

FORM B – BUILDING

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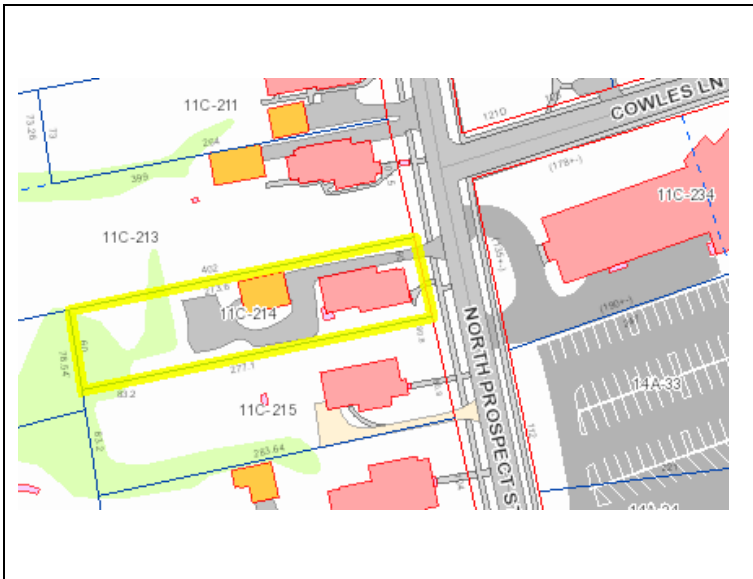
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map



Town/City: Amherst

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Prospect-Gaylord National Register District

Address: 44 N Prospect St.

Historic Name: Merrick M. Marsh House

Uses: Present: Offices for nonprofit organizations
Original: Rental Residence

Date of Construction: c. 1858

Source: *Hampshire & Franklin Express*, 4 June 1858

Style/Form: Victorian vernacular

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Carriage Barn (now garage), c 1858 (AMH.1243)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .43 acres

Setting: On a tree-lined residential street. The town parking lot and St. Brigid's parish hall are across the street. The house has a deep back yard.

Recorded by: Suzannah Fabing

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): May 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

44 North Prospect St.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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AMH.221

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 2 ½- story house has a prominent front-gable roof with intersecting bay, and a full-width veranda along the east facade. Its side-hall plan follows the standard builders' form popular in Amherst c.1830-1880. It is closely related to #58 and #62 North Prospect Street in set-back, scale, proportion and fenestration; however, this example has a double leaf door and no sidelights. Pilasters stand on either side of the door, and there are decorative brackets above it. A lunette window adorns the front gable. The rear portion of the house is one story high, stepping up to two.

The two-bay carriage barn (AMH.1243), located at the rear (west) of the residence, was probably built at the same time as the house. It has a stone foundation and clapboard siding. The barn faces east and is capped by a front-gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles. There is a wood sliding door in the east façade, with a four-panel wood door above it providing access to the loft.

The dwelling is part of the Prospect-Gaylord Historic District and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 4 February 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.

There was a lane on the 1833 map, apparently to the west of the present North Prospect Street, running north from Amity Street and then east about where Cowles Lane is today. At mid-century Osmyn Baker bought the Rufus Cowles farm. He and Lewis Delano, who owned the 1825 John Emerson Strong house on Amity (where The Perry is now), decided to put in a new road east of that house. Initially it reached north only to what became Cowles Lane. Baker sold 108 rods in 1858 to Enos D. Williams, which probably included much of the land on which this house now stands. He sold much of the old farm to Leavitt Hallock, who put in the rest of the street and Hallock Street. Leavitt Hallock sold a few more rods of land--the remainder of the lot at today's #44-- to Williams in 1858.

This is one of the first houses to be built on North Prospect Street. *The Hampshire and Franklin Express* noted in June 1858 that Enos D. Williams was building two houses to rent on "the new street lately opened to the public by Mr. Hallock...presenting the finest views our town affords." The 1860 map shows two houses near the intersection of Cowles Lane and North Prospect, occupied by J. L. Lovell, a photographer, and D. Lord, a carriage trimmer. These houses appear to be 44 North Prospect Street and the twin houses then on the lot at what is today #38 North Prospect (no longer extant). Williams sold a property to Merrick M. Marsh (1822-1905) on March 29, 1861. That is probably this house, since the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* of 5 October 1860, p. 2, reported that "M.M. Marsh has purchased the dwelling house recently occupied by J. L. Lovell." Merrick had purchased an established cabinet wareroom from Hiram Fox in 1845. For a time around 1863 he partnered with brothers Thomas and Jeremiah Young, who were also near neighbors on North Prospect Street, in a furniture firm called Marsh and Young. (This firm was revived briefly in 1879, with Edwin D. Marsh and J. J. Young as principals.)

The 1873 Beers map shows C. Marsh as owner of the property; Cornelia Marsh was Merrick's daughter-in-law, married to his son Edwin D. (It was common to put property in a woman's name in the 19th century, to protect it in case of a business bankruptcy.) Both generations of the Marsh family were cabinetmakers, furniture dealers and undertakers in Amherst and lived together for a time at 44 North Prospect (called 34 Prospect in early city directories and later 16 North Prospect). The business, called Marsh & Son (M.M.M. & Son) and after 1886 E.D. Marsh Furniture Dealer and Undertaker, was located at 10 Phoenix

Continuation sheet 1

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Row. The 1880 Census lists Merrick, his wife Louisa, and his son and family next to the Deuels, who were then living at today's #52, although no street addresses are given.

Edwin and Cornelia Marsh built a house next door, at 38 North Prospect, in 1890. City Directories from 1896 to 1903 show Merrick M. Marsh living at what is today 44 North Prospect. The 1900 U.S. Census shows Merrick, his wife Louisa, a servant and a widowed lodger living there.

For much of the first half of the twentieth century, the house was used as a rental property. In 1910 Rev. Donald C. McFayden, Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, and his wife Edith were renters there, along with another couple, Charles and Emily Howd. Charles Howd was employed as a cutter in a pocketbook factory. Rev. McFayden, a Canadian, served for only a few years at Grace Church. In 1920, the Howds shared the property with Freeman Dickinson (1892-1941) and his wife Charlotte, and in 1930 Emily Howd shared the property with Harold S. Hintze and his wife Alice. Harold was employed as a superintendent at the gas company. The property changed hands numerous times during the late twentieth century.

In 1986 the building was converted into offices for the Peace Development Fund. The owners donated it to the charity in 1994. It currently houses this and other non-profit organizations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Hampshire and Franklin Express, 4 June 1858, p. 2.

1860 Map published by H. F. Walling, New York

1873 Beers Atlas map, revised.

Hampshire County Registry of Deeds, book 180/464-5 and 465-6, both 22 January 1858, a quitclaim deed from O. Baker and deed from L. Hallock to Enos D. Williams; book 181/107-8, L. Hallock to Enos D. Williams, 16 Sept 1858, 12 rods north of the preceding; book 200/45, Enos Williams to M. M. Marsh, \$1300, 29 March 1861. (Thanks to Ed Wilfert for deed research.)

Hampshire and Franklin Express, 5 October 1860, p. 2 "M.M. Marsh has purchased the dwelling house recently occupied by J. L. Lovell."

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Prospect Gaylord Historic District, Amherst (1992), section 8, pp. 11, 12, 16.

U.S. Census, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930

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

Massachusetts Historical Commission Inventory, Form B Continuation Form, May 2014, for both house and barn.

Amherst City Directories, 1869-1903.

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The rear of the house at 44 N Prospect can be seen at the right of this photograph of 32 N. Prospect, in the John L. Lovell Collection at the Jones Library, Amherst, Special Collections. The library dates the photograph to c. 1870.