

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

D6/ 2/ 18/ /

Blue Hills

AVO.79

Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



View looking southwest.

Address: 54 West High Street

Historic Name: Nelson C. and Phebe Curtis House

Uses: Present: Multiple Family Dwelling

Original: Single Family Dwelling

Date of Construction: ca. 1854-1852

Source: Deeds

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding / Wood Trim, Vinyl Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Replacement vinyl sash windows (late 20th C or early 21st C)

Condition: Deteriorated

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.5 acre

Setting: Located on a suburban residential street amid houses of similar age, size, setback and materials.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

54 WEST HIGH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

AVO.79

☐ 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 house is located on a terraced corner lot and oriented to the north, toward West High Street. The lot is covered with lawn with mature trees and vegetation along the side and rear lot lines. An asphalt-paved driveway leads from West High Street past the house's east elevation. A poured concrete walkway and two short runs of concrete steps – one at each terrace level – lead from West High Street to the entrance.

The house rests on a cut stone foundation and rises two stories to a front-gabled roof with overhanging eaves and gable-end cornice returns (now enclosed). Two interior brick chimneys are located on the east roof slope. A hip dormer is located on the east and west roof slopes. The house is three bays wide with a side-hall plan. A single, fixed window is located in the north gable peak. The east and west elevations of the recessed entrance each consist of two slender wood panels, the form of which is repeated in the paneled wood door. Full-height, wood-framed sidelights frame the door. A bay window, infilled with sash windows, is located at the first story of the west elevation. A bay window is also located at the second story of the east elevation. The two-story rear ell is two bays deep and rests on a brick foundation. Windows throughout the house are 1/1 vinyl sash replacements with wide, unmolded wood surrounds.

Now much-altered, the house appears to have been constructed in the Greek Revival style and was much larger than its contemporaries.

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 house at 54 West High Street was likely constructed circa 1852-1854 in the Greek Revival style and altered around the turn of the 20th century. John Curtis purchased this lot of land in 1852; two years later, he sold the land, then with a building on it, to his sons Nelson and Elhanan.¹ In 1857, Elhanan Curtis sold his share of the building to his brother, Nelson C. Curtis, who made this his residence. Nelson C. Curtis (1815-1891)² worked in a boot factory and lived here with his wives, Phebe Waterman Standish (1820-1872),³ whom he had wed in 1840, and Adaline Cole (1826-1915),⁴ whom he wed in 1873.

Carpenter and contractor George H. Wood purchased the property in 1920 from the Curtis family.⁵ George H. Wood (1888-1965)⁶ was active in Stoughton and designed the Bows Moccasin Factory at 340 East Spring Street (See AVO.47). The Wood family owned 54 West High Street until 1942.⁷ George H. Wood also served as chief of the Avon Fire Department. Wood served with the department for 33 years before retiring in 1947.⁸

¹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 210, p. 14 and Book 258, p. 41.

² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86331714/nelson-campbell-curtis>. Accessed Dec. 1, 2022.

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86331734/phebe-waterman-curtis>. Accessed Dec. 1, 2022.

⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86331759/adeline-curtis>. Accessed Dec. 1, 2022.

⁵ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1450, p. 293-294.

⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70185277/george-henry-wood>. Accessed Dec. 1, 2022.

⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 2383, p. 184.

⁸ "George H. Wood, Former Fire Chief," *Patriot Ledger*, 12 April 1965.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

54 WEST HIGH STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

AVO.79

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

City Directories.

Findagrave.com.

"George H. Wood, Former Fire Chief." *Patriot Ledger*. 12 April 1965.

Hanna, William F. *The Story of Avon*. Avon: Avon Centennial Committee, 1988.

Massachusetts Census. Ancestry.com.

Massachusetts Vital Records.

Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.

Robinson, E. *Robinson's Atlas of Norfolk County, Massachusetts*. New York: E. Robinson, Publisher, 1888.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases. 1916.

Sherman, G.A. *Atlas of Norfolk County*. New York: Comstock & Cline, 1876.

Town of Avon. Tax Assessor records.

United States Census. Ancestry.com.

Walling, Henry Francis. *Map of Norfolk County, Mass.* Boston: Smith & Bumstead, 1858.

World War I Draft Registration Cards. Ancestry.com.

World War II Draft Registration Cards. Ancestry.com.



View looking southeast.



Entrance detail.