

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

11C-152	Mt. Toby	E	AMH
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Town/City:

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 14 Beston Street

Historic Name: The Jane White House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: c.1872

Source: Amherst Tax Records and Deeds

Style/Form: New England Farmhouse

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick above ground with stone below

Wall/Trim: Wood clapboards

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Attached enlarged garage with second floor guest room

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Interior changes in 1973. Front, side, garage, and second story enlarged in 1990-1992. Front deck added 1990-92, side deck 2014.

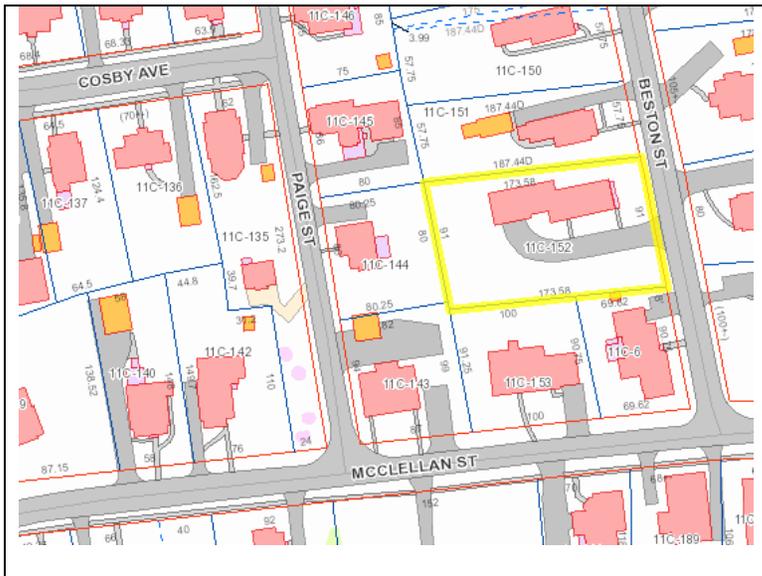
Condition: good, partially renovated

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.4 acres

Setting: Residential

Locus Map



Recorded by: E. Gouin, M. Adams, E. Wilfert

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): September 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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 New Englander farmhouse follows the basic farmhouse design of the two adjacent farmhouses to the north along the western side of Beston at 20 and 26 Beston: namely, a front door to the left, two windows to the right and one window in the second floor front room. (20 & 26 Beston have two front windows on the second floor.) Before the 1990-2 renovation, the front door opened into a small entry that led to a stairwell along the left (south) side of the entryway and up to the second floor landing. First floor living room was situated to the right of the front door entrance, with dining and kitchen areas lay to the rear. Upstairs bedrooms and bath were also situated to the right of the second-floor stairwell access.

A 1967 photograph taken from the vantage point of the house moved into what is now at 15 Beston shows 14 Beston across the street as a small farmhouse with a single window above the front porch, two windows to the left of the front door, and a four-column roofed porch. [Photo appears below.] There are two double-hung windows facing south, but no driveway or side entry or side deck or garage which the property card refers to as 1973 alterations. Sometime between 1967 and 1973 a concrete-floored garage was built, and then between 1973-9, the garage became a downstairs bedroom and another garage to the rear (west of the house) with tin roof was added. It is not known when after 1967 the driveway was built.

Major 1990-92 renovations added 12' to the front of the house although the front door remained to the right with the upper-story extended as well. Despite the extensions, the basic farmhouse design was maintained. The south-facing windows throughout the house were replaced by four large bays and the left-side stairwell was replaced by a central U-shaped stairwell to make room for the large south-facing bays. Renovations in 1990-2 included enlarged open front and side decks, and an extended side entrance into a larger entry and kitchen area. During the 1990-2 renovation a new larger garage was attached, gardening shed behind to the west and guestroom above with exterior lighting from three south-facing skylights and a west-facing double-hung window.

The house has a front facing gable with house extending backwards to maintain original style. The 1990-92 south-facing bays and removal of downstairs interior walls provide open-concept living from what was a series of small enclosed dark rooms. The original attached garage serves as a downstairs bedroom and the attached garage and guest room have separate entrances. The house has an unfinished basement with below grade cobble sides and above grade brick. Original trees of unknown date and large perennial gardens developed after 1990 frame the house, with a larger side (south) entry deck added in 2014.

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 area to the north of Beston Street was originally farmland owned variously by Theodore Lyman, John Borland, Horace Henderson, and to the east by Luke Sweetser, a merchant and farmer who raised fancy cattle near the current high school and bought land to provide access to water for his cattle at Tan Brook. (Tan Brook runs parallel and to the east of Beston St., midway between Beston St and current day East Pleasant St.) There is an 1854 deed on microfilm at the Jones Library Special Collection from Osmyn Baker to Luke Sweetser.

Beston runs directly from McClellan at right angles due north, terminating (on the 1873 revised Beers Map) at the land belonging to W.D. Fearing to the north on land that lays to the south of Fearing Street. The street consists of lower-lying land, which drains down from the higher topography of McClellan and becomes swampy during heavy rainfalls.

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Horace Henderson's 80 acre farm included the former Lyman/Borland farm to the north of Beston Street and extended from Pleasant Street to the Hadley line, north of current day Beston Street. Sweetser sold the 4+ acres he had purchased from Henderson on the east side of Beston (1989/235), back to Henderson on Nov 8, 1860.

Henderson's re-acquisition of 4 acres 116 rods was bound on the west and south by Leavitt Hallock, a Plainfield, MA farmer who appears as an Amherst resident in the 1855 and 1860 US Census, but who had moved onto New York State by 1865. The west boundary for this acquisition became Beston Street, the east boundary was Tan Brook, and the deed includes a dam right of interest to Sweetser. Access to a roadway to be built by Horace Henderson on the east side of this parcel was promised to all lots, presumably for access to the Lyman/Borland/Henderson farm to the north.

Smith (1991, 2003) has Beston Street (a 500 ft county layout) existing by 1873 and it is drawn (but not named) in the 1873 revised Beers map. It becomes known as "Beston Street" in April 1896 named for owner John Beston, Jr. whose house (#44) is at the north-west terminus of the Beston Street cul-de-sac. It was accepted as a Town Way in March 1883 and a County Layout in 1884.

Beston Street was likely to have been a farm lane that ran from McClellan St. north to the Lyman/Borland/Henderson farm but the 1860 Walling map shows only the brook with no roads or buildings in the area. It is properly drawn in on the 1873 Beers maps with houses identified (south to north on the westerly side) with B. Thompson (see 52 McClellan), Jane White (14 Beston), C. McLaughlin (see 20 Beston) and J. Bestin (misspelled, see 44 Beston). The 1886 Burleigh picture map shows what must be Beston Street going through to Fearing, but the buildings now in the area suggest that the area is not well represented with McClellan Street mostly hidden from view.

Horace Henderson (d. 1881, age 80) is likely to have constructed Beston Street (year unknown) along the property division between his land to the west and Sweetser's land to the east. The west side of what became Beston Street was acquired by farmer Leavitt Hallock, originally from Plainfield, MA, shown by the 1855 and 1860 US Census to be a farmer living in Amherst; by 1865 Hallock had moved to New York State and died 1875 in CT. 1863 Amherst Tax Records show him with horses, cows, carriage, and 2 house lots, the 2nd a 10 acre lot valued at \$2,000. The 1864 Tax Records show him with no livestock and a 5 acre lot valued at \$1,000.

On August 17, 1863, Hallock sold 399 square rods on the west side of Beston to Emeline S. Williams, wife of Edward Williams, a carpenter, for \$459.69, with a mortgage for the full amount to be paid off by 1868 [214/ 30]. In the same year, Emeline Williams acquired her residence on North Prospect St., part of Hallock's development there.

Emeline Williams' husband Edward Williams (7/16/1814-9/13/1865) was the son of Samuel Williams (a farmer in Huntington, MA) and wife Susan Wight (descended from emigres during the Great Depression 1680s from Isle of Wight who helped to found Dedham, MA) and the older brother of Lucas Williams. The Williams continued to live on North Prospect Street and the property on Beston bought by Emeline was not developed by her carpenter husband, Edward, who died of consumption two years after the 1863 purchase.

Emeline Williams at age 48 appears in the 1870 Census (p. 32 of 108) as keeping house (presumably her residence on North Prospect St) valued at \$4500 with an estate at \$500. (These figures differ from the Amherst Tax records' valuation of Mrs. E.S. Williams's house at \$1750 and barn at \$150.) The 1873 Census shows Emeline's brother-in-law Lucas (age 47, a merchant tailor, born like his older brother Edward on his father's farm in Huntington) with a house valued at \$8400 and estate at \$400. Also listed under the single "Williams" listing are the children of Emeline and Edward: Hartley Williams (age 26, merchant tailor), Mary (age 23, at home) and Frank L. (age 13, listed as an invalid). The 1869 Amherst Directory shows Lucas Williams (merchant tailor) as boarding on Prospect Street and the 1873 Amherst Director lists Lucas Williams, a sewing machine agent, with a house on Prospect Street, information confirmed by the 1873 Census.

Emeline subsequently married James T. Norton and moved away from Amherst (the sale related to #44 Beston is conducted in her married name as Norton), but her burial is listed as Emeline S. Williams, buried (1896) with her first husband in Amherst in West Cemetery.

In 1870, Emeline S. Williams sold the corner lot facing McClellan, now #51 McClellan, to Benjamin B. Thompson, an English tailor with a Scots wife Helen, for \$1300 who lived there until his death age 73 of "disease of brain" in 1889 (see #51 McClellan Historical Narrative).

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On November 22, 1870, Emeline Williams sold the Beston St lot that would become #14 to Jane White for \$100 (276/99). The deed mentions only a parcel of land on a private way leading northerly from McClellan, and bounded by Benjamin B. Thompson, William Boyle, and Christy [McClaughlin]. Beston Street's first post-Civil War residents were mostly Irish immigrant families of modest means.

Between May 1 1872 and May 1, 1873, the town tax valuations show increased property valuations and the 1873 Amherst Tax Records show Mrs. Jane White with a house valued at \$400 exempt from taxes, and a ½ acre lot valued at \$100, also exempt, thus indicating that Jane White had a house built between May 1872-3. The house is drawn and labelled Jane White on the 1873 Beers map.

There is no information on who built the house, although it is noteworthy that it follows the same footprint and interior design as its earlier neighbors at 20 and 26 Beston. Jane White is not listed in the 1874 Amherst Tax Records. Emeline William's 399 rod parcel eventually because lots 11C-6 (#53 McClellan, on the north-west corner of McClellan-Beston), 152 (#14), 151 (#20), 150 (#26) and 149 (#44) on Beston St.

There were several Jane Whites living in Amherst in this period. The 1870 Census shows a Jane V. White, age 55, Irish, widowed and keeping house with her daughter Jennie 16 at home. The 1880 Census shows two Jane Whites: one, age 59 and Irish, a servant in domestic service, and the second, Jane S. White, age 50 and Irish, keeping house with her daughter Jane C. at home. It is likely that Jane S. (mother) and Jane C. (daughter) White are the first inhabitants of 14 Beston Street, based on the 1880 Census that lists their dwelling on the same census sheet as their known neighbors Benjamin Thompson and his family (51 McClellan at the north-west corner of Beston, and John Beston, Jr.'s entire family (44 Beston at the north-west end of the Beston Street cul-de-sac).

Although there are many Irish-born Whites in Amherst at the time, any family links to Jane S. White cannot be determined with certainty. There were James, Patrick, and John White(s) noted in the Census or living in the vicinity as noted in the 1873 Amherst Director: Calvin (farmer with house on Pleasant), James (farmer with house off Pleasant), John (laborer with house on Pleasant), Martin (worked at hat shop, house on Pleasant), Thomas (laborer, house on Pleasant), and Ward L. (a clerk at Palmer & Bangs who boarded on Pleasant). The 1872 Amherst Tax Records show a James White on the Sweetser lot, with a house (\$300), two barns (\$200) and lot, total \$1,000. tax valuation, but his wife's name is Mary and they had three children.

On May 23, 1883 (379/367) Jane S. White sold the property for \$800 to Matthew Gleason, listed in the 1886-7 and 1889-90 Amherst Directories as an employee at H.D. Fearing whose residence (as of that date) was Beston near McClellan, and in the 1892-3 and 1895 directories as a laborer with a house on Beston Street; in 1896-7 and 1917, he is listed as an employee of George B. Burnett & Son, but in the 1910 Census at age 64 he is a stamper in the Hat Factory. Matthew Gleason was Irish and emigrated in 1865. His wife Elizabeth, also Irish, was 6 years older and had emigrated in 1864. In 1910, their daughter Helen A., age 32, was a stenographer in manufacturing, and their son, John E., age 24, was a plumber's helper. The 1919 Amherst Directory lists Elizabeth, widow of Mathew, at 8 Beston (later renumbered 14), with John F. (the son) a plumber living at the same address.

The house then passes through multiple ownerships -- William H. Deguise, a barber on Amity Street (1922 – 779/116), George Lehane (1958 – 1275/240-243), Rachel S. Peterson (1963 – 1403/380), Jane D. Gawronski (1966 – 1491/260), Peter Mokrzecky (1968 – 1539/352), Richard and Carol Rocco (1970 – 1577/92) and Ann (Gillespie) Silva (1973 – 1719/18) who worked at the University of Massachusetts of Amherst during a period in which faculty were moving onto Beston, Paige and McClellan Streets. It became the property (in 1979 – D48/100) of John A. Hunt (d. 2015) and his wife Maurianne Adams, both University professors, who enlarged and renovated the house and garage in 1990-2 and added a large side deck in 2014.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

J.A. Smith (1991, updated 2003). *A Record of the Streets and Ways in the Town of Amherst Massachusetts*. Town Hall, Amherst, MA and Jones Library Special Collections.

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Amherst Tax Valuations
Deeds
Amherst Directories
Census records
Jones Library Special Collections mss



14 Beston Street in 1967