

# 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:** 18 North Prospect Street

**Historic Name:** Charles F. Morehouse House

**Uses:** Present: Two-family Residence

Original: Single-family Residence

**Date of Construction:** 1896-97

**Source:** *Springfield Daily Republican*, 31 December 1896,  
p. 11

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboard/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Garage c. 1920

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

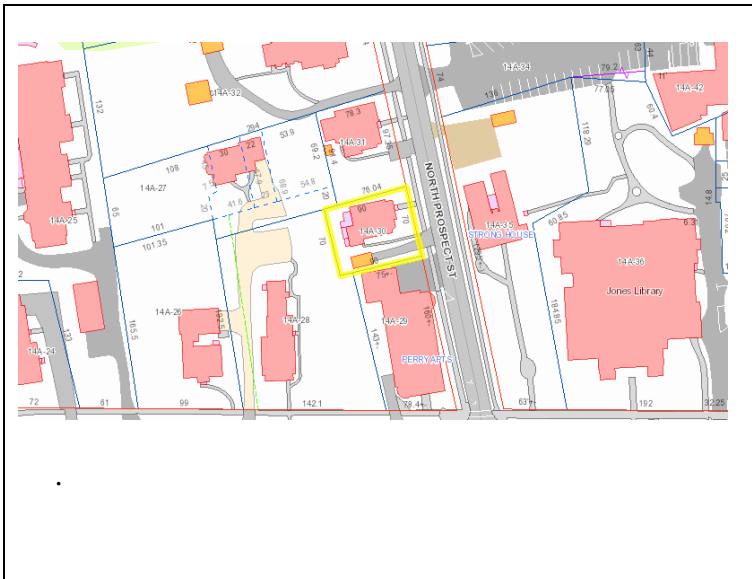
**Condition:** Excellent

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

**Acreage:** less than one acre

**Setting:** Near town center, across the street from the Amherst Historical Society (Strong House) and near Jones Library. The house has a small front yard, with limited land around the sides and rear.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Suzannah Fabing

**Organization:** LHDSC

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

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

18 N. Prospect St

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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AMH.201

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 three-story gambrel-roofed house has a prominent polygonal bay to the left of the front door that continues up all three stories and pierces the roofline, creating the effect of a "tower" capped by a tent roof, whereas, in actuality, it becomes an intersecting gable. A rounded bay on the south façade rises for two stories. The side-hall plan places the front door at the north end of the N. Prospect St. façade, approached from a veranda. A large stained-glass window with floral design, in the north façade, lights the stair. There is a small lunette window in the gable, and the upper band of windows in the tower has diamond lights in the upper sashes. The variety of sizes and shapes of windows is typical of Queen Anne design.

This is one of several large Queen Anne-style homes in the Prospect-Lincoln-Sunset neighborhood, built in the 1880s and 1890s. Exposed rafter ends under the eaves, delicate mullions in the uppermost windows, and the lunette windows evoke the Colonial Revival style beginning to come into fashion in the latter half of the 1890s.

The one-car garage dates from approximately 1920

This house is part of the Prospect/Gaylord National Register Historic District, established in February 1992.

## 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.*

John Emerson Strong built a house in 1825 on land lying at what is today the NW corner of Amity and N. Prospect streets (much later the site of The Perry). The 1833 map shows a lane running west of this house, north and then east about where Cowles Lane lies today. At mid-century, Lewis Delano owned the J.E. Strong house, and Osmyn Baker bought Dr. Rufus Cowles's farm, which occupied the area to its north. Delano and Baker decided to put in a new road east of the J.E. Strong/Delano house, which became North Prospect Street. Initially, it reached north only to Cowles Lane, but Leavitt Hallock, to whom Baker sold much of the Cowles farm property north of Cowles Lane, completed the street. The first houses were erected in 1855-1860 near the intersection with Cowles Lane.

Melvina Lessey (1846-1884; widow of the builder C.W. Lessey) bought the  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre property on the corner of Amity and N. Prospect from Levi Stockbridge in 1880. Following her death, Flora (b. 18 Jan 1871) and George Hanson Lessey (b. 8 June 1875), children of C.W. and Melvina, sold the lot between today's #24 N. Prospect and the corner building to Myra Morehouse, without a building on it, in June 1896.

According to the *Springfield Daily Republican*, 31 December 1896, p. 11, in its year-end wrap-up of building news in Western Massachusetts, Mrs. Charles F. Morehouse's house was in construction, and its cost was \$4000. The completion date is likely, therefore, to be 1897.

Charles Frederick Morehouse (1859-1933), a partner in the Carpenter and Morehouse Press and editor of *The Amherst Record*, married Myra G. Camp in 1894. The couple must have moved into this house in 1897. He was still living there in 1930, according to the U.S. Census, although Myra had died in 1918. Morehouse co-authored the authoritative *History of the Town of*

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*Amherst, Massachusetts*, with Edward B. Carpenter (1896). Carpenter lived a few streets away, at 91 Sunset. Morehouse's sister, Alice Morehouse Walker, lived at 166 Lincoln Avenue in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

According to Frank Prentice Rand, Morehouse enlivened the *Amherst Record* "with personal news in abundance, shrewd editorial comment upon national affairs, and tidbits of acrid wit...In both news columns and editorials he achieved variety and lightness by virtue of a playful and pithy style of writing..." Toward the end of his life, Rand reports, Morehouse "became obsessed by fear of accident, and he finally became virtually a recluse in his North Prospect Street home. His editorial thrusts, however, never ceased to be trenchant."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

*National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* for the Prospect-Gaylord Neighborhood (1992), section 8, pp 14-15.

Amherst City Directories, 1886 and following

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

Hampshire County Registry of Deeds, Book 354/199, Levi Stockbridge to Melvina Lessey, 1 April 1880; 488/53-54, Flora and George Lessey to Myra Morehouse, 29 June 1896. Thanks to Ed Wilfert for deed research.

Research of local historian Ed Wilfert; personal communication 2014.

*Springfield Daily Republican*, 31 December 1896, p. 11

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

Rand, Frank Prentice. *The Village of Amherst: a Landmark of Light*. Amherst: Amherst Historical Society, 1958, pp. 210-211.

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