

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

029-0004	Marblehead North		WNH.161
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**Town/City:** Wenham

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

## Photograph



Photo 1. Façade (south) elevation.

**Address:** 173 Larch Row

**Historic Name:** Susan DeForest Parker House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Residence

Original: Single Family Residence

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1920

**Source:** visual

**Style/Form:** Colonial Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Not known

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards and trim

Roof: wood shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Barn, ranch house (1963)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Side ell(s?) (mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> c)

**Condition:** Excellent

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

**Acreage:** 11.53 acres

**Setting:** Semi-rural neighborhood with heterogeneous residential development on large lots. Main thoroughfare between Wenham village and Hamilton/Essex.

## Locus Map



Map #s are last two digits of lot #s, not street #s

**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies and Wendy Frontiero

**Organization:** Wenham Historical Commission

**Date:** June 2017

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

WENHAM

173 LARCH ROW

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

WNH.161

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.*

173 Larch Row occupies a very large, irregular site on the north side of Larch Row. A paved driveway bisects the property. To its west are a small pond near the road and, near the back of the parcel, a modest modern ranch house. The eastern portion of the property contains a large barn and a Colonial Revival mansion behind a deep front setback, which is traversed by an L-shaped driveway and maintained chiefly in lawn. A series of fieldstone walls define the driveway and form terraces around the house. A dry-laid fieldstone wall and closely spaced street trees line Larch Row in front of the main house and barn. (A large rectangular building depicted to the northeast of the house on the assessor's maps is not visible from the public way. The ranch house at the north of the parcel is not clearly visible from the road and is not described in this form.)

The principal house consists of a large main block (five bays by two bays) and two contiguous, small ells trailing to the west. Measuring 35 feet long by 29 feet deep, the main block rises 2 ½ stories to a side gable roof with gable returns and a large center chimney. Exterior walls are clad with wood clapboards; the roof appears to be covered with weathered wood shingles. Simple wood trim, corner boards, and gable returns frame the structure. Windows typically contain 6/6 double hung sash, molded casings, and wood shutters mounted on pintles.

The symmetrical façade (south elevation) has a center entrance in a pedimented vestibule with a single-leaf door and half-height sidelights. The side elevations typically display two windows on each story. The one-story ells to the west of the main block have side-gabled roofs, regular 6/6 windows, and a single-leaf door offset on the façade of the inner ell. The series of additions ends with a glass-enclosed porch.

Located to the west of the house and measuring 49 feet long by 28 feet wide, the voluminous barn contains 1 ½ stories plus an exposed basement on the south side. It rises from a fieldstone foundation to a front gabled roof with gable returns that faces the house. A small cupola with a low hip roof is set on the diagonal at the center of the ridgeline. The long south elevation of the barn has a large sliding barn door at its ground level. Windows on the basement and main floor are 8/8 double hung sash, with horizontal, 8-light windows under the eaves at the half-story. The gable end elevations are not clearly visible from the street; a very large, segmental arch window dominates the view of the half-story in the east elevation. The outline of a large shed-roofed projection is just visible along the rear (north) elevation.

Well maintained and intact, 173 Larch Row is a fine example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century, country house design in Wenham. The property is distinguished by the size and scale of both the main house and barn, its academic detailing, and by the intact landscape setting, including an open lawn, pond, stone walls, informal driveway and landscaping, and numerous mature trees both along the street edge and dispersed within the property.

## 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 173 Larch Row reflects the shift in Wenham during the early decades of the twentieth century from a rural agricultural and manufacturing community to a suburban and "summer home" community. During this time, Wenham became host to the rising number of society patrons seeking an estate on the desirable North Shore. The open farmland were fertile ground for patrons seeking to transform quaint farms into proper estates.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the F.S. Dodge house was located at 173 Larch Row. In 1905, the property was purchased by Dr. Charles T. Parker and wife Susan DeForest Parker, members of New York society who summered on the North Shore. (Essex

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South Deed Book 1804, page 89.) At that time, Charles Parker had an expansive summer estate of more than 30 acres on Prince Street in Beverly. Beginning around 1909, the Parkers appear in city directories and census listings as living at the former Dodge house on Larch Row. Charles Parker died in 1912.

Susan DeForest Parker married Fortunato Porratto, an Italian émigré, in 1931. During the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original Dodge house was moved or removed and the existing Colonial Revival house constructed. Further research may reveal the origins of the existing house. Around 1940, the property passed to bank executive Frederick Winant and his wife Henrietta. During the 1950s, the house was the residence of Frederick and Pauline Dearborn.

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Photo 2. Outbuilding.