

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

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Town/City: Amherst

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

Address: 243 Amity Street

Historic Name: William/Solomon Boltwood House

Uses: Present: Single-Family Residence
Original: Single-Family Residence

Date of Construction: c. 1751

Source: Visual; National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

Style/Form: Georgian

Architect/Builder: N/A

Exterior Material:
Foundation: Fieldstone

Wall/Trim: Wood/wood clapboard

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Kitchen/game room addition (2008); gambrel addition
including garage (2009)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:** In 1838? (moved
slightly to the west to make room for the Jones House (219
Amity Street; AMH.154)

Acreage: .34 acre

Setting: Residential, rural college town.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Steve Bloom/Suzannah Fabing

Organization: LHDSC

Date (*month / year*): November 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AMHERST

243 AMITY ST

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.

This side-gabled, five-bay, post-Medieval house was constructed in 1751 after an initial fire in 1750. It features a garrison overhang, a third-story stepped gable, and a saltbox profile. The windows, placed tight to the cornice line and the low foundation line, are strong visual evidence for the early construction date. Family records and letters in the Jones Library Special Collection substantiate the eighteenth-century date. The house was moved slightly to the west in 1839, to make room for the Jones House (216 Amity; AMH.154).

Like Solomon's brother Samuel's house (AMH.118), this house is built in a style commonly found in Hadley and other Connecticut Valley towns of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, "a style ultimately traceable to late-Medieval English houses of the southeast counties," according to Paul Norton. "Characteristic are the central door and chimney, clapboard sheathing, and overhang of second floor and attic." Norton cites as later additions a lean-to at the rear, side porch, blinds, and front portico, all of which were subsequently removed, returning the house more closely to its eighteenth-century appearance. In 2008 and 2009, two two-story additions were built at the rear (north), greatly enlarging the house and incorporating a garage.

****SELECTED TO NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT (2/22/1993)****

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.

"November 4, 1750, my house burned and on the 12th I had another set up, on the same foundation, and so far finished by the 12th day of January that I got into it to live." So wrote Lieutenant William Boltwood, a farmer and builder. He sold the house to his brother, Lt. Solomon Boltwood, in 1760. Solomon (1727-1777) came to Amherst (then Hadley) as a child, between 1731 and 1738. Solomon brought his bride, Mary Strong (1731/2-1814), to live at 243 Amity Street. In 1773, he was licensed as a retailer of liquor. During the American Revolution, Solomon Boltwood sided with the Tories, causing consternation among townfolk, but he was active in town affairs and a respected citizen afterward. His son established Boltwood's Tavern in the Center Village in 1804.

One son, Ebenezer (1752-1804), is recorded living at the house. The house, barn, and 40 acres were sold by another son, Samuel, to Dr. Robert Cutler in 1787. Cutler reportedly moved from Pelham to Amherst because he was not in sympathy with Shea's Rebellion. He and his son Isaac practiced medicine in Amherst for many years and were active in civic affairs. Three generations of the Cutler family lived in the house until 1839, when the house was moved west to its present location and the two-acre house lot was sold to Thomas Jones. Apparently, Thomas Jones, in 1839, also bought the lot to which the house was moved and sold it to Leander Merrick in 1850. Title then passed from Elisha P. Cutler in 1850, to C. O. Sears in 1859 and to Increase Gilbert in 1862. Edward L. Robinson lived there in 1880, and Mary Gilbert in 1881. In 1896 William E. Dickinson left the house to his eldest daughter, Caroline. Mason A. Dickinson, Jr. and his wife Mildred (née Hollis) lived there from 1929 until 1973. Mason, Jr. had grown up in his parents' house around the corner at 194 Lincoln Avenue and began working as a clerk in his father's Grange Store. He later worked for Amherst College.

According to Norton, David Morton (1866-1957), lyric poet and professor of English at Amherst College, lived here for a while. Morton began teaching at Amherst in 1924. He boarded at several different addresses on Amity Street. City Directories place him at this address in 1925.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Letter from Lucius M. Boltwood to Edward Hitchcock, August 1904, quoting "a little manuscript book of Lt. William Boltwood, before me at this writing." In Jones Library Special Collections.

US Census 1790-1850, 1930, 1940, 1950

Amherst City Directories

Town maps 1772, 1775, 1833, 1856

Brown, W.R. "Some Amherst House [sic] That Have Been Moved During the Last 100 Years." *Amherst Record*, 8 May 1947. S clipping of this article is in Vol. 3 of the W.R. Brown scrapbooks in the Jones Library Special Collections, p. 79.

National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form, Lincoln-Sunset Historic District, Amherst, section 7, p. 1.

"Strong House Ranks as Oldest; Built in 1744," *Holyoke Shopping News*, 24 April 1935. A copy of this article is included in vol. 2 of the scrapbooks of Mrs. C. J. Fawcett, p. 6, in the Jones Library Special Collections.

"Amherst Through the Years," Unknown newspaper (*Amherst Record?*), 18 June 1954, clipping in the William Boltwood—House folder in the Jones Library Special Collections.

Rand, Frank Prentice. *The Village of Amherst: A Landmark of Light*. Amherst: Amherst Historical Society, 1958, p. 207.

Norton, Paul F. *Amherst: A Guide to its Architecture*. Amherst: Amherst Historical Society, 1975, p. 65.

Roberts, George S. *Historic Towns of the Connecticut River Valley*, p. 365.

On Solomon Boltwood: Carpenter & Morehouse, *The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts* (1896), pp. 18, 40, 50, 61, 82, 102.

On Mason A. Dickinson, Jr., ancestry.com, accessed 13 January 2016.

Town of Amherst Property Card 2014.