

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

65/ 271/ 12/ /	Billerica		
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**Town/City:** Chelmsford

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

## Photograph



View looking south from front yard.

**Address:** 116 Riverneck Road

**Historic Name:** Dunbar House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Dwelling

Original: Outbuilding

**Date of Construction:** Ca. 1920-1940s

**Source:** Visual Assessment

**Style/Form:** None

**Architect/Builder:** Not known

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Stone, Uncut; Concrete Block

Wall/Trim: Vinyl siding

Roof: Rolled bituminous roofing

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Two sheds

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Vinyl siding; Metal-frame storm windows

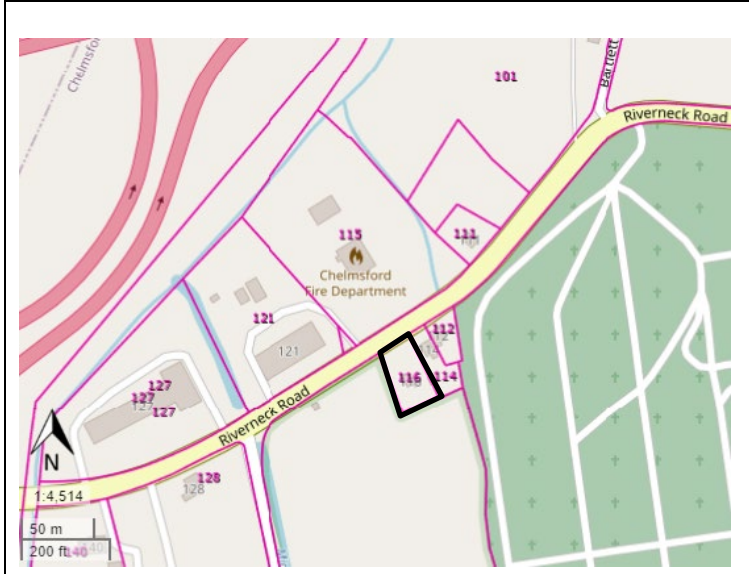
**Condition:** Poor

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

**Acreage:** 0.26 acre

**Setting:** Mixed residential and light industrial. Chelmsford Fire Department Engine #4 House is located across the street. The Canal Street Conservation Area abuts the property to the south. St. Joseph's Cemetery is located south and east of the property. Highways Interstate 495 and U.S. Route 3 are located nearby.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies, Historic Preservation Consultant

**Organization:** for Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust

**Date** (*month / year*): January 2023

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

116 RIVERNECK ROAD

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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 diminutive house (less than 500 square feet) appears to be a collection of former outbuildings constructed during the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that have been assembled as one building. The living room block is capped with a shallow-pitched side-gabled roof. The façade, now sheltered by a small enclosure, contains a 2/2 wood sash window and a paneled wood door with a large light in the top half. A vinyl sash window is centered in the block's west elevation. The interior is finished with a wood plank floor and a beadboard ceiling. Beadboard was also used to construct a closet located in the northwest corner of the room. Window and door surrounds are wide, flat boards with thick sills (perhaps 2x4s). A slender brick chimney with an opening for a stove pipe is located in the east end of the room.

The southwest room of the house consists of a shed-roof block. A row of three 6-light, wood-framed hopper windows fills the south elevation. A similar, single, hopper window and a paneled wood door similar to that at the main entrance are located in the west elevation. A multi-light, wood-frame slider window in the north elevation connects the room to the main block. Window and door surrounds are wide, flat boards with narrow sills. A shed-roof block attached to the house's east elevation contains the kitchen, the interior of which is also finished with beadboard. The small space at the rear of the house between the bedroom and kitchen connects the two formerly-free-standing outbuildings. A slender brick stovepipe chimney is located in the south wall of the connecting area. A small bathroom ell is located at the southeast corner of the house.

## 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.*

This apparent collection of former outbuildings is located on the former Ohlson property. In 1881, Swedish immigrant Sven Ohlson purchased a ten-acre parcel of land here that extended west to the Middlesex Canal (now Canal Street).<sup>1</sup> The family appears to have constructed a house on the property and were living in it by 1900. The 1900 census included Helen Ohlson, Sven's widow, and her grown children Elmer Ohlson, Ebba Ohlson, and Amanda Ohlson Logan. Amanda R. Ohlson Logan (1863-1948), who had been widowed by the time of the 1910 census, worked as a nurse. Amanda Ohlson purchased the property from her siblings in 1920 and lived here alone until her death. The Ohlson family sold the property in 1949.<sup>2</sup>

At some point in time between 1950 and 1965, a building (presumably the former Ohlson house), was removed or demolished.<sup>3</sup> An account relayed by neighbors states that the house burned during that time and the former outbuildings were assembled to create a dwelling.<sup>4</sup> (More research is recommended.)

In 1969, Donald F. Burbank purchased the dwelling and the 0.26-acre lot.<sup>5</sup> Born in Lowell, Donald F. Burbank (1933- 2021)<sup>6</sup> worked as a self-employed tree surgeon for almost fifty years and planted numerous flowering specimen trees on the lot. Donald Burbank bequeathed the property to the Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust. The Trust has named the property the Burbank Gardens and will be open to the public.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds Book 143, p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds Book 1109, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> U.S.G.S. Billerica Quadrangle map. 1950 and 1965.

<sup>4</sup> Conversation. Scott Venier, Chelmsford Conservation Land Trust to Stacy Spies, Jan. 18, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds Book 1902, p. 602.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/lowellsun/name/donald-burbank-obituary?id=24561998>. Accessed Jan. 20, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.clct.org/burbank-arboretum/>. Accessed Jan. 20, 2023.

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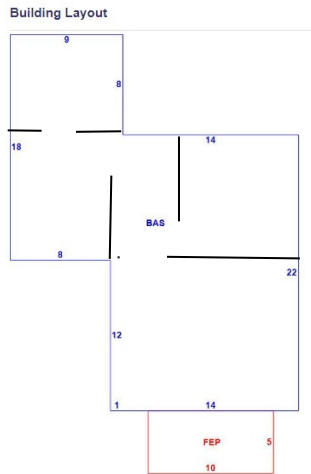
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United States Geological Survey. Billerica, Massachusetts. 1:24000. 1941, 1950, 1965.

Walker, George H. & Co. *Atlas of Middlesex County*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co., 1889.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



Assessor's plan.



View looking southwest. From right to left: porch, main room, kitchen (with shed roof), and bathroom ell.



View looking north. Bedroom at left, bathroom at right.

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View looking east.



Detail. Main entrance. View looking west.



View looking north toward closet on north wall. Entrance visible at right.



View looking northwest from southwest room toward west elevation. Note 6-light hopper window.

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View looking north from southwest room toward main room.  
Note sliding window between the rooms.