

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/282A

2196

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



West (façade) elevation

Address: 18 Bowker Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1915-27

Source: style, historic maps

Style/Form: Bungalow

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone, concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Side and rear additions, replacement sash (L 20th – E 21st c)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.24

Setting: Located on a short side street near the main thoroughfare of Massachusetts Avenue, close to the Arlington line. Dense residential neighborhood with buildings of varying size and scale and predominantly early to mid-20th c construction.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

18 BOWKER STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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.

18 Bowker Street occupies a small lot that is level at the right side and slopes steeply down to the left. Set at an angle to the street, the building has modest front and side setbacks, which are maintained with lawn and extensive landscaping. A brick walkway and wood stairway access the front entrance, and a fieldstone retaining wall runs perpendicular to Bowker Street at the left side of the property. A paved driveway leads to the back of the house from neighboring Charles Street. The building consists of a 1 ½ story main block with side and rear appendages.

The nearly square main block rises from a fieldstone foundation with deeply recessed mortar joints to a low hip roof with exposed rafter ends and a center chimney. Low, hip-roofed dormers are centered on each slope. Walls are clad with wood shingles. Windows typically have 1/1 double hung sash with band molding. The symmetrical front façade (west elevation) presents a center entry porch with a low hip roof, flanked on either side by a single 1/1 window. The entry porch is composed of shingled half-walls and piers, arched openings, wood steps, and a single-leaf, wood door. The dormer on this elevation has two narrow awning windows. A half story dormer has a hip roof and two awning windows with band molding.

The asymmetrical north (left side) elevation of the main block contains three large 1/1 windows and a shallow rectangular bay window, slightly off-center, with a tripartite unit of 1/1 windows. The dormer on this elevation has two 1/1 windows. The south (right side) elevation of the main block contains a single 1/1 window and a half story dormer with a hip roof and a single 1/1 window. A large 2-story ell projecting from the back of the right side elevation rises from a concrete foundation to a hip roof with exposed rafter ends; a roof skirt at the base of the second story continues the main roof and also displays exposed rafter ends. The street-facing (west) wall of the ell has tri-partite windows on each floor, while its right side (south) elevation has offset, paired windows.

Well preserved and well maintained, 18 Bowker Street is a typical example of modest, early 20th century suburban housing in Lexington. The house is notable for its characteristic Bungalow massing, rustic masonry foundation, lively roofline with multiple hip roofs and exposed rafter ends, and, most unusually, its carefully detailed porch.

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.

The small grid of streets bordered by Massachusetts Avenue, Hibbert Street, Taft Avenue, and Bowker Street represents an early area of suburban infill in East Lexington, near the Arlington town line, in an area known as Dexter Hillside. Immediately south of Taft Avenue is Liberty Heights (LEX.Q), a hilltop subdivision laid out by Brookline developer Jacob W. Wilbur in 1909 and developed in the teens and twenties. The growth of both these neighborhoods followed the arrival of the electric street railway on Massachusetts Avenue in 1899 and was directed at working class residents.

In the area adjacent to Massachusetts Avenue known as Dexter Hillside, Hibbert and Sylvia streets, which straddle the Lexington/Arlington line, were laid out, platted, and partially developed by 1898. The only other evidence of development here at that time is the L-shaped beginning of Charles and Cherry streets, where ten house lots were laid out but vacant. By 1927, both Charles and Bowker streets extended from Massachusetts Avenue to Taft Avenue, and the western ends of Cherry Street, Stevens (then Cary) Road, and Camden (then Smythe) Street pushed a few lots eastward from Charles. Development was gradual through the 1920s and 30s, and was virtually complete, with the present network of streets, by 1950.

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The 1922 directory identifies four households on Bowker Street, none with street numbers. They include a carpenter, "state agent," post office clerk, mason, and chauffeur. The house at 18 Bowker appears on the 1927 map with a small outbuilding (likely a garage) at its back left corner. The first known residents at this address were Herbert G. Miller, a printing press operator, and his wife Bertha in 1935. By 1940, Herbert and Bertha were living a few doors away on Bowker Street, and #18 was occupied by Francis Dailey, a post office clerk, his wife Irene, and a lodger. (The extended Dailey family was living on Bowker Street as early as 1922.) Subsequent residents of this house were William A. Knight, a machinist, and his wife Gertrude F. (1945 and 1955), and Leroy J. Hebert, "Res. Tech.", and his wife Helen D. (1965).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Historic maps and atlases: Walling 1853; Beers 1875; Walker 1889; Stady 1898; Walker 1906; Sanborn 1908, 1918, 1927, 1935, 1935/1950.
- Lexington Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey, Period and Area Summaries.
<http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm> Accessed Jul 23, 2015.
- Lexington Directories: 1899, 1908-09, 1922, 1934, 1936.
- Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington." 1980.
_____. Form A – Liberty Heights, LEX.Q. Prepared by Anne Grady and Nancy Seasholes, 1984 and 2001.
- U.S. Census: 1940.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



South (right side) elevation



North (left side) and west (façade) elevations