

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20-10B	Marion		MRN.621
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Town/City: Marion

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 96 Moorings Road

Historic Name: Margaret C. Butler House

Uses: Present: Residential

Original: Residential

Date of Construction: Ca. 1924

Source: Visual analysis, town assessor's records

Style/Form: Craftsman

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Rubblestone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Wood shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Guest house (2019)

Gate house (2019)

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lynn Smiledge

Organization: Marion Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): January 2024

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Replacement windows (2005)

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2.76

Setting: Sparsely settled area at Converse Point bordered by shoreline. Interior terrain is characterized by woods and marsh land. Populated primarily by large, waterfront seasonal residences built on large parcels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dwellings display the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

96 Moorings Road

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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.

96 Moorings Road occupies an irregularly-shaped parcel on the west side of the Moorings Road loop. The house faces east with an extensive rear (west) elevation oriented to the shoreline, which is protected by a substantial seawall. It is sited in the southern half of the parcel, which is almost entirely maintained in lawn sparsely dotted with young trees. A border of vegetation lines the property along Moorings Road and the southern lot line. A gravel driveway with a granite apron and granite-lined grass median enters the property at an imposing rubblestone gate at the northern point of the parcel. It passes west of a small gate house near the driveway entrance to the property, east of a guest house sited north of the subject dwelling, and ends in a large circle in front of the main house. A low rubblestone wall broken by a tall trellis gate spans the façade at the driveway edge. A small gatehouse near the driveway entrance fronts a large rectangular fenced garden containing twelve raised beds.

This large two-story dwelling comprises four hip-roofed blocks with deep overhanging eaves organized in a V shape. Porches extend along the entire shore-facing elevations of the house. The entrance, which faces east, occupies the side-gabled main block, which is flanked by a block to the south and by two blocks to the north. Constructed in 1924 in the Craftsman style, it appears to retain all of its original character-defining features. The house rises from a tall rubblestone foundation and is clad in wood shingles. It has a wood-shingled roof that carries painted, double-flue brick chimneys at each of the four blocks.

The house is trimmed with a prominent belt course encircling the building. The wood shingles are organized in overlapping four-row courses that flare slightly over the belt course. The main block, which is three bays wide at the east elevation, contains the main entry at its northernmost bay where it joins the angled connector block. The six-panel wood door has eight-light sidelights and a shallow hip-roofed hood with a molded cornice. The door fronts a shallow stoop and granite pathway that leads to the driveway through the flat-topped trellis gate. All of the windows at the house were covered with storm shutters at the time of the site visit. Images of the dwelling found at a real estate listing for the house show them to be a combination of single, double, and triple mullied six-over-six sash with flat surrounds and box lintels. (See image below.) The windows at the first story touch the belt course and those at the second story touch the cornice.

The north block, which is connected to the main block by the angled connector block, is two bays wide by five bays deep and faces north. An entry at the north wall opens to a deep, hip-roofed open porch supported by Doric columns. A one-story flat-roofed porch spans the west elevation of the north block. It is fully glazed with large transomed lights and has a roof deck with a turned balustrade. A door at the north wall of the porch opens to a circular stone terrace enclosed by a low rubblestone wall. A three-step stone stair with heavy flank walls descends to the lawn from the west end of the terrace.

An open, hip-roofed porch with a rubblestone knee wall and Doric columns spans the west elevation of the angled connector block. An enclosed porch at the two northernmost bays of the west elevation of the main block matches the porch at the north block but is smaller in size. A door at its north wall fronts a three-set stone stair that descends to the lawn. A deck extends west from the porch along the rear elevation of the main and south blocks. A fenced courtyard spans the south elevation of the south block.

The guest house and the gate house, which were built in 2019 according to town assessor's records, closely match the subject house in style and materials. The guest house includes a three-car garage and apartment unit. The square gate house has scroll brackets at the eaves.

96 Moorings Road is a handsome example of the Craftsman style. The American Craftsman architectural movement was inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement, which was a response to the Industrial Revolution and the division of labor. It promoted hand-worked goods and buildings over those that were mass produced. Popular from 1905 until 1930, the style

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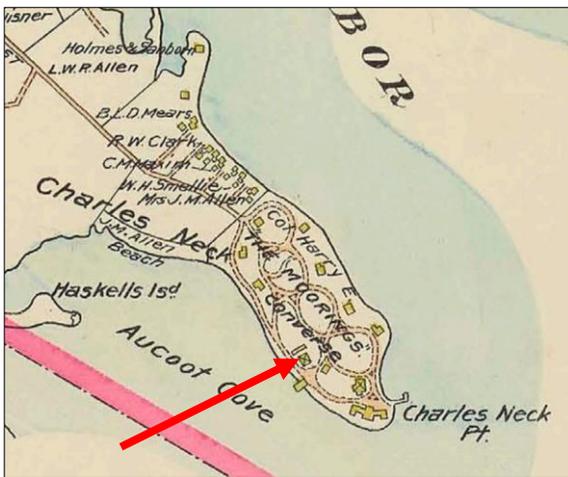
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originated in Southern California and was spread by pattern books and popular magazines and through the efforts of its best-known proponent, furniture designer Gustav Stickley. Craftsman-style homes are typically characterized by low-pitched roofs with overhanging eaves, wide open porches with thick columns, large bay or picture windows, and the use of rustic materials like stone. The Doric columns and turned balustrades at the subject house are more characteristic of the Colonial Revival.

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.

This house is located at the end of Moorings Road, an approximately 0.5-mile-long extension of Converse Road [historically called Pleasant Street, Nye Street, or Charles Neck Road] which runs south from Marion Village to Converse Point [historically called Charles Neck Point], the southernmost end of the peninsula on the western shoreline of Sippican Harbor. Moorings Road, which loops back on itself at the tip of Converse Point, takes its name from "The Moorings," the name given to the Converse estate that occupies the end of the peninsula.



1903 map. Approximate future location of subject house.

No buildings are seen on Charles Neck on the 1855 and 1879 maps. The 1903 map shows this area occupied by The Moorings estate owned by Harry E. Converse, which included a large main house, a number of outbuildings, and a pattern of oval roadways. The earliest recorded conveyance found for this property was the purchase of a 120-acre parcel of land from the estate of John B. Blankinship in 1864 by Thomas LeBaron and Nahum Morse.

Note: For the history of the estate first owned by Lyman R. Blake in 1878 and later by Harry Converse, see the MHC Building Form B for [100 Moorings Road](#) (1924, Parker Converse House, MRN.47).

After the death of Harry Converse in 1920, the property was conveyed to three of his children, Margaret Converse Butler (1896-1981), Parker Converse (1897-1965), and Roger Wolcott Converse (1900-1969). In 1922 the siblings drew up a plan subdividing the Moorings estate into 24 building lots. (See the plan below.) In a 1995 recorded interview, H. [Harry] Peter Converse, the son of Parker Converse, described how the property was divided:

"They cut the point in half and Aunt Peggy [Margaret Converse Butler] took everything on the Aucoot Cove side and this is after my grandfather [Harry E. Converse] died leaving the land to his children. Dad [Parker Converse] had the land on the Sippican Harbor side and Uncle Govy [Roger Converse] got a strip across the middle which in my youth was called Govy's Alley."¹

This subject house was built on a parcel consisting of parts of lots #11, 12, 13, and 14 on that plan. Consistent with the Peter Converse interview, this property, which was on the Aucoot (west) side of the land, fell to Margaret Butler, the daughter of Harry Converse. It is likely that Margaret Butler and her husband John Meigs Butler (1892-1953) built this house sometime around 1924. Their primary residence was in Evanston and later Winnetka, Illinois where John Butler was president of the King Pneumatic Tool Company. The engagement announcement for Margaret Converse in the *Boston Globe* on June 18, 1916 commented that, "[Margaret] is one of the youngest girls to make known her prospective nuptials, for she has not been presented and is still at school."² An amateur photographer and Chicago Cubs fan, Margaret C. Butler documented the team in the 1930s.³ One of her films is in the collection of the Chicago Film Archive.⁴ This property remained in Converse/Butler hands until 1976.

¹ Courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society, transcript of audio tape, object 2005.007.003 (1995).

² "Table Gossip," *Boston Globe*, June 18, 1916, pg. 64.

³ "Cubs historical sleuthing: 1939," @<https://www.bleedcubbieblue.com/2021/3/6/22316840/cubs-historical-sleuthing-1939-edition>

⁴ Butler Family Collection @ <https://collections.chicagofilmarchives.org/Detail/collections/18>.

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West elevation.



Left: East (facade) and north elevations. Right: West and south elevations. Images @ <https://www.redfin.com/MA/Marion/96-Moorings-Rd>

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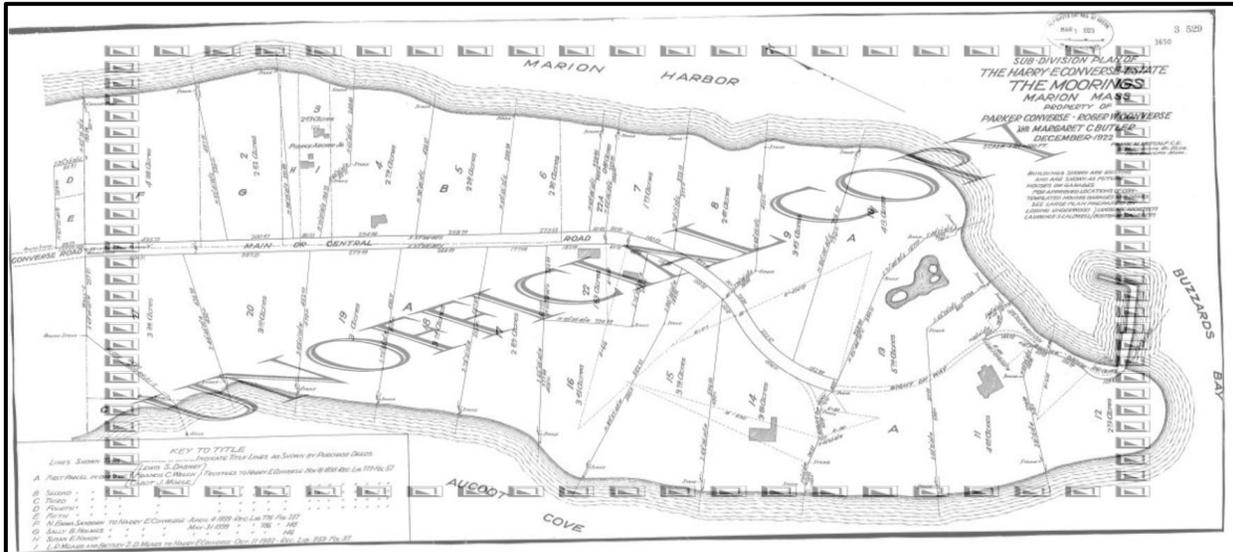
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Harry E. Converse Estate Subdivision Plan, 1922. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 3, Page 529.