

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

13-0080 Salem WNH.173

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

**Town/City:** Wenham

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

## Photograph



7 Porter Street, view looking northwest.

**Address:** 7 Porter Street

**Historic Name:** Everett and Blanche Sears House

**Uses:** Present: Single Family Residence

Original: Single Family Residence

**Date of Construction:** 1933

**Source:** Deeds, Sears Catalog

**Style/Form:** Tudor Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Sears Roebuck Co./Everett Sears

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete

Wall/Trim: Wood Shingles and trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Detached frame garage.

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Garage doors replaced (late 20<sup>th</sup> C)

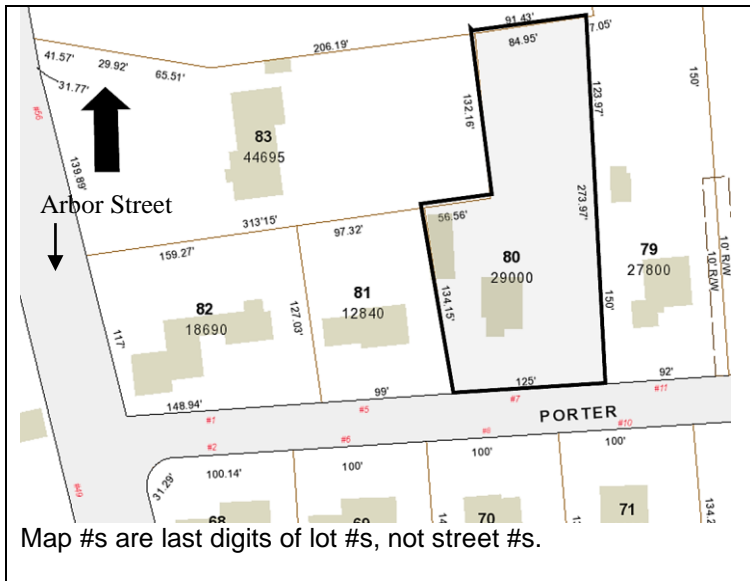
**Condition:** Excellent

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

**Acreage:** 0.67 acre

**Setting:** Residential neighborhood of early 20<sup>th</sup> century and mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century single-family houses.

## Locus Map



Map #s are last 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

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WENHAM

7 PORTER STREET

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.*

This two-story rectangular-plan Sears Roebuck kit house faces south toward Porter Street. The side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. An exterior brick chimney is located at the east gable end. The building is covered with stained wood shingles and rests on a concrete foundation. A two-story cross-gabled projection is located at the west end of the south elevation and contains the recessed entrance. The projection features a flared roofline at the first-floor level. Six-light windows flank the recessed entrance. The first floor and the projection contain 4/1 wood sash windows. The shed dormer on the south elevation contains 3/1 wood sash windows. 6/1 wood sash windows are located elsewhere throughout the building. A diamond-shaped window is located on the west elevation at the location of the interior stair landing. Flat wood trim is located throughout the house.

A detached wood frame garage is located at the west property line, adjacent to the house. The front-gabled roof features a roof flare identical to that on the house, likely indicating that the garage is also a Sears Roebuck kit. The walls are covered with stained wood shingles identical to those on the house. Flat wood trim is located throughout the garage. Two garage bays fill the south elevation; the paneled garage doors appear to date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 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.*

In 1922, Everett W. Sears and his wife, Blanche, purchased a large parcel of land on the north side of Porter Street from the estate of Isaac Porter. The Sears family moved into the Porter house (now 19 Porter Street). Sears worked as a house carpenter while farming the land, planting it in squash. (1930 census and Wenham Historical...:110) Sears subdivided the lot in 1933 and in June of that year, Sears sold the lot "with the buildings thereon" to Hughena Cameron. (Essex Deed and Plan, Book 2954, page 329) Cameron, later surname Stanley, sold the house in 1944 to Fred Burrecker and wife. The property was sold again in 1945 and in 1985, to the current owners. (Essex Deed Book 3390, page 289; Book 3422, page 170)

Everett Sears' occupation as a house carpenter makes it likely that he constructed the house ca. 1933. The house is an excellent example of the "Lynnhaven" model of Sears Roebuck kit homes. The design featured six rooms and 1½ bathrooms, a shed dormer on the front elevation, and a recessed front door in the cross gable. The design is model number 3309 in Sears catalogs produced in 1932-1935 and 1937 and cost \$2,227 to \$2,393. (Stevenson and Jandl: 161.) The 1932 Sears *Homes of Today* catalog describes the Lynnhaven:

All "Honor-Bilt" homes are thoroughly tested to be sure that they contain those requirements which make happy, satisfied home builder. In presenting the Lynnhaven, we feel that we are offering a home which will solve a problem for many home builders. The graceful way in which the front projection ties itself into the main building and the exceptionally attractive entrance, makes this home one that will be admired by many. The exterior walls, covered with our Royal Red Cedar 24-inch shingles, when stained a light gray, give a very pleasing effect. The Floor Plan contains vestibule, lavatory, reception hall, living room, dining room, breakfast alcove, kitchen, three bedrooms, bath and plenty of closets. (Sears: 23)

The garage shares design features with the house and is likely to also be a Sears kit.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Sears, Roebuck and Company began selling building materials through its extensive catalog operations. In 1908, Sears began offering 22 styles of Honor-Bilt mail-order house kits that included pre-cut materials to construct an entire house. The prices included plans, specifications, and nearly all of the materials to build the house, up to and including the nails. The materials were shipped to the nearest railroad stop and trucked to the building site. Sears also offered financing for not only the house but also the lot. The idea of mail-order houses caught on and Sears' sales went from approximately 125 units a month in 1920 to more than 250 units a month in 1929. Sears reached 30,000 houses sold by 1925

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and nearly 50,000 by 1930. The effects of the Great Depression on sales were not fully felt until 1935, when Sears stopped financing the houses and lots. That year, Sears returned to selling only houses. The last Sears kit house catalog was issued in 1940 and the housing division discontinued. Sears Roebuck kit houses, as well as those of their competitors The Hodgson Company, Aladdin Homes, and Montgomery Ward, have been constructed throughout the United States. (Stevenson and Jandl: 19-23.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Sears, Roebuck and Company. *Homes of Tomorrow*. 1932. <https://archive.org/stream/HomesOfToday1932/HomesofToday-19320001>. Accessed February 7, 2017.
- Stevenson, Katherine Cole and H. Ward Jandl. *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company*. New York, New York: Preservation Press John Wiley & Sons, 1986.
- United States Census for 1930, 1940. Ancestry.com.
- Walker Lithography and Publishing Company. *Atlas of the Towns of Topsfield, Ipswich, Essex, Hamilton and Wenham, Essex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: Walker Lithography & Co., 1910.
- Wenham Historical Association & Museum, Inc. *Wenham in Pictures and Prose*. Wenham: Wenham Historical Association & Museum. 1992.
- Town of Wenham Tax Assessor records.

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## Supplementary Images

Sears, Roebuck and Company. *Homes of Tomorrow*. 1932. Page 23.

Garage, view facing north.

**The LYNNHAVEN Six Rooms and Bath**  
No. 3308—Already Cut and Fitted  
Monthly Payments as Low as \$50 to \$65

WHAT picturesque possibilities can be hidden behind a few brick, stone, sacks of cement, a pile of lumber and millwork. It all depends on the design, but the result desired is a home with an attractive exterior and a conveniently arranged interior. All "Honor Bill" homes are thoroughly tested to be sure that they contain these requirements which make happy, satisfied home builders.

In presenting the Lynnhaven, we feel that we are offering a home which will solve a problem for many home builders. The graceful way in which the front projection ties itself into the main building and the exceptionally attractive entrance, make this home one that will be admired by many. The exterior walls, covered with our Royal Red Cedar 14-inch shingles, when stained a light gray, give a very pleasing effect.

THE FLOOR PLAN contains vestibule, lavatory, reception hall, living room, dining room, breakfast alcove, kitchen, three bedrooms, bath and plenty of closets.

Fill out Information Blank and we will send you complete delivered price and copy of the original architectural elevations, floor plans and outline of specifications.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

HOME CONSTRUCTION DIVISION

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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     DCriteria Considerations:     A     B     C     D     E     F     GStatement of Significance by Stacy Spies*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Everett and Blanche Sears House at 7 Porter Street is an excellent example of a kit house sold by Sears Roebuck Company during the 1920s and 1930s. The house is an unusually intact example of innovative developments in residential construction during the Early Modern Period (1915-1940) of Massachusetts history. The Sears house is representative of the development of Wenham in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century from a rural manufacturing and agricultural community into a suburban community from which professionals would commute to work in Beverly, Boston and other urban areas.

In 1922, Everett W. Sears and his wife, Blanche, purchased a large parcel of land on the north side of Porter Street. Sears subdivided the lot in 1933 and in June of that year, Sears sold the lot "with the buildings thereon" to Hughena Cameron, later surname Stanley. Everett Sears' occupation as a house carpenter makes it likely that he constructed the house.

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The garage shares design features and materials with the house and is likely to also be a Sears kit.

The Everett and Blanche Sears House retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and meets Criterion C at the local level.