

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
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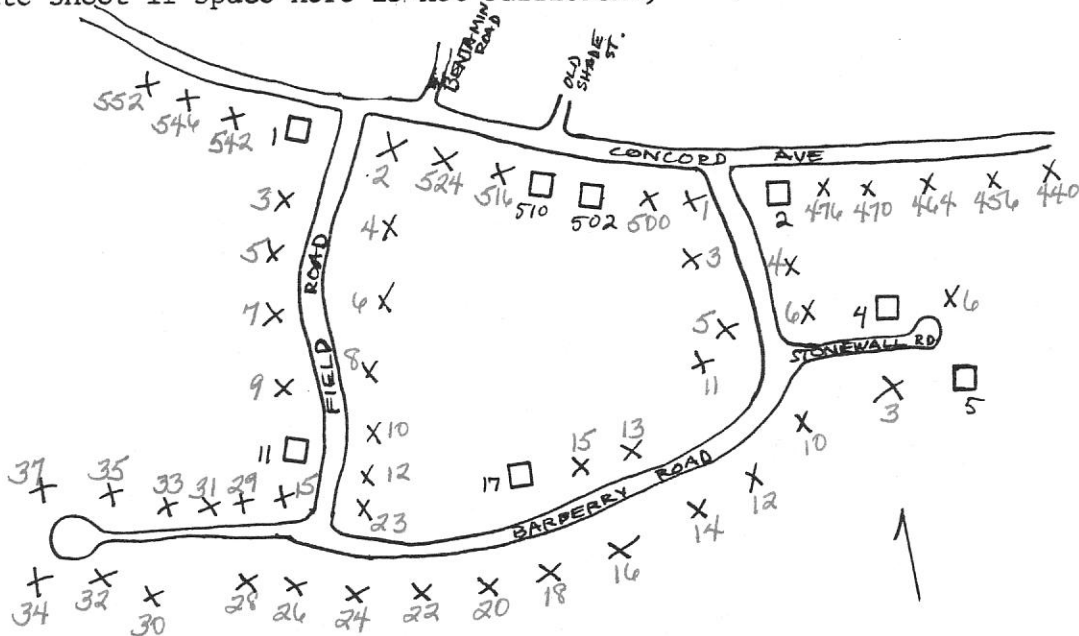


Lexington

f area (if any) Five Fields

l date or period early 1950s

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date February, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Set in an area once open fields separated by stone walls but now, after 30 years growth of landscaped plantings, largely wooded, Five Fields is a community of contemporary homes designed and developed by The Architects Collaborative (TAC) of Cambridge. TAC envisioned a planned community of well-designed, low-cost houses. In order to keep the price down and to compete with other similar houses then on the market, such as those by Techbuilt, TAC offered standard plans with certain components, such as roof trusses, mass produced. Originally, three house types were built: a one-story model on flat sites, a two-story version of the same model on steep slopes, and a split level on gentle slopes (see 11 Field Road and 1 Field Road forms). Problems arose, however, when prospective buyers wanted to make changes. The changes were costly, so later plans allowed more opportunities for custom design and as a result were more expensive.

The original Five Fields houses had vertical redwood siding and pitched roofs and could thus be called a variant of ranch style. (Pitched roofs were

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Five Fields was started in 1951 by The Architects Collaborative (TAC) of Cambridge. Pleased with the success of their Six Moon Hill development in Lexington (see Moon Hill area form), TAC wanted to repeat some of that community's unique features, particularly the common land and an incorporated community with its own bylaws. TAC was also interested in providing more work for the firm so, when they heard that an 80-acre parcel in Lexington was available, they decided to develop an entire housing community themselves (Norman Fletcher, personal communication). Because the AIA code of ethics prevented architects from being directly involved in development, a corporation named Site and Shelter was formed to build roads and sell lots.

Five Fields was originally farmland divided by stone walls into five fields, hence its name. TAC divided the area into 68 house lots of at least half an acre each and provided for 20 acres of common land; the latter was later changed to seven acres and the size of some lots increased. Roads were designed to curve or to be cul-de-sacs, for visual variety and, in the case of cul-de-sacs, children's safety. Field Road was the first to be built; then the section of Barberry Road west of Field Road, and finally Barberry Road east of Field Road. Ground was broken in June 1951; by August 1952, 29 houses had been built; and by 1957 all lots had been sold for what is now a community of 59 houses, some of which are on double lots.

A "Five Fields Association" began to meet in late fall 1951 as soon as the first residents moved in, and the corporation planned by TAC was set up soon afterwards. It determines policy on various neighborhood issues and all

(see Continuation Sheet)

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