

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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Photograph



Town/City: Amherst

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Amherst

Address: 53 Sunset Avenue

Historic Name: Howard and Helen French house

Uses: Present: Single-Family Residence

Original: Single-Family Residence

Date of Construction: c.1941

Source: City Directories

Style/Form: Cape Cod

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: poured concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingle

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Attached one-bay garage on north end of house.

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1995, addition to the south with new master bedroom and screened-in porch. 2004, kitchen expanded, lavatory and laundry room added on the first floor. 2013, the porch was enclosed.

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .47 acres

Setting: Residential

Locus Map



Recorded by: Steve Bloom/Suzannah Fabing

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): March 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

53 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.

Originally a three-bedroom house with one bathroom--on the second floor--and a one-car garage, this classic cape has been enlarged and modified. A small open porch encloses the original front door. It has a closed front gable and balusters on the sides. There are two 6/6 windows on either side of the original front door on the main floor, and one gabled dormer with window above each pair on the second floor. The addition to the south of the main house has two 6/6 windows on the west side. The new front door is to the right of the garage.

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.

Rev. Howard Dean French (b. ca 1873), a retired Congregational minister, and his wife, Helen (née Cornell), are shown living at this address in City Directories from 1942 through 1951. They had been living at today's 46 Sunset for a few years prior to that. Helen had attended Smith College and was described as "interested in all church activities. Favors women suffrage" in a *Woman's Who's Who* of 1914. Roy E. Moser and his wife Rebecca S. are listed at 53 Sunset in the 1954 and 1960 City Directories. He was an extension economist in farm management at the State College (later UMass). In 1967 they sold the house to Milton and Helen Brooke.

A large number of what W. R. Brown called "Cape Codish" houses were built in Amherst during the 1940s, several on Sunset Avenue and Blue Hills Road. The trend probably began when William Gass of South Deerfield began building houses reminiscent of those flooded when the Quabbin Reservoir was created in the late 1920s. Gass incorporated parts of historic houses taken down before the flooding into his new renditions of those historic New England house types. Other builders soon followed the Cape trend.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Leonard, John W. *Woman's Who's Who of America* (1914), p. 308.

Amherst City Directories.

Amherst Street Lists.

Interview with present owner Kenneth Rosenthal, 2016.

Conversation with Jacquelyn Tuthill, 25 September 2016. She has been doing research on the Gass firm and has discovered that it bought parts of 250 Quabbin houses.

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