

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

23A-199	Easthampton		NTH.221
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**Town:** Northampton

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 49 Beacon Street

**Historic Name:** George A. Burr House

**Uses:** Present: four-family residence  
Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1870

**Source:** atlas of 1873

**Style/Form:** Italianate

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: weatherboard

Roof: slate

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** garage

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

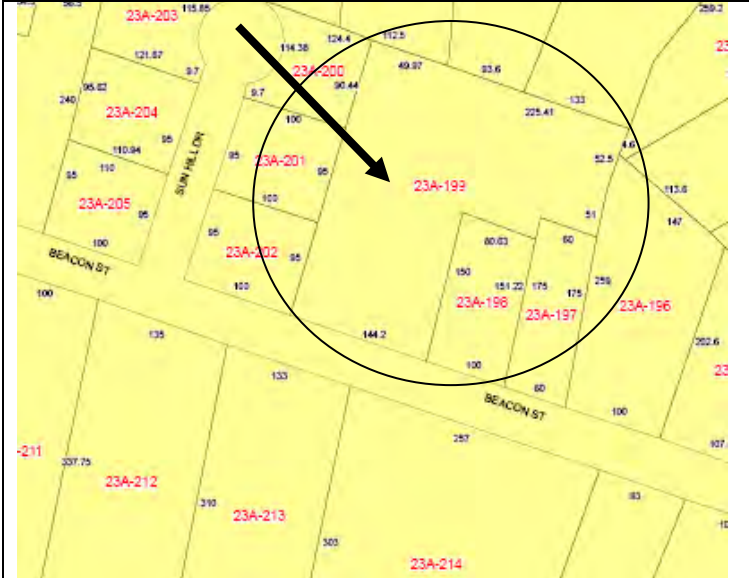
**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no | x | yes | | **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acreage:** 1.48 Acres

**Setting:** This is a south-facing house set on a large lot on a quiet residential street.

## Topographic or Assessor's Map



**Recorded by:** Bonnie Parsons

**Organization:** PVPC

**Date** (*month / year*): April, 2010

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

[NORTHAMPTON]

[49 Beacon Street]

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

NTH.221

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 George A. Burr House is one of Northampton's most high-style Italianate houses. It is a two-and-a-half story house that is asymmetrical in plan. The main block of the house has a slate-covered, side-gable roof with a full-height projecting and off-center pavilion on its south façade. The pavilion has a two-story, three-sided bay window on its street side. In the angle between the main block and the pavilion is a two-story porch. Adding to the complexity of the plan, and to its picturesque qualities, is a one-story wing on the west, and a two-and-a-half story ell on the north elevation. On the east elevation there is a square bay window at the first floor level and a three-sided oriel window at the second floor level of the ell. The two add volume to the interior and visual variety to the elevation. The complexity of this building's plan and elevation was, at the time of its construction, stylistically advanced and pointing to the Queen Anne style that was to evolve in the next decade. The decorative features of the house include the bracket-supported wide eaves overhang, a frieze with Swiss-inspired applied ornament, and paneling between stories on the bays. Windows in the house are paired windows favored by the Italianate style with 1/1 sash, and large fixed light windows with stained glass transoms, which are a later window form that became popular in the Queen Anne period. First floor windows have architrave surrounds and second floor windows have hooded lintels supported on consoles. There is a fanlight window in the third story of the pavilion, and rondel windows in the gable ends of the main block, too. The west wing has an arched roof with a row of clerestory windows beneath its eaves. The entry porch is highly ornamental with paired chamfered posts on high impost blocks supporting bracketed roofs. Ornate porch friezes and brackets of jigsaw-cut fretwork and patterned railings add to the picturesque quality of the two-story porch.

## 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.*

From the Form B of 1976, "George Burr came to Northampton in 1843 at the age of 14 and after an apprenticeship as an errand boy, formed a partnership for the purpose of handling coal, flour and grains. After a brief time in New York, he returned to Northampton and was elected general agent of the Florence Sewing Machine Company and subsequently served as treasurer. He later helped develop the Florence Manufacturing Company and served as president and treasurer. For number of years he was on the board of assessors and selectmen, and served as vice-president of the Florence Savings Banks from its inception. He also helped to finance the local concert of the famous Jennie Lind, who left her mark on Northampton by calling it the paradise of America. In 1868 Burr bought 8 ½ acres on both sides of the recently opened street. The street had been laid out along the top of the river terrace and was pleasantly situated for a small estate. The Burr place is featured in the History of Florence and its picturesque nature has been maintained to this day."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Beers, F. W. County Atlas of Hampshire Massachusetts, New York, 1873.  
Hales, John G. Plan of the Town or Northampton in the County of Hampshire, 1831.  
Miller, D. L. Atlas of the City of Northampton and Town of Easthampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, 1895.  
Walker, George H. and Company. Atlas of Northampton City, Massachusetts, Boston, 1884.  
Walling, Henry F. Map of Hampshire County, Massachusetts, New York, 1860.  
Registry of Deeds: Book 253, Page 217.  
Charles Sheffield, ed. History of Florence, Florence, 1895.

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**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible     Eligible only in an 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 by Bonnie Parsons

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Burr House would contribute to a Beacon Street Historic District developed and resided in by some of Florence’s leading industrialists in the 1860s-1910s. As the home of the industrialist/developer of Beacon Street as a neighborhood it is the key property in the district. It represents the shift in Florence from neighborhoods that mixed mill workers’ housing with mill owners’ housing of the first half of the century to that of neighborhoods of economically-similar residents with, in this case, large lots, grand homes set back from a broad street.

Architecturally, the district is significant for its range of high style homes and a church in the Stick Style, Italianate, Queen Anne and Tudor Revival styles. Further research would indicate which among them were architect-designed, as many certainly were. The Burr House is one of the finest Italianate style houses in Florence.