 was on deposit at the Exchange Bank of Virginia at Weston. The pro-Union reorganized government of Virginia was set up at Wheeling on July 1, 1861, however, and on July 2 a delegation removed the funds to Wheeling, out of the clutches of the secessionist State administration. When the new State of West Virginia was constituted, building was continued, but the name of the institution was changed to the West Virginia Hospital for the Insane.

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It was not until late in 1864 that a portion of the hospital was opened to house patients. By the autumn of 1867 there were 45 persons in the south wing, and many of the State's insane who were being maintained at Virginia's institution at Staunton were finally transferred to Weston in that year. But it was the early 1880s before the main building was completed; by that time additional brick structures housing special functions were already on the grounds. The State seemed unable to provide the space needed for all its mentally ill, and a second hospital was started at Spencer in 1890. What had been ideally designed for 250 patients would hold several times that number for extended periods.

During the early construction stages, the influx of money, men and material had an immediate and beneficial effect (for the most part) on Weston and Lewis County. From a small county-seat community which served surrounding farms, the town grew to a center of activity involved in the financing and building of an institution on a scale not before witnessed in the area. Skilled workers, to cut, haul and place stone; burn and lay brick; do the carpentry work; and saw the lumber, were brought in. The infant timber industry received a great stimulus, and local farmers had a new outlet for cash goods. The professional and common workers at the hospital added to the population and at the same time spurred growth in the number and variety of service-related personnel.

From the beginning the Hospital was largely self-sufficient. They raised their own vegetables on the hospital's farms and maintained a dairy herd. The barn was a well maintained building, with running water. A coal mine nearby supplied fuel for heat, and there was a reservoir for water. All of the patients' clothing, curtains, and fabrics were made at Weston, as well as fine quality mattresses and most of the institutional furniture, thus fulfilling the 19th-century ideal that institutions be self-sustaining and that mental patients learn a trade.

West Virginia Hospital for the Insane had a name change about 1913 to Weston State Hospital, but its functioning as the State's primary mental institution did not change. Overcrowding, a developing attitude that treatment should be directed more to maintenance than to the attempt to rehabilitate, and a continual lack of funds plagued the hospital for many years. New buildings filled as soon as they were completed. New facilities, however, have not marred the original main facility. Currently there are plans to re-use Andrews' great mental hospital west of the Alleghanies.



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 26.5 acres

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>545990</u>	<u>4321070</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>545580</u>	<u>4320810</u>

B	<u>17</u>	<u>545740</u>	<u>4320700</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>17</u>	<u>545810</u>	<u>4321180</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title West Virginia SHPO edited by Carolyn Pitts  
organization NPS date 1/10/90  
street & number 1100 L St., NW telephone (202) 343-8166  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20013

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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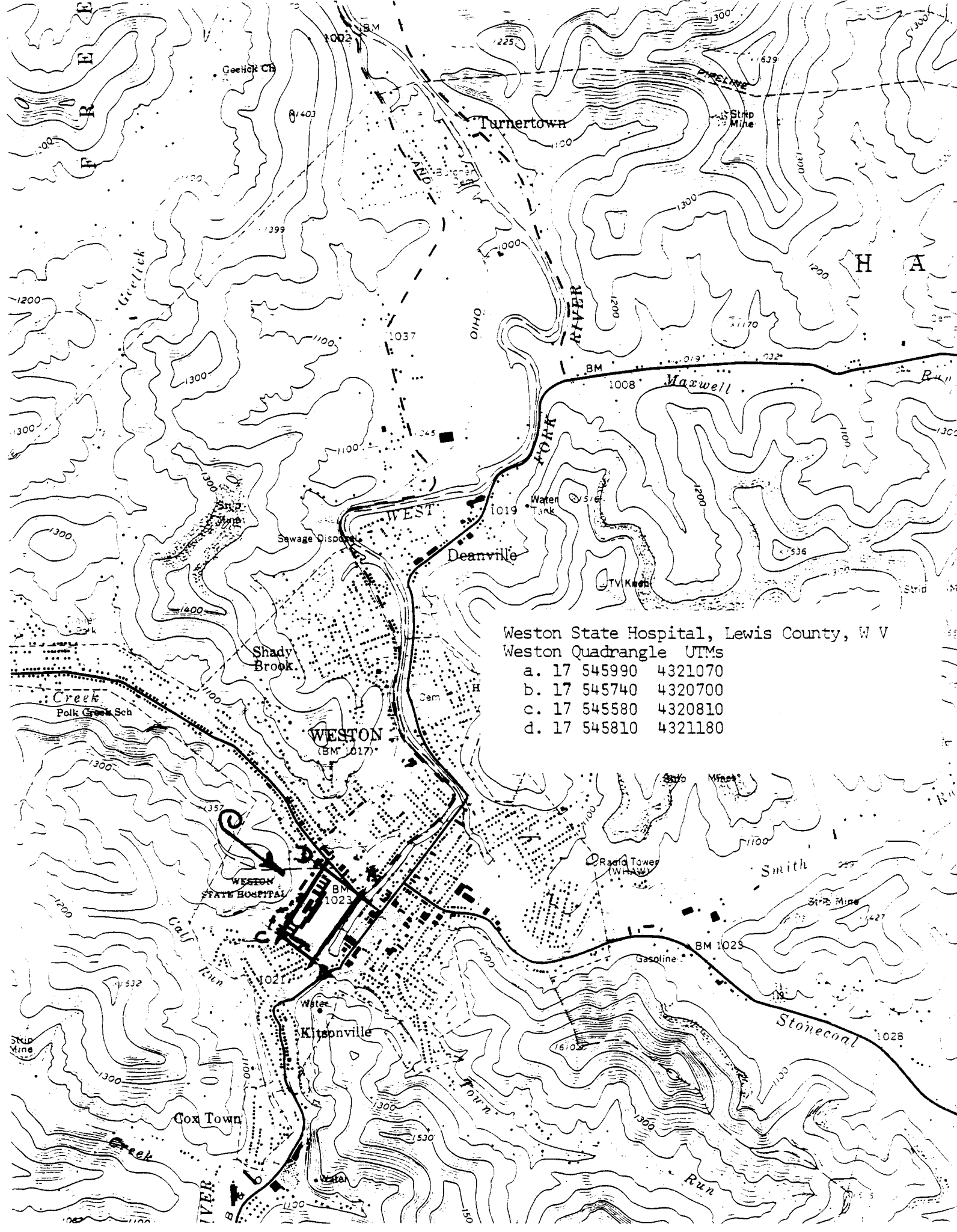
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the intersection of River Street and West Second Street (U.S. Routes 33 and 119) southwest along the west side of River Street to a point about 100 feet south of a line parallel with the far southeast corner of the south, one-story wing of the main building, thence northwesterly on a line parallel with the said wing to a point approximately 100 feet west of the rear of the farthest extension of that wing, and from there northeast to an intersection with the south side of West Second Street (U.S. Routes 33 and 119), thence along the south side of that street to its intersection with River Street.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entirety of the main stone building constructed between 1858 and 1881, all of the projecting wings to its rear, the brick addition of 1935 that is physically attached to the extreme southeastern end, and the grounds extending to the property lines at the front and sides of this complex (bounded by River Street to the east, West Second Street to the north, and the dividing wall or fence to the south).

The large, open expanse to the front and sides of the main building has always served as an entrance courtyard. These grounds have been an integral part of the setting since construction, allowing an unobstructed view of the facade from River Street.



Weston State Hospital, Lewis County, W V  
 Weston Quadrangle UTMs

- a. 17 545990 4321070
- b. 17 545740 4320700
- c. 17 545580 4320810
- d. 17 545810 4321180

