

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/123    2205

**Town/City:** Lexington

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

## Photograph



West (façade) and south elevations

**Address:** 22 Charles Street

**Historic Name:**

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1906-20

**Source:** historic maps, style

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Detached garage

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Artificial siding and trim, rear ell (L 20<sup>th</sup> c), basement fenestration (E 21<sup>st</sup> c), replacement windows (L 20<sup>th</sup> – E 21<sup>st</sup> c)

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.19

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

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Wendy Frontiero

**Organization:** Lexington Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): September 2015

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

22 CHARLES STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.*

22 Charles Street occupies a small corner lot at the intersection of Charles Street and Stevens Road. The land slopes steeply down from right to left and front to back across the site. The house is set at the front left corner of its lot, close to the street edges. Its modest setbacks are maintained mostly in lawn with foundation plantings. The yard also includes a paved walkway to the front entrance on Charles Street, a paved driveway at the right side of the house, and a large garage with a short paved strip pavement at the back of the house, along Stevens Road. Low fieldstone walls retain the sloping grade at the street corner. The building consists of a 2 ½ story main block and a large rear addition. It appears to have been constructed as a two-family house.

The L-shaped main block rises 2 ½ stories from a fieldstone foundation with a front gable roof with gable returns, a center chimney on the left slope of the roof, and a short cross-gabled wing on the left side elevation. Walls are clad with vinyl siding and trim. Windows typically have 6/1 or 4/1 double hung replacement sash. The front façade contains a voluminous, polygonal bay window on the left, rising two stories to a virtually flat roof. On the right bay of the façade, the entry porch contains two square posts supporting a flat deck with an uncovered porch above; vinyl railings and posts are typical on both levels. A single leaf offset doorway is located on both floors; the ground floor entry has half-height sidelights. Narrow paired windows are centered in the gable peak.

The right side (south) elevation of the main block has irregular fenestration, represented by a variety of single and paired, 4/1 and 6/1 windows, as well as smaller mid-floor windows that likely indicate interior stair landings. An off-center doorway is set towards the back of this elevation, accessed by a wood stairway and stoop with vinyl railings. A shed-roofed dormer towards the front of this elevation contains a single 4/1 window.

The left side (north) elevation is dominated by a 2 ½ story gabled pavilion with a fully exposed basement at the left. The pavilion rises from brick piers at the basement level, which frame a center entrance flanked by large multi-light windows. Upper stories on the end gable have one window centered on each floor on its two exposed elevations. The forward bay on this elevation of the main block has one window on each level. Above this bay, a gabled dormer features a single 6/1 window and no gable returns.

A large addition across the rear of the main block rises three full stories from a concrete foundation to a flat roof. It contains one window bay on each side of its northeast corner. To the left on the rear elevation, a broad, rectangular projection on the upper two floors has one window on each story.

At the back of the property, along Stevens Road, stands a square garage building with textured concrete block walls and a hip roof with exposed rafter ends. A wide single doorway on the street façade accommodates two vehicles.

Well maintained, 22 Charles Street has lost historic integrity through the application of artificial siding and trim, the remodeling of the front entry porch (and at least some elements of the front bay window), and the addition of large-scale basement fenestration on the Stevens Road elevation. The house is notable for its unusually large size in a neighborhood of mostly small-scale houses, the lively massing that takes advantage of the corner site, and the original or early garage.

## 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.*

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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. 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.

The house and garage at 22 Charles Street appear on the 1927 Sanborn map. The first known residents at this address, in 1930, were Finlay MacIsaac, a house carpenter born in Canada, his sister-in-law Rose McGovern, and his two daughters, one of whom worked as a stenographer at the county farm bureau. Renting an apartment here in that year were Frank H. Tobin, a painter, his wife Florence P., and their three young children. Subsequent residents included Bertram F. Jackson, Jr., identified as a mechanic and a guard, and his wife Margaret R. from at least 1945 through 1965. Mary Jane Jackson, who worked as a secretary, lived with them in 1965.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Historic maps and atlases: Walling 1853; Beers 1875; Walker 1889; Stadly 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, 1928, 1934, 1936, 1938, 1942.

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: 1930.

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**SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES**



North (left side) and west (façade) elevations



West (façade) elevation



Garage: North (façade) elevation