

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number
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148; 58, 14A-8	Mt. Toby	E	AMH. 145
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: Amherst

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Lincoln-Sunset National Register District

Address: 26 Sunset Ave

Historic Name: George B. Burnett House

Uses: Present: Single-Family Residence

Original: Single-Family Residence

Date of Construction: 1912

Source: *American Architect* 106: No. 2015 ; Sanborn maps

Style/Form: Tudor Revival/Arts and Crafts

Architect/Builder: Karl Putnam; landscape Wm Punchard

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: Stucco; Wood

Roof: Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 5.21 acres

Setting: This house occupies an extremely large lot in a settled residential area.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Steve Bloom/Suzannah Fabing

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): November 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

26 Sunset Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

E

AMH.145

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This Tudor Revival house features a stucco exterior and asymmetrical massing. Side-gabled with a secondary façade gable, the house has an entry door with diamond-shaped leaded panes beneath an arched entry hood. Diamond leaded windows in a variety of sizes add to the picturesque charm of this "ivy-covered cottage." The architect, Karl Scott Putnam, was enchanted with the Arts and Crafts style for a few years after studying architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University. Original landscape plans by William H. Pynchard of Boston, dated 1925, are extant, and the trellis, arbor and gardens on this large parcel are exceptional.

****SELECTED FOR NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT (2/22/1993)****

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This house was built for George Brinton Burnett (1888-1951), the son of William Burnett (8 Sunset Avenue; AMH.148). The Burnett family operated the most productive hat factory in Amherst at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. George inherited and ran the factory after his father's demise. The house is indicated on the 1916 Sanborn map.

George Burnett grew up next door, at 8 Sunset. His mother died when he was a teenager, but the household included many siblings and several servants, one of whom, in the 1910 census, was a cook described as "mulatto." George was a member of the class of 1910 at Amherst College and married (Lavinia) Blanche Phillips (1889-1981) in 1911. The newlyweds must have started the process of building this house right away. The hat factory closed in 1936, and George retired, but the couple lived at 26 Sunset until near the end of his life. They were still there in the 1950 City Directory, although he died the next year in Florida. They had one son, George, Jr. (1913-1982), who became a teacher. In most US Census counts, there was a servant in their household. Blanche Burnett remained in Amherst for some time after George Sr.'s death. She is recorded as living at 30 Boltwood Avenue in 1954. She died in Walpole, MA.

Karl Scott Putnam, the architect of 26 Sunset, was the son of architect Roswell Field Putnam, who had already built houses on North Prospect, Sunset and Lincoln avenues. Born in Leverett in 1883, he earned a B.S. in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1910 and also studied at Columbia. He came to Northampton as a practicing architect in 1913, although he had had a nominal partnership with his father as R.F. Putnam and Son earlier. This house must have been one of his first undertakings. He taught architecture at Smith College from 1930 to 1952 and helped establish a master's degree program there in architecture and landscape architecture, in conjunction with the Cambridge School of Architecture. He died in 1965; his papers are in the Smith College Archives. During his career he entered into several partnerships: Taylor and Putnam in 1919; Ames, Putnam & Dodge of Boston in the 1920s and 1930s, and Putnam and Cox. These firms were responsible for the Jones Library (AMH.249), the Lord Jeffery Inn (AMH.488), and the Munson Library in South Amherst (AMH.616), among Amherst landmarks, as well as many residential, ecclesiastical and academic buildings throughout the Pioneer Valley.

Between Amity and Elm streets, Sunset Avenue was laid out about 1887 but only slowly developed as large houses with spacious yards were built. The houses on the west side of Sunset were built after the houses on the east side. These larger houses had residents who were industrialists, college residents, writers and teachers. Another Arts and Crafts-inspired house stands at 118 Sunset, designed by James H. Ritchie of Boston (AMH.140).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

26 Sunset Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

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AMH.145

Sanborn maps, 1902, 1916

Amherst City Directories

US Census, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940

American Architect, Vol. 106: no. 2015 (August 5, 1914), unpaginated plates: Two photographs of the newly completed house and floor plans.

Hirth, Gillian, December 1972 student paper for Paul Norton, UMass. Property of Prof. Norton.

National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Lincoln-Sunset Historic District, Amherst, section 7, p. 11.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Form B (1988), online in the MACRIS database.

Amherst College alumni biographies, consulted online November 17, 2015.

Biographical information on George B. Burnett and Blanche Phillips Burnett online at ancestry.com, consulted November 2015. See also, on the Burnett family, Lockwood, John H., ed. *Western Massachusetts: a History 1636-1925*. 4 vols. 1926. Vol. 4, pp. 844-845.