

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

84-333-12	Billerica		
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Town/City: Chelmsford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 11 Plum Street

Historic Name: William and Zelma Bartlett House

Uses: Present: Single-family dwelling

Original: Single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1940

Source: Deed, Census, voter lists

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

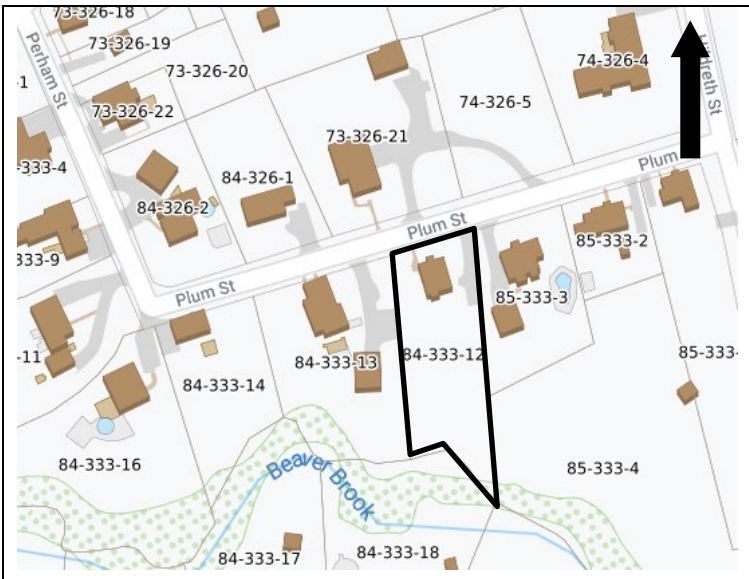
Foundation: Brick; Concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles; Wood trim

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None.

Locus Map



Major Alterations (*with dates*): House extended along entire width of rear elevation (Mid-20th C?). Original porch removed and front porch floor, steps and railings added (Late 20th C). Rear deck, steps and railings (Late 20th C.) Basement entrance altered (Late 20th early 21st C)
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.51

Setting: Located on a suburban street at edge of Chelmsford Center. Houses to north, east, and west date from the early 20th century to the early 21st century.

Recorded by: Stacy Spies, Historic Preservation Consultant

Date: November 2020

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

11 PLUM ST

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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.

The Bartlett House is located near the street, at the north end of its deep lot. An asphalt-paved driveway leads from the street along the east edge of the lot. A large poured concrete retaining wall separates the driveway from the house. At the basement opening in the east elevation, the concrete wall curves inward toward a short run of steps that lead to the basement door. A second set of steps set into the wall lead from the drive to a small concrete-paved patio located at the southeast corner of the house. An L-shaped asphalt-paved walkway leads from the street to the front door and along the west elevation of the house toward the back yard.

The Bartlett house is a 1-story, side-gabled building that rests on a brick foundation with grapevine pointing. The three-bay façade contains two windows and a center entrance that is sheltered by a small, enclosed projection. This projecting bay features an asymmetrical, front-gabled roof and rests on a poured concrete foundation. The side-gabled building has close eaves with shallow moldings. The facade (north elevation) features a slight roof overhang above a simple frieze. Windows on the façade are placed snug against this frieze. A slender, square-section brick interior chimney is located at the roof ridge. An extension constructed along the width of the rear elevation rests on a concrete block foundation.

The house is sheathed with wood shingles and flush cornerboards. The original house appears to have been three bays wide and two bays deep. Windows in the original house are 6/6 double-hung wood sash with external metal-frame storm windows. The window surrounds are wide and flat. A single 6/6 wood sash window remains on each of the side elevations. The façade entrance, inside the projecting enclosure, contains a paneled wood door with four lights in the top half. Windows in the rear of the house, i.e. the extension, are constructed of vinyl coated metal. A slider window is located in the east elevation. A pair of awning windows is located on the west elevation. The rear elevation contains a tripartite casement window and a sliding glass door that leads to the wood deck.

The front porch and steps and rear deck were all constructed in the late 20th century. Poured-concrete piers in the lawn near the front porch indicate a different original porch configuration.

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.

Maine natives William H. Bartlett (1877-1951)¹ and his wife, Zelma (1875-1947)² were married in 1902 in Bangor, Maine. By the time of his World War I draft registration,³ the couple was living in Chelmsford while William Bartlett worked as a driver for the U.S. Cartridge Company in Lowell. William Bartlett worked as a driver for several years; the 1920 census indicates that he worked as a driver for a grain mill and the 1930 census indicates that he worked a driver in the construction industry.

In 1939, William and Zelma Bartlett purchased the property at 11 Plum Street⁴ from Clarence G. Nickles, who owned a large parcel of land south of Plum Street. It appears that the house was constructed around that time, as William and Zelma Bartlett

¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18177190/william-bartlett>. Accessed Nov. 12, 2020.

² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18177191/zelma-n.-bartlett>. Accessed Nov. 12, 2020.

³ World War I Draft Registration cards. Ancestry.com. Accessed Nov. 16, 2020.

⁴ Middlesex North Deed Book 938, p. 10. Also, Plan Book 81, p. 101.

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appear as homeowners in this location at the time of the 1940 census. In addition, the Bartletts appear on voter lists and city directories at 11 Plum Street beginning in 1940.⁵

The effects of the Great Depression impacted the Bartletts, as it did many other Chelmsford residents. From 1937 to 1940 (at a minimum), William Bartlett worked as a stone mason at a W.P.A. reservoir construction project. According to city directory listings, William Bartlett worked as a stone mason until the time of his death in 1951.

In 1952, John and Denise Gibbons of Lowell, Massachusetts, purchased the house and property. John Horace Gibbons (1921-2007),⁶ a New Hampshire native, served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and worked as a postal clerk for several decades. Denise Gibbons (1927-2003) was also born in New Hampshire. Denise Gibbons worked as a beautician, according to the Chelmsford voter lists. John Gibbon's estate sold the property in 2009.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



View looking south.

⁵ https://www.chelmhist.org/City_Directories/1941_List_of_Men_and_Women.pdf. Accessed Nov. 12, 2020.

⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/84298742/john-h-gibbons>. Accessed Nov. 16, 2020.

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View looking southwest. Basement entrance partially visible below far window.



View looking west at basement entrance.



View looking north at rear (south) elevation.



View looking northeast at west and south elevations.



Photo 6: Poured concrete retaining wall. View looking southwest.



Steps in poured concrete retaining wall. View looking west.