

Area AA — Metropolitan State Hospital

The former Metropolitan State Hospital property is located on a hilltop setting in South Lexington, bordered on the north by Concord Avenue in Lexington and on the south by Trapelo Road in Waltham. Operational from 1929 until 1992 it was one of several state psychiatric institutions serving the Boston metropolitan area. The entire Metropolitan State Hospital property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.



Memorial at old Metropolitan State Hospital Site

The growing need for an additional state hospital for the city of Boston was first voiced at the turn of the 20th century although the state did not allocate the funds to build a second metropolitan psychiatric institution until 1927. That same year 378 acres of farmland in Lexington, Waltham and Belmont was purchased and construction of the sprawling hospital campus was begun. The official opening of the hospital was celebrated on October 29, 1930 although construction of the original seventeen buildings continued until 1935. Some of the later stages were accomplished through the federal Works Progress Administration. At the time of its completion, the \$1.8 million complex was considered the most modern mental health facility in the country. Met State, as it was known, treated patients with both mental health and general health problems.

Most of the buildings in the original campus complex were designed by architect Gordon C. Robb and were Colonial Revival in style, constructed of red brick with concrete and brick trim. Stylistic details included pediments decorated by dentils and brick moldings, brick quoins, molded watertables and lunette windows.





Example of brick quoins.

The buildings located within Lexington included the massive CTG (continuous treatment group) building consisting of eight wings of patient accommodations with a central, secure courtyard for recreation (1927), the domed medical-surgical building (1935), the Kline Hall auditorium (1930), and St. Nicholas Chapel (1935). Resources located in Waltham included the Administration Building (1927), the Female Dormitory (1927), Male Dormitory (1930), Chief Engineer House (1931), the Superintendent House (1934) and the hospital cemetery.

The facility closed in January 1992, part of a broader deinstitutionalization movement that saw the shuttering of most state mental hospitals in Massachusetts and placement of patients in smaller group settings. The entire property remained abandoned and unused for the next fifteen years.

In 2007 the portion of the property in Lexington was transformed into a 387-unit apartment complex known as Avalon at Lexington Hills. A number of the former hospital buildings were incorporated into the new development including the former Kline Hall which now houses marketing offices, Lexington's cable access station, an auditorium and a fitness area. A large concrete relief from the medical-surgical building has been installed outside the building as a memorial to the state hospital.





Converted memorial hospital buildings

The CTG building with its courtyard is a centerpiece of the development and has been totally retrofitted for residential use.



A short distance from the apartment complex, the abandoned and boarded Dr. William McLaughlin Administration Building, just over the line in Waltham, awaits future use.

