

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/48/2	Nashua South		CLM.398
---------	--------------	--	---------

**Town/City:** Chelmsford

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): North Chelmsford

## Photograph



**Address:** 53 Princeton Street

**Historic Name:** George H. and Jennie Sheldon House

**Uses:** Present: multiple-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** between 1889 and 1907

**Source:** 1889 and 1907 maps of North Chelmsford

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/wood

Roof: slate

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Unknown date: removal of front porch and addition of shed roof entry porches

Ca. 1990 replacement windows

Ca. 1925 conversion to multiple-family dwelling

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** .35 A

**Setting:** The house is located approximately 100' southwest of Princeton St. Princeton Dr. to the south serves as a driveway and a paved parking area is at the rear of the house. The front of the lot is flat and grassy with mature trees and shrubs. The surrounding area includes 19<sup>th</sup> c. industrial and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. residential developments.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Jennifer Burden, Gray & Pape, Inc.

**Organization:** Chelmsford Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): June 2016

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

53 PRINCETON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CLM.398

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 building is located on the west side of Princeton Street at Princeton Drive. It is a ca. 1900, two and a-half-story, cross-gabled duplex house. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the exterior walls are largely covered with wood shingles with wood trim. The first and second story walls of the turret are covered with wood clapboard. The building rests atop a stone foundation. It follows a symmetrical plan with a large, octagonal turret in the center of the primary (northeast) façade. The façade faces Princeton Street and is divided into five bays with front entrances located on either side of the turret. Each of the two entrances features a small porch with a shed roof that slopes toward the side of the house. Windows are located in three sides of the turret at the first and second stories, and five sides on the third story. Most or all of the windows in the house consist of replacement one-over-one double-hung windows. The sides of the house each feature an enclosed pediment at the gable. A cross gable extends from the rear or southwest side of the building.

The building is a slightly altered example of a turn-of-the-century residence that retains historic integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association.

## 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 1875 and 1889 maps of North Chelmsford show a building on this lot, but the footprint and setback from Princeton Street do not match the current building. The 1907 Sanborn map does show a building on this lot that matches the current footprint and setback; therefore, it was constructed ca. 1900. The first owner of the building was George H. Sheldon, son of George T. Sheldon, who organized the Chelmsford Foundry Company in 1858 and purchased the Baldwin Mill in 1879. The 1889 map of North Chelmsford shows that the elder Sheldon owned several parcels in the area and his residence was located to the south of the 53 Princeton lot (the house is no longer extant).

The 1910 US Population Census lists George H. Sheldon (1853-1912) living on Princeton Street with wife Jennie (1861-1922), daughter Catherine (born ca. 1888), and son Edward (born ca. 1889). At this date George was listed as an iron and steel manufacturer and Edward as an iron moulder. After George's death in 1912 it appears Jennie did not remain in the house since she is not listed in the city directories in 1915 or 1917; Edward is also not listed in these directories. The property, however, was transferred to Jennie from George's estate. After her death in 1922, her heirs sold the property in 1924 to John A. Simpson. The 1930 census lists Simpson (born ca. 1862) living in the City of Lowell with daughter Marion (born ca. 1895) and son Roger (born ca. 1897). At this date John was a building contractor, Marion was a teacher, and Roger was contracting superintendent. In 1940 John granted a quit-claim deed to Marion and Roger for this and four other properties in Middlesex County; therefore, the house at 53 Princeton was likely rented out by the Simpson family. Deed research did not discover when Roger and Marion sold the property. By 1976 S.M. Stevens owned the property as this person sold it that year to Robert and Sally Gauthier. According the 1966 city directory, the house continued to be used as an apartment-type building as several people were then listed at this address (occupations of the residents were not provided). The building continues to house multiple housing units as is currently owned by the 53 Princeton Street Realty Trust.



# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

53 PRINCETON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CLM.398

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Beers, F.W. *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*. J.B. Beers & Co., New York. 1875.

Chelmsford Public Library. Royal Shawcross Photographs Collection. Available at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/chelmsfordpubliclibrary/sets/7215760000139715/>.

Genealogical research, including U.S. and Massachusetts census records; birth, marriage, and death records; and city directory records from ancestry.com.

Geo. H. Walker & Co. *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Geo. H. Walker & Co., Boston, MA. 1889.

Merriam, Fred. *Images of America: North and West Chelmsford*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina. 2016.

Middlesex North Registry of Deeds. [www.lowelldeeds.com](http://www.lowelldeeds.com).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Lowell, MA. 1907 and 1950.

Waters, Dr. Wilson. *The History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Lowell, Mass., 1917.



Undated photograph of 53 Princeton Street. (Chelmsford Public Library.)