

# 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*):

Prospect-Gaylord National Register District

**Address:** 57 North Prospect St.

**Historic Name:** Mrs. Martha E. Swift House

**Uses:** Present: Two-Family Residence

Original: Single-Family Residence

**Date of Construction:** c. 1869

**Source:** Deed from Stratton to Swift, 1869

**Style/Form:** Italianate

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: asbestos shingle with wood trim

Roof: metal

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

2-story carriage house, 1902-10.

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

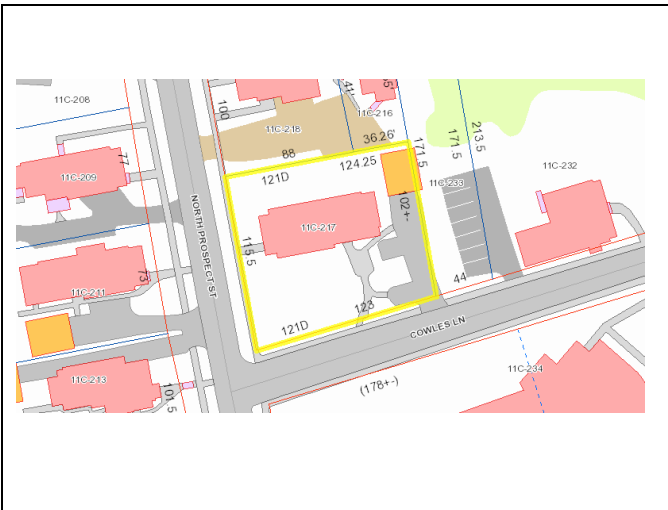
**Condition:** good

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

**Acreage:** .3 acres

**Setting:** At the corner of North Prospect Street and Cowles Lane, in a residential neighborhood of Victorian houses.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Suzannah Fabing

**Organization:** LHDSC

**Date** (*month / year*): May 2015

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

57 NORTH PROSPECT ST.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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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 is a two-story, wood frame Italianate style residence with attic. A veranda runs the length of the North Prospect Street façade. A slightly lower two-story wing projects from the rear (east) in two extensions. The shallowly pitched hipped roof with bracketed wide over-hanging eaves, the chamfered porch supports and molded hoods above the window openings are typical of the Italianate style. An applied decoration of lozenges and rings ornaments the spaces between small rectangular windows under the eaves. The house has been converted into a two-family, one unit being entered from North Prospect Street and the other from Cowles Lane.

The carriage barn is located to the rear (east) of the residence, facing south. It is of wood clapboard, on a stone foundation; it has a front-gable slate roof. A sliding track door of bead-board in the south facade provides access, and a bead-board door above it gives onto the loft. There are two 6/6 windows in its north façade.

This is one of a number of impressive Italianate residences in the area around North Prospect/Lincoln/Sunset. Other examples include 74 and 82 North Prospect.

This property is part of the Prospect-Gaylord Historic District, which was designated a National Register Historic District 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.*

The lot on which this house stands was part of Dr. Rufus Cowles's farm at the turn of the nineteenth century. Much of the farm north of today's Cowles Lane was bought by Leavitt Hallock in the mid-1850s. Hallock extended North Prospect Street from Cowles Lane (then called Maple Street) to Hallock Street and divided his portion into building lots. This lot of 47 rods, however, was sold by Levi D. Cowles to Rufus Stratton on Feb. 20, 1867 for \$1000 (Book 240/365). Two years later, Stratton sold the property to Martha Swift for \$7,000, a price that suggests that the house must have been erected on it by then. Stratton may have lived in it briefly, prior to building a house at 94 North Prospect in which he lived for decades.

This house appears on the 1873 Beers map as the Mrs. Swift residence. The 1870 US census and the 1873 city directory indicate that a widow, Martha E. Swift (b. 1821), was residing in Amherst at the time, along with her three sons, William J. (b. 1852), John B. (b. 1853) and George M. (b. 1857). Since the census listing is near the Deuels and Emeline Williams, who are associated with 52 and 58 North Prospect, it is probable that Mrs. Swift was living at #57 in 1870, even though the 1870 census of Amherst does not give street addresses. She does not appear in the 1869 City Directory. She may have moved to the area from Brooklyn NY because of Amherst College (both older boys appear to have been members of the class of 1873, and George was in the class of 1876). Mrs. Swift, whose late husband William had been considerably older (b. 1779), was a woman of means. The 1870 census records her as owning \$10,000 worth of real estate and a personal estate of \$50,000. According to this census, the family kept an Irish servant, another servant, and had a teacher as a boarder (or perhaps tutor?).

Martha Swift had returned to Brooklyn by the time of the 1880 Census. Reverend George Lyman, who had retired from a Congregational ministry in South Amherst in 1873, owned the house [when?]. In 1883 Mrs. Emma Owen Buffam conducted a preparatory school for young women there (it later moved to Lessey Street). The Octagon, on the corner lot across Cowles

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Lane (1855; no longer extant), was also a school – for children—operated by the Howland sisters. The town's first kindergarten was opened there in 1879 by Miss E.M. Munsell.

In 1900 the property at 57 North Prospect was owned by house cleaner Allen E. Pierce (b. 1853) and his wife Lydia (b. 1853). The Pierces continued to reside there in 1910. In 1926, Elizabeth Rogers purchased the property from the executor of Lydia Pierce's estate. Elizabeth and her husband John, a dentist, retained the property for over fifty years; she sold the property in 1978 to Jacob and Shirley Roseman.

Sanborn maps indicate that the barn was constructed between 1902 and 1910, while the property was under the ownership of Allen E. Pierce.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1873 Beers Atlas map

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

National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Prospect Gaylord Historic District, Amherst MA (1992), section 8, pp. 12, 14, 17.

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Form B Update (2014).

Sanborn maps, 1902, 1910

U.S. Census 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910.

Amherst College Biographical Record, accessed at

<http://www3.amherst.edu/~rjyanco94/genealogy/acbiorecord/1873.html#swift-wj> May 25, 2015.

Edward W. Carpenter and Charles Frederick Morehouse, *The History of the Town of Amherst* (Amherst, MA: 1896), pp. 220, 275.

Amherst City Directory, 1873

Hampshire County Registry of Deeds, Book 240/365, Levi Cowles to Rufus Stratton, 20 Feb. 1867, \$1000; 263/130, Rufus Stratton to Martha Swift, 1869, \$7000; 2071/126, Elizabeth Rogers to Shirley Roseman, 1978. Thanks to Ed Wilfert for deed research.

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Barn at 57 North Prospect