

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/39/2	Nashua South	G	CLM.419
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Town/City: Chelmsford

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

Photograph



Address: 16-20 Wright Street

Historic Name: George C. and Ella J. Moore House

Uses: Present: multiple-family dwelling

Original: single-family dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1880

Source: deed research

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding/vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Ca. 1990 replacement siding and windows

Ca. 1990 removal of ornamentation

Ca. 1990 rear deck addition

Ca. 1924: conversion to multiple-family dwelling

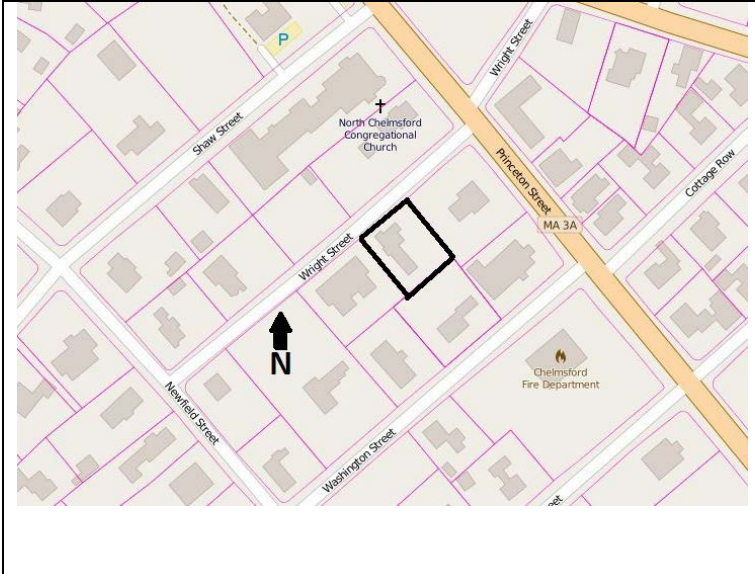
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .21 A

Setting: The building is located approximately 20' southeast of Wright St, southwest of its intersection with Princeton St. A paved parking area is to the northeast of the house. The lot is mostly flat and grassy with a few mature trees. The surrounding area mostly includes 19th and 20th c. residential development with former mills to the southeast.

Locus Map



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

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

16 WRIGHT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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 building is a 2.5-story dwelling with a stone foundation, walls clad in replacement vinyl siding with vinyl trim, and has an asphalt-shingle multiple-gable roof. An exterior brick chimney is located on the northeast wall near the primary (northwest) façade. Fenestration throughout the building consists of a combination of historic two-over-two and replacement one-over-one double-hung windows. The main mass of the house is front gabled with gable returns and is two bays wide. The north bay of the primary façade includes a two-story bay window. The south bay includes a two-story, front gable projection with a one-story open porch. The porch has a hipped roof supported by two round columns. The main entry into the apartment units on the façade has historic wood and glass doors topped with a transom. A secondary entry is located on the southwest wall. A turret is located on the north corner of the façade and is topped with a pyramidal roof. The rear portion of the building includes a modern two-story deck along the northeast wall.

The house is an altered example of a late nineteenth century residence that retains historic integrity of location, setting, 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.

Deed research traced the ownership history of the property to 1880 when George and Alice Cummings purchased the lot from Samuel Wright. The 1875 map of North Chelmsford shows that Wright owned the larger lot at this date, including the building to the west on Wright Street and the building to the rear on Washington Street. Wright (1830-1883) is listed in federal and state census records as living in Chelmsford with wife Hannah (née Cummings, ca. 1834-1902) and their three children. In October 1880 Wright sold the .21-acre portion of the lot to George and Alice Cummings. George may have been a relative of Hannah, but the exact relation was not discovered. The house was likely constructed after this transaction since the lot was subdivided and possibly sold to relatives; furthermore, the Cummings sold the property two years later for \$3500, which is an appropriate price for a small lot with a building.

George Clifford (1848-1923) and Ella J. (1852-1901) Moore purchased the property in 1882. Moore was born in Westford and succeeded his father in the woolen and worsted cloth (a type of wool yarn) manufacturing (CLM.294). In 1872 Moore purchased G.T. Sheldon's foundry building on Stony Brook and began wool scouring and combing. Throughout the next few years Moore added other buildings to that complex. In 1890, the worsted mill produced 16,000 pounds of worsted yarn per week. Moore eventually owned numerous lots in North and West Chelmsford, but the 1889 map of North Chelmsford shows that this was the only residential lot owned at this date.

The 1900 census lists George and Ella living on Wright Street with children Bessie (born 1881) and George, Jr. (born 1886), Ella's mother Nancy Gilchrest (born 1824 in Maine), and servant Delia Leahy (born 1872 in Ireland). After Ella passed in 1901, the property passed to George Jr. and Bessie. In 1911 they transferred the property to George, Sr. At this date Bessie was married and living in Buffalo, New York while George, Jr. remained in Chelmsford. The 1920 census lists George, Sr. continuing to live on Wright Street with housekeeper Ida E. Fowler (born ca. 1861), lodger Shirley Fowler (born ca. 1909), and maid Lucy Hall (born ca. 1899 in Canada). In 1924 the executors of the will of George C. Moore, Sr., including George, Jr., transferred the property to James Turner. Turner immediately transferred the property to Mabel E. Wright.

Mabel (1875-1962) was married to Walter Wright (1873-1958), but his name does not appear as an ownership on the deeds. Research did not discover if Walter was related to Samuel Wright, who owned the parcel prior to the construction of the house.

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The 1930 census record lists the Wrights in Brookline, MA and they are not listed in Chelmsford city directories, therefore, they did not reside at this address. In 1934 Mabel Wright sold the property to John and Anna Valentine. The 1940 census lists the Valentines (both born ca. 1897) living on Newfield Street in North Chelmsford with John working as a lawyer. It appears the Valentines owned several rental properties because in 1958 they transferred ownership of the lots to the Valentine Investment Trust. The Trust held ownership of the property until 1970. Since 1970 ownership of the property has been transferred five additional times, including twice to different realty trusts/companies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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

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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.

Perham, Henry S. *A Sketch of the History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia, PA, J.W. Lewis. 1890.

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



Ca. 1900 photograph of 16 Wright Street. (Chelmsford Public Library.)

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance

The area of North Chelmsford was determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP by MHC in 1987 for its local level of historical significance. The historic district boundary of Area G roughly includes resources along Middlesex and Princeton streets between Wright Street, Gay Street, and Edwards Avenue. The district is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the industrialization of North Chelmsford in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and under Criterion C for its examples of workers' cottages, modest single-family houses, and elaborate residences owned by local industrialists. The building at 16-20 Wright Street retains sufficient historic integrity to contribute to this potential historic district.