FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor’s Number | USGS Quad | Area(s) | Form Number
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UMASS No. 77 | Williamsburg | N/A | 

Town: Amherst
Place: University of Massachusetts
Address: 31 Clubhouse Drive
Historic Name: Bowditch Lodge
Uses: Present: Day Care Center
Original: Lodge
Date of Construction: 1937
Source: University of Massachusetts Facilities Dept.
Style/Form: Rustic vernacular
Architect/Builder: 4H volunteers
Exterior Material:
  Foundation: Concrete
  Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding
  Roof: Asphalt Shingles
Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (with dates): Relocation in 1967, which included loss of original foundation and original fieldstone chimney. Replacement of windows, installation of vinyl siding, alteration of porch arches, and installation of brick chimney where no chimney previously existed (dates unknown).
Condition: Good
Moved: no | | yes | X | Date 1967
Acreage: Total Campus Acreage: 1,348 Acres
Setting: Close to Stadium Road and relocated Farley Lodge, backing onto wooded area.

Recorded by: W. Maros/C. Weed/C. Beagan
Organization: VHB/Pressley Associates
Date (month / year): May 2009

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.
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.

Bowditch Lodge is a one story ranch-style building with a side gable roof, which was constructed in 1937 as a meeting place for the Massachusetts State College’s very active 4H club community. The building has a projecting front gable ell and a deep covered porch on its main, southeast elevation. The main entry is sheltered within the porch. The building is six bays wide and six bays deep, with a fieldstone exterior chimney on the building’s south end. Bowditch Lodge is currently clad in synthetic siding and has modern replacement windows.

Bowditch and Farley Lodges were designed and built by volunteers from the 4H community. Both these buildings originally had interiors that were designed in the New England summer cottage tradition, with the wood framing intentionally left open and exposed on the inner side of the exterior walls. At an unknown later date, the exposed wood framing was covered over with interior wallboard.

Mid-20th century photographs of the Bowditch Lodge on file at Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst show that the building originally had board and batten wood siding, rounded arches at the front of the deep porch, and a fieldstone chimney at what is now its southwest end. Bowditch Lodge is an example of regional rustic vernacular architecture of the early-to-mid 20th century, with an emphasis on unpretentious appearance and functional design.

Historic photographs indicate that Bowditch Lodge and Farley Lodge were very similar in appearance, but with essentially reversed designs, with the placement of the projecting front gable ell and adjoining deep covered porch being reversed like mirror images. The two Lodges are not reverse-identical designs, however. The prime differences are that each Lodge has its chimney in its west end, and the windows in the projecting ells are of a different size and configuration.
Landscape – Visual/Design Assessment

Bowditch Lodge is a part of the UMASS childcare complex located north of Alumni Stadium on the west side of Stadium Drive. The site is fairly flat and accessed by a curved bituminous concrete entry drive leads from a parking area on the east side of the site. Vegetation on the site consists mostly of lawn with deciduous and evergreen trees. To the south, west, and north of the site are dense woods.

2005 orthophotograph of the Bowditch Lodge (center, top left) and surrounding landscape, north is up (MassGIS).
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.

Overview

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst was chartered as the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1863 but did not accept its first class until 1867. As one of two land grant universities in Massachusetts, the university’s original mission was agricultural education. Its mission, however, evolved within the first 20 years in response to the changing needs of the United States. While agriculture remains, even today, a mainstay of the University’s mission, the University now also supports engineering, science, education, and liberal arts colleges and departments.

A full historical narrative of the University of Massachusetts from its founding to 1958 is contained in the survey report. This narrative was prepared in 2009 by Carol S. Weed, Senior Archaeologist with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Shown below are selected highlights from the text of the full historical narrative, along with additional information pertinent to the specific building that is described in this Massachusetts Historical Commission Building Form. This section contains: (1) highlights of the historic periods in the development of the University of Massachusetts, leading up to and including the period when the building was constructed, (2) information about the university in the decade when the building was constructed, (3) information about the circumstances that led to the construction of the building, along with information about its architect, if known, and (4) an analysis of the historic landscape of the building.

1863-1867: Administration and Initial Campus Layout

As the educational mission evolved in the years after 1863, so did the university’s approach to its facilities and its landscape. There was no accepted plan for the layout of the college, despite the preparation of various plan proposals in the 1860s, including separate proposals from the country’s preeminent landscape planners, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, who had formerly worked together on the winning design for New York City’s Central Park. Neither Vaux’s plan, nor Olmsted’s plan to create a campus around a central green, were accepted by the University Trustees.

Manning’s plan designated three distinct sections of the campus, the Upland, Midland and Lowland Sections. Each section was intended to be the locus of specific functions, with clusters of purpose-built structures to serve those functions. For example, one section would be designated for faculty, women’s and horticultural facilities. A second section would contain administration, research, science and student life (dormitory, dining hall, and sports) facilities. The third section would be dedicated to poultry, farming and sewage disposal facilities.

Although Manning’s Upland, Midland, and Lowland sections are not fully realized, it is apparent that discipline specific groupings were developed. Building clusters, especially those related to agriculture, administration, and the hard and earth sciences (physics, chemistry, and geology) continued to expand through the present day.
1916-1931: World War I and the Transition Years
Long range building programs were developed beginning with Landscape Gardening Professor F.A. Waugh’s 1919 plan. Like Manning’s 1911 plan, Waugh’s 1919 work emphasized building groups in order to maintain the proper balance between buildings, cultivated fields, meadows and lawns, forests and trees. By World War I and continuing through the 1920s, University records frequently refer to the inadequacy of the physical plant; the lack of class room space; the lack of properly ventilated and lighted spaces; and the danger of having to cancel classes because of a lack of appropriate facilities. Expansion of the campus through acquisition of additional land was considered essential if the University were to construct new and better facilities to address these deficiencies and excel as an institution of higher education.

The 1920s, however, had the fewest buildings constructed of any decade in the campus history to that point. The slow pace of building is largely attributed to the annual funding levels that were appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature during the decade.

1931-1941: Great Depression, New Deal
The change in campus orientation wrought by the expansion of the school’s mission began in the 1930s with its name change to Massachusetts State College. With that program expansion there was a concerted effort to modernize and expand the campus facilities. The campus population had grown steadily during the 1920s.

In 1933, the campus was hosting about 1,200 students in its graduate and undergraduate sections. By 1935, there were 1,300 students enrolled representing a 53 percent increase in five years and of 80 percent in ten years, prompting the University to limit the freshman class to 300 students due to the inadequacy of facilities and staff to care for a greater number. This student population was putting extreme pressure on basic resources such as the library.

Despite the growing student population and an identified need for additional and improved campus facilities in the 1920s and 1930s, the onset of the Great Depression with its wide-ranging consequences effectively restricted funding to the bare minimum needed to operate. By late 1933, the funding outlook had improved through the economic stimulus initiatives of the Federal Government, and National Recovery Act funds were available for the construction of a library, a new administration building, and other unspecified buildings for the University.

As part of the University’s planning effort to select a site for the new library, the Campus Planning Committee charged with this work issued a final report in late 1933, which contained five recommendations for campus development: 1) That the general organization and building program on the campus be planned so as not to interfere with the sightliness [sic] and beauty of the present central open space, 2) That buildings of such a general service nature (library, dining hall, etc.) that they affect the entire student body be located in the first zone immediately adjacent to the central open space, 3) That buildings dealing with services more specialized (agriculture, home economics, etc.), and therefore affecting only certain groups of students, occupy the second zone, 4) That buildings used by students, but not directly contributing to organized instruction (dormitories), occupy the third zone and 5) That buildings dealing with problems of general maintenance and physical service (heating plant, carpenter shop, horse barn, etc.) occupy the outer, or fourth zone.

The committee went on to note that with these five recommendations in mind, they would site newly proposed buildings according to the defined zones. These zones were basically the ones that Professor Waugh had recommended in his 1907 and 1919 planning reports and Manning had proposed in his 1911 plan. The zones or sections were designed to focus significant elements of the college’s mission to its physical core which was defined as the broad, central bench with its hallmark pond. Everything that supported these core elements were dispatched to outer zones.

Despite documents entitled “Final Report of the Campus Planning Committee,” the group operated in one form or another as the primary planning unit on campus for the next 15 years, until 1948. The committee continued to focus on where buildings and facilities would be best sited relative to the campus missions.
Bowditch Lodge
The construction of two 4H lodges on the campus within a mere four years (1933-1937) during the economic hardships of the Great Depression is a testament to the depth of commitment of the 4H community in Massachusetts during the 1930s, particularly when one considers that 4H volunteers provided the design and much of the labor and materials that made construction of these buildings possible. The two lodges (Bowditch Lodge and Farley Lodge) were constructed as private facilities on State-owned land at the campus.

The 4H Movement is historically associated with the Extension Service of the US Department of Agriculture and land-grant colleges and universities, such as the Massachusetts Agricultural College, now the University of Massachusetts. The 4H Movement fosters agricultural and scientific education, particularly through youth groups. Bowditch and Farley Lodges are integral to the history of the Extension Service and agricultural programs at the University of Massachusetts. According to UMass alumna Elaine Barker, Bowditch and Farley Lodges also played a role in the University’s early involvement with the Peace Corps. The lodges were used in 1962 to house volunteers who were among the early recruits to the Peace Corps shortly after U.S. President John F. Kennedy set up the Corps as an organization.

Bowditch and Farley Lodges were originally located where Thompson Hall (built 1967) now stands. Bowditch Lodge was relocated to its current site in 1967, while Farley Lodge is thought to have been moved in about 1962. Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst, has a photograph of Bowditch Lodge being loaded onto a flatbed truck in preparation for its move. The smokestacks of the University Power Plant can be seen directly behind the lifted building in this photograph.

Bowditch Lodge was named for Nathaniel I. Bowditch, who served as a Trustee of the College from 1896 to 1945.

Landscape Analysis
Bowditch Lodge and Farley Lodge are presently located outside the core of the historic campus and are not shown on historic campus maps or plans in their current location because they were moved in the 1960s. Historic photographs of the buildings on their original location, however, show the buildings shortly after their completion with evergreen and deciduous trees over mown lawn with dense woods to the north, south, and west in the area where Thompson Hall now stands. Access to Farley Lodge is shown as a residential-scale stepping stone path. The addition of a new building, Grass Roots Daycare, to the complex obstructed views of the historic buildings from the adjacent road and resulted in the removal of some trees. Change in use to the childcare complex resulted in the addition of new pedestrian and vehicular pavement, extensive chain link fence, and children’s play equipment that is not consistent with the historic appearance of the complex.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

___, Massachusetts 4H History, www.mass4H.org


Harold Whiting Cary, The University of Massachusetts: A History of One Hundred Years (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1962)

Joseph S. Larson, Personal communication to VHB 25 March 2009 concerning Elaine Barker’s recollection of Peace Corps volunteers being housed at Bowditch and Farley Lodges in 1962.

Richard Nathhorst, Personal communication to VHB 3 March 2009 regarding the historic context of Bowditch and Farley Lodges and their original interior finishes.
Detailed Map
Bowditch Lodge, view west, November 2008
Bowditch Lodge on its original site, no date (mid 20th century)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bowditch Lodge on its original site where Thompson Hall now stands, no date (mid 20th century)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bowditch Lodge during removal from its original site where Thompson Hall now stands, no date (circa 1967)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bowditch Lodge after relocation to its current site, no date (circa 1968)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Bowditch Lodge after relocation to its current site, with relocated Farley Lodge on the left, 1968
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
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 by:  Rita Walsh, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

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

Bowditch Lodge (UMASS #77) is recommended not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building is not recommended individually eligible as it does not possess individual significance nor does it display any significance in construction or architectural design. The building’s physical integrity has been diminished through the application of synthetic siding over its original board-and-batten siding, replacement window sash, and alterations to its recessed front porch. The building was also moved from its original location in 1967.

Although a large number of buildings on the campus are recommended eligible as part of a potential historic district, Bowditch Lodge is not recommended eligible as a contributing resource to this district as it is physically isolated from this concentration of buildings and is separated from them not only by distance, but by a series of parking lots and more recently constructed buildings.