

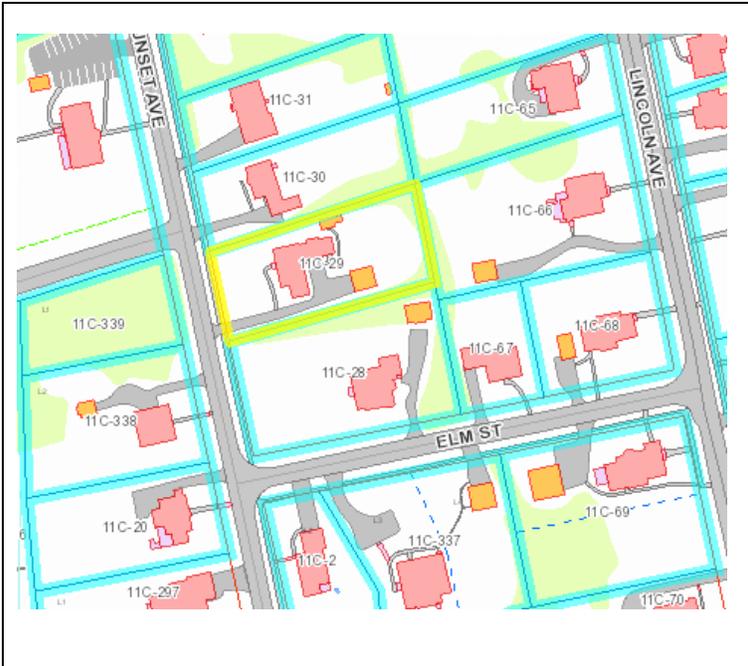
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Suzannah Fabing

Organization: LHDSC

Date (month / year): March 2016

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

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Town/City: Amherst

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Amherst

Address: 103 Sunset Avenue

Historic Name: L. Leland Dudley House

Uses: Present: Single-family residence

Original: Single-family residence

Date of Construction: c. 1938

Source: city directories

Style/Form: Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: William Gass

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/wood

Roof: slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Garage (1985); shed (1996)

Major Alterations (with dates):

Condition: very good

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

Acreage: .56 acre

Setting: On a tree-lined residential street, this house is surrounded by carefully landscaped grounds.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

103 SUNSET AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

E

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.

This classic 1 ½-story Cape features an off-center front door and two upstairs dormers on the west façade. An extension to the south is lower in height but includes a finished attic. According to Town of Amherst records, the house was built by William Gass, a contractor from South Deerfield known for authentic recreations of older homes that respected their proportions and materials.

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 street address enters the record with the 1938 City Directory, in which it is the residence of L. Leland Dudley and his wife, Virginia (née Bartlett). The 1940 US Census shows them there with their two teenage children, Bartlett and Nancy. Lofton Leland Dudley (b. 1895) came to Amherst from Belmont, MA, to serve as Superintendent of Schools. He was the author of several studies of city school systems. The Bartletts were still living at this address in 1950.

William Gass and his sons made a profession of building houses of historic New England type, many incorporating materials from authentic early houses taken down in the late 1920s in anticipation of creation of the Quabbin Reservoir. Five towns were submerged by the new reservoir. In a few cases, Gass dismantled entire houses and reconstructed them elsewhere. Writing in 1946, W. R. Brown observed,

“Much, if not most of the changes in style of Amherst houses has been due to the activities of the Colonial Construction Company of South Deerfield of which William Gass, Senior, was the prime mover.

This concern built fifty-two houses in Amherst, most of them similar in type yet no two are alike. More than half of them are “Cape-Codish.” That is, gable-roofed, with very little overhang of eaves, and no cornice at the ends. A striking and appropriate feature of all the Gass houses is the big topped, usually central, chimney. In the old brick oven and fire-place heating days, big chimneys were necessary. Now they are made big only where they are conspicuous. That is, from the roof up, thereby adding an air of antiquity to the buildings.

The Gass houses and those of a similar type made by other builders are low studded, averaging about seven feet and six inches, between floor and ceiling, and they are, when properly insulated, easy to heat and are designed to be run without servants to meet the exigencies of the times.

The Gass boys bought a lot of old houses from the Quabbin district which they took down and used the material in several Amherst buildings. In the house Robert Gass built for himself at 166 Triangle Street, he used practically all “old stuff” excepting for heating and plumbing, and as a result has a genuine antique.

The Loy house on Pokeberry Ridge, the King house on Lincoln Avenue and the Ellert house on Blue Hills Road were likewise made mostly of old timber....”

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

US Census 1940

Amherst City Directories

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

103 SUNSET AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Town of Amherst Property Card 2016

Brown, W. R. "Changing Style of Homes," *Amherst Record*, 4 March 1946. A clipping of this article is found in Vol. 3 of the W. R. Brown scrapbooks, p. 18, in the Jones Library Special Collections.

Conversation with Jacquelyn Tuthill, 25 September 2016. Tuthill has been doing research on the "Quabbin Houses." She reports that there are three of Gass's "board-for-board" reconstructions of houses from the Quabbin in Amherst, none of them in the North Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset LHD: 152 Triangle Street, 41 Lincoln Avenue, and a third on Blue Hills Road. Her research shows that the firm bought parts of 250 Quabbin houses for reuse.