

FORM B – BUILDING

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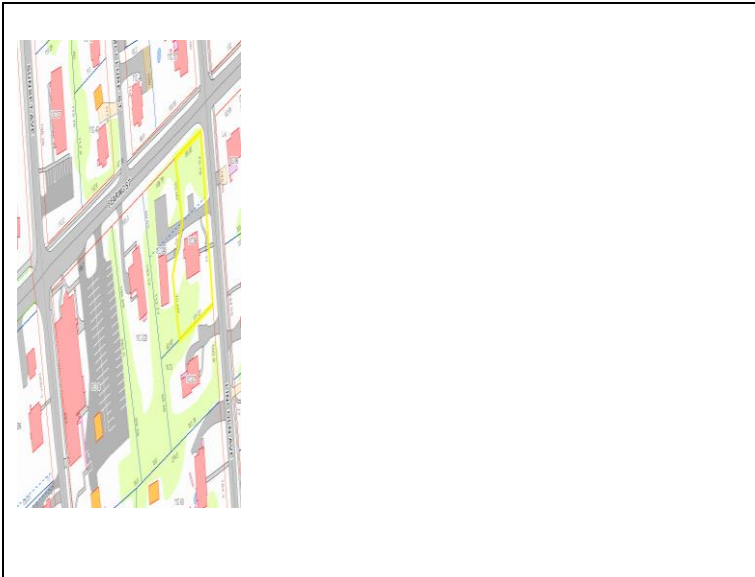
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map



Town/City: Amherst

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Lincoln-Sunset National Register District

Address: 290 Lincoln Avenue

Historic Name: Warren and Edna Brown House

Uses: Present: Single-Family Residence

Original: Single-Family Residence

Date of Construction: 1910

Source: town property records

Style/Form: Dutch Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: stucco, masonry/wood trim

Roof: asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

A historic barn on the property was demolished in 2013.

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .41 acres

Setting: Rural college town. This house occupies an irregular corner lot at the intersection with Fearing Street.

Recorded by: E. Gouin/S. Fabing/P.Stacey

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): April 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

290 LINCOLN AVE

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.

Two-story Dutch colonial home with gambrel roof and horizontal emphasis. Clad in stucco with wood trim. Two chimneys, one just left of center and the other on the right (north) end. Front door is also slightly left of center. Large shed dormers extend nearly the length of the roofline and bring light to the second floor. A porch extends the length of the Lincoln Avenue façade, featuring slender Doric columns and a shallow slat balustrade. Five steps with wooden railings lead up to the front door. Windows on first floor are triple and unevenly spaced, while the second floor windows are double and aligned over those on the story below. The barn (demolished in 2013) matched the brown stucco wood trim coloring, but reflected a chalet style with balcony.

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.

Warren R. Brown (1873-1957), a native of New Hampshire, married Edna M. Belliveau (1889-1975) in Amherst in 1909. Tax records show that the barn at 290 Lincoln was built before Brown had the house built. The barn's siding (prior to its 2013 demolition) was original and its Swiss Chalet style (with balcony) was a style popular at the turn of the century. The Swiss Chalet style of both barn and (less so) of house mirrors the romantic style of architecture of the house diagonally across Lincoln and Fearing at 109 Fearing, in keeping with the Arts and Crafts Movement at the turn of the century through 1910, which is when the barn and then the house were built.

Warren R. Brown constructed and lived in the house at 290 Lincoln for half of a century. He was celebrated in his own time and is responsible for a significant contribution to the life and history of Amherst as an essayist. "His Comments were quoted," Eli Marsh says of Warren R. Brown. "He was a remarkable person in the community." (p. 239 of Essays on Amherst's History). According to Historical Society member Fred Luddy, who lived in Amherst when Warren R. Brown was alive, Brown was a "ubiquitous character," "larger than life" "To get a sense of what a significant figure Warren R. Brown was in Amherst --and this is a fact every child knew -- you'd have to know his telephone number. It was "1."

Historians Doris Abramson and Robert C. Townsend in *Essays on Amherst's History*, compare Warren R. Brown to Calvin Coolidge in his influence on Amherst's "communal self-consciousness." In addition, Amherst historians also place Brown within a "community" of thinkers, drawing parallels between "Alexander Meikeljohn, Kenyon Butterfield, Ray Stannard Baker and Warren R. Brown." The historians note that Warren R. Brown "provided through his columns, correspondence, and talks, not only subjects

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of interest concerning a place and a period, but evidence of the play of a lively mind over those subjects.” More than once the historians liken his thinking and contribution to other great minds of his day, thinkers who were responsible for positioning Amherst and influencing Amherst toward, among other values, a refined social liberalism.

Brown did not just define Amherst in his writing and thinking about the town; he lived the ethos he wrote about and he also helped create and continue it. He was brought up on a farm and when he moved to Amherst naturally built barn and then his a house, and wrote about livestock, animals, dogs, rare wildlife and plants and livestock as well as about war, pacifism, and social topics. Brown was a close friend of Robert Frost, who visited often and sought his advice (Brown was also a realtor) before moving into a house a block away at 43 Sunset. Frost wrote to Brown on November 7, 1931, that “We think Dr Goodell [the owner of 43 Sunset] is giving in and you are getting us a house cheap and we are much pleased by our bargain” (letter in the Jones Special Collections). The two occasionally signed their letters in friendship as “O[ld] M[an] Brown” and “OM Frost.” The Brown-Frost correspondence was bequeathed by the Brown family to the Jones Library Special Collections.

Warren Brown’s 290 Lincoln Avenue address first appears in Amherst City Directories in 1911. The Browns raised three sons there. Warren Brown was a principal in W.R. Brown & Co., an insurance and real estate firm on South Pleasant Street. Alma and then Jeffrey Brown are listed as owners of 290 Lincoln until 1976 when the house was sold by Edna Brown’s estate. Since then it has had a succession of owners and in 2012 became a rental property

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

U.S. Census, 1920, 1930, 1940.

Amherst City Directories, 1911 and following.

Town of Amherst property records.

Amherst directories 1911 ff.

Biographical information on Warren and Edna Brown on ancestry.com, consulted 10 September 2016.

Minutes of public hearing regarding demolition of the barn, Amherst Historical Commission, 5 February 2013, online at amherst.gov, and other documents cited therein.

Poore, P. "The Swiss Chalet, 1885 - 1910." *Arts Crafts Homes and the Revival RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Jan. 2013).

Greene, T.P. (Ed.) (1978) *Essays on Amherst's History*. Vista Trust: Amherst, MA.

Jones Library Special Collections – Warren Brown correspondence.

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