

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

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| 11C-124 | Mt. Toby | E | AMH. |
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Town/City: Amherst

Place: Amherst

Photograph



Address: 52 Fearing Street

Historic Name: Carl R. & Josephine Fellers House

Uses: Present: Single-Family Residence

Original: Single-Family Residence

Date of Construction: 1929

Source: HLR, Martha Fellers Averill

Style/Form: Colonial Revival/Georgian/Vernacular

Architect/Builder: Markussen (contractor)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Vinyl clapboard siding

Roof: Asphalt composition

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations *None*

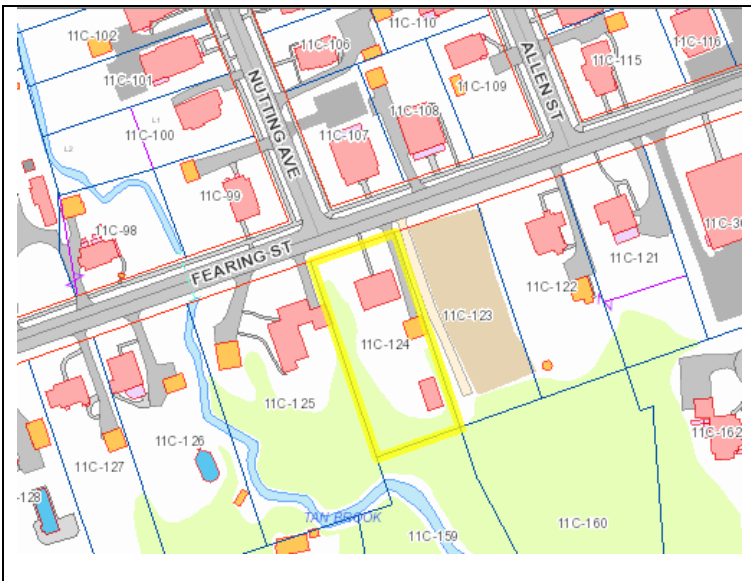
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: N/A

Setting: On a residential, somewhat busy street, the house is surrounded by the owner's wooded, mostly wetland lots, giving a rural ambience to this house. Four or five older large houses across the street relate to its scale, but the neighborhood is composed primarily of more compact, single-family houses.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Gretchen Fox

Organization: LHDSC

Date (month / year): October 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

52 FEARING STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.

52 Fearing Street is a Vernacular, Georgian, Colonial Revival house, with a 41-foot frontal width and unusually tall two and half stories. The low reach of the cladding over the brick foundation, the symmetry of the two windows and entry placement marking the bays and the three large shed roof dormers all combine to give this large-scale family house a Georgian style solidity. Particular details add refinement to the otherwise restrained design. Sidelights and a fan light surround the paneled door. The pedimented portico, supported by two single Tuscan columns, is fitted out with matching pilasters that extend its width. A wooden storm door is made up of 15 panes, the entry door inside is heavy, paneled wood, frequently left open to reveal another paned glass door that forms an interior vestibule. Two short, narrow windows flank the entry, giving further interior light. The pedimented portico matches the breadth of one of the two wide, shuttered windows marking the bays. Three low rising brick steps to the broader brick front porch floor complete the imposing entrance. Projecting eaves and the gabled roofline extend several inches over the perimeter. Windows marking the bays are 1/1: two on the first floor, three on the second, and in the three dormers on the third. The three tiers of identical large windows and doorway give an especially ordered appearance. A simple pedimented portico over the east side kitchen door at the top of three concrete steps can be seen in profile from the street. An exterior brick chimney marks the center of the west side of the house, which is 21 feet deep. Two double-doored garages under a single-gabled roof face the street from a short distance behind the house, at the top of a paved driveway. Offset to the west, they are only partially visible from the street.

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.

More commodious than neighboring houses on this south side of Fearing, the Fellers House easily takes its place with the four, multi-family family houses opposite. At the time when this house was built in 1929, the Fearing Estate on the south side of the street was being developed into suburban Vernacular houses, while the former Fearing property on the opposite side of the street already well established by 1910, with straightforward, large-scale residences, some of them multi-family. Professor Carl Fellers, a bio-chemist in the University of Massachusetts Food Science Department, and his wife, Josephine, an artist, purchased this lot, the northern portion of Lot 15 of the "Fearing Extension" two years after it had been deeded in 1925 by Dora Fearing to the original owner. It was probably Josephine Fellers who chose the contractor, Markesson, to build the house, according to her daughter, Martha, a surviving daughter who lives in the house she grew up in. With a growing family (eventually 6 children), she wanted the house to have plenty of rooms, but it was in the detailing, particularly of the interior, that she reportedly asserted her authority as the house was being constructed. An accomplished artist, she even designed the doorknobs, and was especially particular about the carved staircase and bannisters.

Over time, the Fellers family acquired three lots adjacent to the house, including the large one on Fearing Street just east of the house and driveway. Since the house to the west, 60 Fearing Street, was not built until c. 1937, this house was originally surrounded on all sides by land, and bounded by Tan Brook, giving it a unique bucolic setting in the midst of this rapidly developing area of town.

Carl Fellers (1893-1960), an early major authority on food science, was one of the first faculty members in the fledgling department of horticultural manufactures. He remained there (1925-1957) as the department changed its name to food science, and MAC to MSC and UMass. Fellers' research centered on cranberry nutrition and preservation, and seafood preservation, both important fields for the Massachusetts economy then and now. His work and inventions earned him multiple awards and

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notoriety. In 1987, the National Institute of Food Technology named their award for outstanding service to the field the Carl R. Fellers Prize.

Martha Fellers Averill is a valuable source for the history of this house in which she grew up, and for the social history of the neighborhood. She has noted, for example, that her mother and other women on the block, largely faculty wives, hosted mixer teas for the wives of science faculty at Amherst College and UMass.

Tan Brook is a year-round watercourse flowing through this and twelve other properties and bordering five others between McClellan Street and UMass, including lots on North Pleasant Street, Beston Street, Fearing Street, and Nutting Avenue, as well as wooded lots west of North Pleasant Street. Its name derives from the tanneries, which once flanked the stream during the early nineteenth century, the area of which is now part of Kendrick Park. The brook's sources lie to the north and east, and were piped underground in the twentieth century, through the school grounds between Strong and Triangle Streets, beneath the East Pleasant Street commercial district, continuing under Kendrick Park and along McClellan Street. Until the arrival of piped sewerage, the brook served the north edge of the West Village for waste-water outflow, a reason for the more modest development of the neighborhood know by the Irish epithet, "the Curragh," a small boat or vessel. Downstream, Tan Brook waters the UMass pond and flows west through Hadley, until it empties into the Connecticut River.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Amherst assessor's records

"Carl R. Fellers," filed papers, UMass W.E.B. DuBois Library, SCUA.

"Carl R. Fellers," Wikipedia

HLR

Martha Fellers Averill, July – September 2015, personal recollections in interviews with Gretchen G. Fox