

# FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES  
BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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**Town/City:** Amherst

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Amherst

**Address:** 156 Sunset Avenue

**Historic Name:**

**Uses:** Present: Two-family residence

Original: Single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** 1953-54

**Source:** Amherst Street Lists

**Style/Form:** modified Cape, extended to ranch

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: artificial clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
one-car garage (attached)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):  
addition 2012  
converted to two-family 2006

**Condition:** fair

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** .82 acre

**Setting:** Near the southern edge of the University of Massachusetts campus. The lot falls off sharply to the west.

Photograph



Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Suzannah Fabing

**Organization:** LHDSC

**Date** (*month / year*): March 2016

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

156 Sunset Avenue

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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AMH.

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.*

The original one-story house has been added to, with a small garage at its northeast corner and an expansion to the west, at basement level but above grade because the land falls off sharply. These changes facilitated converting it into a two-family residence in 2006.

## 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.*

No house is listed at this address in Amherst Street Lists prior to 1954. In that year, Ralph J. Watts and his wife Edna K. Watts, were in residence. They had moved to Amherst from Appleton, Wisconsin, the previous year. Ralph Jerome Watts (b. 1885) graduated from MAC in 1907, with training in chemistry. For many years he served as Secretary to the Board of Trustees of the college. In the 1930s and 1940s he was Business Manager of Lawrence College in Appleton. The couple returned to Amherst to live upon his retirement. Edna K. Watts (1882-1974), a septuagenarian homemaker and presumably a widow, is listed at 156 Sunset in Street Lists of 1955 and following. The next owners, Victor A. and Elizabeth D. Velen, acquired the property in 1975, following her death.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Amherst street lists 1950-1957

Amherst City Directories

Amherst property card 2015, citing deeds: Hampshire County Registry of Deeds, Book 1125/102 (to Edna K. Watts) and Book 1840/81 (to Velen).