

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

18-33B	Marion		MRN.607
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Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 118 Converse Road

Historic Name: Tall Pine Unit / Girl Scout Camp Lodge - Roger R. Blackman House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Institutional (camp)

Date of Construction: Early 1920s / Mid-20th century

Source: Visual analysis

Style/Form: Craftsman / Shed Contemporary

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Not visible

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles / Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Two sheds

Photograph



Locus Map



Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Infill block (early-20th c.)
Center block (mid-20th c.)
Garage block (mid-20th c.)
Replacement windows

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1.38

Setting: Diverse residential neighborhood developed in the mid-19th – early 20th centuries. Housing stock represents a range of styles including Cape, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Craftsman and Colonial Revival. Settled mostly with moderately-sized, wood-frame, single-family houses on small- to medium-sized lots.

Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): October 2023

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MARION

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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.

118 Converse Road occupies a rectangular lot on the west side of Converse Road and faces east. The parcel is set back behind the adjoining properties at 118 and 122 Converse Road and is accessed by a right-of-way that passes between them. It gently drops in grade from east to west towards the Aucoot Cove Conservation Area. The area surrounding the house is maintained in lawn and foundation plantings line the façade (east elevation). The balance of the property is densely vegetated. A low drystone wall marks the north and west property lines. A gravel driveway enters the property from Converse Road via the right-of-way and ends at an attached garage at the south elevation of the house.

This wood-frame dwelling is a one-story, side-gabled structure comprising a three-bay-by-one-bay main block of log construction and three dependencies. The dependencies include an early infill block, a center block, and an attached garage. Constructed in the 1920s with later additions, it displays a blend of the Craftsman and Shed Contemporary styles and retains many of its character-defining features. The house is clad in wood shingles and the roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. A large river rock chimney with a stone cap rises from the roof ridge of the main block.

The east roof slope at the façade (east elevation) of the main block sweeps over the west bay, which is a one-bay-deep projection. A shingled knee wall enclosing a terrace spans the center and east bays and opens at its west end to admit a slate walkway that runs from the driveway along the east wall of the garage and center blocks. The main block is trimmed with corner boards and has deep overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails. Openings at the façade include a glass-and-panel-door at the center bay and six-light sliding sash at the east and west bays. The openings appear to be in the same locations as those seen in an early photograph of the structure when it served as a camp administration building. (See the image below.) A shed-roofed, box oriel window at the north elevation contains six-light sliding sash.

The gabled center block is set back from the façade at the west elevation of the main block. It contains small fixed-light sash at the east elevation and four openings at the west elevation including a French door, a sliding door, and two windows. The openings front a wooden platform deck wrapped by a three-step stair that descends to grade. The platform continues across the shed-roofed infill addition which spans the main block, where the deck is enclosed by a wood and cable railing. A narrow French door occupies the westernmost bay of the infill block and a band of continuous, nearly full-height sash occupies the rest of the wall. The garage block, which land plans show was added sometime between 1974 and 1987, is set back from the façade of the main block and extends well beyond the west elevation of the infill block. It has an asymmetrical gullwing roof with deep overhanging eaves and rafter tails. Wood-paneled overhead garage doors with integrated transoms face the driveway at the east elevation.

The main block at 118 Converse Road was log-built with Craftsman-style features that were replicated in subsequent additions. The predominant style for smaller homes throughout the country from 1905 to 1930, the Craftsman style emphasized simplicity and modesty in architecture. Craftsman-style homes are typically one or one-and-one-half stories tall and characterized by low-pitched roofs with overhanging eaves; exposed beams, brackets and rafters; and natural materials such as stone. The Craftsman characteristics of this house include its form, deep eaves with rafter tails, and rubblestone chimney. Shed Contemporary house designs were part of the Modernist movement that emerged in the United States in the second half of the 20th century as a response to earlier Classical styles. Influenced by the work of architects Charles Moore and Robert Venturi, the structures appear to be assembled from two or more shed-roofed and gabled forms joined together. These shapes dominate the façade and give the impression of several geometric forms tightly attached to each other.

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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.

Marion Village, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor. The town has historically consisted of a northern portion, often referred to as the Old Landing, and a southern portion, known once as Wharf Village but more commonly referred to today as The Village or Marion Village.

This house is located in the southernmost portion of Converse Road which runs from Marion Village southward towards Converse Point (formerly called Charles Neck Point), the end of the peninsula which forms the western side of Sippican Harbor. Originally called Nye Street, Converse Road was also inconsistently known as Pleasant Street or Charles Neck Road. When the 1903 map was drawn, this section of Marion was largely open with only a few scattered buildings. Today, the area is settled with late-20th and early-21st century houses at the midpoint of Charles Neck, and much earlier dwellings on large parcels at the southern part of the Neck as it approaches Converse Point.

This house does not appear on any of the historic maps of Marion. The earliest recorded conveyance found for the property was the sale in 1908 of a parcel of undeveloped land by Nathan B. Nye to Abbie R. Dow and her husband Richard S. Dow.

Nathan B. Nye (1864-1951), a well-known figure in Marion, was one of the many descendants of Capt. George Bonum Nye. Censuses from 1880 through 1940 showed Nathan Nye working primarily as a laborer and sometimes as a gardener at the nearby Harry Converse estate. In 1908 he sold two parcels of land to Abigail Rawson Dow (b.1865) and her husband, Boston lawyer Richard S. Dow (1863-1940), who were already Marion summer residents. Fifteen years earlier in 1893 they had purchased waterfront property and commissioned William Gibbons Preston to design a cottage at 5 Water Street (c. 1895, Richard S. Dow House, MRN.164). In 1916 the Dows sold the undeveloped property to Harry E. Converse.

Colonel Harry Elisha Converse (1863-1920) was the son of Malden shoe manufacturer Elisha S. Converse (1820-1904) and an executive at the Boston Rubber Shoe Company that his father had founded in 1853. In 1903 Harry Converse built "The Moorings" (demolished in 1924), considered to be the largest wood frame house in New England. It was set south and east of the subject property on a large, gardened estate at Charles Neck overlooking the entrance to Sippican Harbor and Buzzards Bay. The subject property, which included three parcels, was devised to Harry Converse's son Parker Converse in 1921. Sometime between 1916 and 1923 Harry E. Converse or his son Parker Converse made the subject property available to the New Bedford Girl Scouts for use as a summer camp. The New Bedford Council was established by Emma R. Hall in 1913, just a year after the national organization was founded by Juliette Gordon Low. The subject building, known as Tall Pine Unit, was likely built in the early 1920s and was of log cabin construction. It served as the administration building for the camp, which ran summer sessions for 300 girl campers from 1923 until 1944, when a hurricane destroyed the surrounding pine forest.¹ The camp extended from the administration building southward to Aucoot Cove, which was reached by a woodland path to Aucoot Marsh and then a boardwalk to the waterfront.²

Parker Converse sold the subject property in 1947 to Roger W. Blackman of Arlington, as reported in a 1947 newspaper article stating that Blackman had "bought from Parker Converse the log cabin and land formerly owned by the Girl Scouts on Converse Road."³ Roger W. Blackman (1910-1979) was listed in the 1940 census as a stock clerk and on his World War II draft registration card the same year as an employee of the American Stove Company. He and his wife Olive moved to Florida, where his obituary stated that he was a retired sales engineer for Peoples Gas Company of Tampa.⁴ Blackman remodeled the building for seasonal residential use; it is not known if he or a later owner was responsible for the center block and infill additions and the wood shingle siding applied over the log walls. After two subsequent short-term owners, the property was purchased by Langford and Margaret Baldwin in 1957. An Episcopal priest, Langford "Lang" Baldwin (1917-2008) was born in Yonkers, New York. He was first married to Margaret K. Baldwin (d.1980) and later to Vera Mary Dowden. He served as rector of St. Andrew's Church in New Bedford, St. Barnabas and All Saints churches in Springfield, and Grace Church in Amherst. During World War II

¹ "The Girl Scouts at Camp Hall" by Leslie Thayer Piper in the *Courier Sentinel*. March 10, 2019.

² Camp Hall photograph notes, Sippican Historical Society collection at <https://sippicanhistoricalsociety.org/>

³ "Marion [News]" in uncited newspaper, July 8, 1947.

⁴ Roger Blackman obituary. *Tampa Bay Times*, May 22, 1979.

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Langford Baldwin served in U.S. Counterintelligence in Tunisia and Italy. The subject house was a summer residence for the Baldwins, who owned it until 1972.

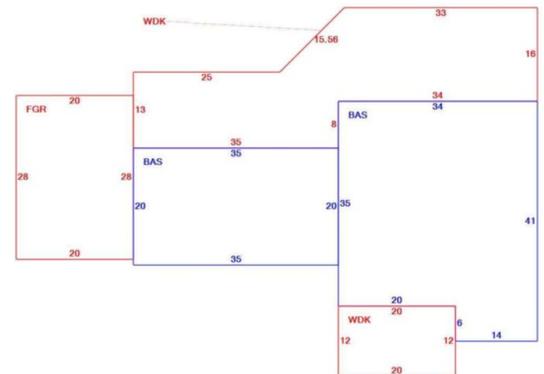
The property was purchased by the current owners in 2018.

Title Research

Date	Book-Page (Certificate)	Grantor	Grantee	Plan Reference
09-14-2018	(127458)	Allan C. & Eileen L. Rowbotham	Allan C. & Eileen L. Rowbotham	
07-12-2011	(116259)	David B. & Karen A. O'Connor	Allan C. & Eileen L. Rowbotham	
08-02-2003	(104044)	Claire M. Craig	David B. & Karen A. O'Connor	
11-25-1996	(90616)	Robert L. Merrow	Claire M. Craig	19525 J Lot#74
03-31-1995	(87840)	Fleet Bank	Robert L. Merrow (Lot#1)	
10-29-1992	(83777)	Maurice R. & Alexena M. Barnett (Fcls.)	New Bedford Institution for Savings	
07-02-1986	(73086)	Maurice R. & Alexena M. Barnett (Mtg)	New Bedford Institution for Savings	
04-15-1986	(61134)	Angus G. & Margaret E. Anderson	Maurice R. & Alexena M. Barnett	19525 I Lot #71
10-26-1978	(61134)	Joseph D. & Lorraine f. Chrobak	Angus G. & Margaret E. Anderson	19525 I Lot #71
12-30-1974	(54110)	Otto Max Schlaegal	Joseph D. & Lorraine f. Chrobak	
06-30-1972	(49365)	Langford & Margaret K. Baldwin	Otto Max Schlaegal (Parcel #2)	19525 E Lot #19
08-13-1957	(25284)	Walter E. & Florence K. Mellor	Langford & Margaret K. Baldwin	19525 E Lot #19
10-26-1956	(24209)	John H. & Dorothy N. Somers	Walter E. & Florence K. Mellor	
09-15-1954	(21257)	Roger W. & Olive D. Blackman	John H. & Dorothy N. Somers	
05-06-1947	(11405)	Parker & Jane Butler Converse	Roger W. & Olive D. Blackman	
02-14-1947	(11405)	Court Decree	Parker & Jane Butler Converse	
10-13-1921	(1178)	Harold S. Davis	Parker & June Butler Converse	
10-04-1921	(518)	Estate of Harry E. Converse	Harold S. Davis	
09-19-1916	(97)	Abbie R. (& Richard S.) Dow	Harry E. Converse	
04-23-1908	(92)	Nathan Nye	Abbie R. (& Richard S.) Dow	
	Probate	Barnabas B. Nye	Nathan Nye	

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Assessor's card plan

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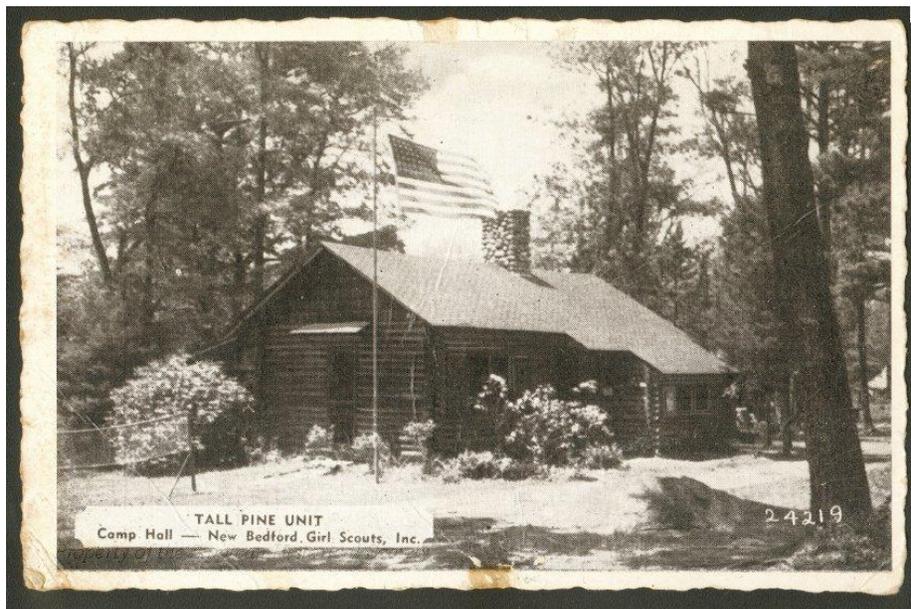
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North and west elevations.



South elevation.



Tall Pine Unit, Camp Hall, New Bedford Girl Scouts, Inc. Ca. 1940. Image courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.