

# Homes.com article

## One of New England's remaining industrial roundhouses could have a residential future

The iconic Gas Works building in Northampton, Massachusetts, listed for almost \$2 million

Once an industrial property, this Northampton, Massachusetts, building is on the residential market. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

By [Madeleine D'Angelo](#)

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With its red-brick exterior and circular form, the Gas Works building is a Northampton, Massachusetts, landmark. However, after serving as industrial and office space for the past 150 or so years, the roundhouse could be destined for a residential future.

"I feel like this is such a special building," said Brick & Mortar broker [Shelly Hardy](#), who has the 0.16-acre property listed for \$1.99 million.

Completed in 1856, the Victorian-era structure at [244 Main St.](#) consists of two connected parts: a rectangular section totaling 6,330 square feet and an 11,840-square-foot roundhouse. Initially, the structure was a gas storage and processing facility for [Northampton](#), but it changed hands around 1986, when local engineer Robert Curran purchased, remediated and restored the eclectic structure until it was ready for a parade of office tenants. According to a plaque on the roundhouse, Curran's work preserved one of the last seven such structures in the United States.

Even from above, the distinctive property and its rounded slate roof stand out. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

Since its remediation and remodel in the 1980s, the roundhouse has served as an office building. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

After Curran passed in 1987, his son, Robert Curran Jr., inherited the property, leasing it as an office building to tenants, including an engineering firm, local publications, and a healthcare provider, Hardy detailed.

However, those tenants dried up after the COVID-19 pandemic forced workers to stay home. Having known Hardy since the 80s, Curran Jr. worked with the agent to brainstorm alternative uses for the historic space. Given the structure's beauty and Northampton's appetite for housing, the city has a high concentration of academic residents thanks to nearby colleges such as Smith, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Mount Holyoke — an at-least-partially residential project was "where it felt we could fill a niche," Hardy said.

Aiming to inspire interested buyers, Curran Jr. even hired [Florence, Massachusetts-based Meetinghouse Architecture](#) to design a seven-unit, mixed-use housing plan for the property.

"He just really wanted to show people the vision that he has for [the property]," Hardy said.

The property's round portion boasts exposed beams and a skylight. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

Cubicles from the last tenant remain. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

It's a property that calls to a certain kind of development-minded buyer, Hardy said. According to the listing materials, the Main Street roundhouse has \*three bedrooms and 11 bathrooms; however, the building will require extensive work if a buyer opts for the residential route. Even so, this kind of adaptive reuse wouldn't be foreign to Northampton residents, the broker noted. A trio of former school buildings was transformed into condos a while back, she said, "so I think that people do have an appetite for it."

So far, she's received "a handful" of inquiries, but Hardy suspects "people are digesting the scope of work that's needed here to convert from office to residential." However, the home has very solid structural bones, she noted, with a steel framework, a masonry exterior, and old-growth timber beams throughout, which give the former utility hub a distinctive aesthetic.

"There's a lot of New England charm in Northampton," she explained, "but there's not a lot of the brick-and-steel beam [construction], which people seem to absolutely love."

Interior spaces offer an industrial aesthetic that's a bit rarer in Northampton. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

\*\*A short bridge connects to a walking path. (JefferyB Photography/Clear to Close Media)

**Writer****Madeleine D'Angelo**

Madeleine D'Angelo is a staff writer for Homes.com, focusing on single-family architecture and design. Raised near Washington, D.C., she studied at Boston College and worked at Architect magazine. She dreams of one day owning a home with a kitchen drawer full of Haribo gummies.

**Missprint**

\*Property is currently set up as office space with 6 bathrooms and 2 kitchenettes, no bedrooms. See proposed architect plans (attached).

\*\* Padasrian Bridge connects to Main Street and downtown