

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/270 2206

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



East (façade) and north (right side) elevations

Address: 23 Charles Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1906-20

Source: style, historic maps

Style/Form: Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Artificial siding (L 20th c); side entry vestibule? (L 20th c?)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.12

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-20th c construction.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

23 CHARLES STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	2206
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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.

23 Charles Street occupies a small lot that slopes down from left to right through the site. A concrete block retaining wall lines the sidewalk edge of the property. The building has modest front and side setbacks, which include a paved driveway on the left side of the house. A brick walkway leads from the sidewalk to the front entrance. The yard is maintained chiefly in lawn, with foundation plantings and scattered mature trees.

The rectangular building rises 2 ½ stories from a fieldstone foundation to a front gable roof with no returns and a center chimney. Walls are sheathed in vinyl with vinyl trim. Windows typically have 6/1 or 1/1 double hung replacement sash with vinyl trim. The front façade (east elevation) is spanned by a one-story porch with concrete steps framed by fieldstone cheek walls, half-height fieldstone walls surmounted by Tuscan columns, and a low hip roof. An offset entry door is located in a shallow projecting bay on the left, with paired 6/1 windows to the right. A large cross-gabled pavilion is centered over the entrance bay. It contains an angled bay window on its front face and single windows on its sides. A single 1/1 window is set in the right-hand bay of the second floor, and a 1/1 window is centered in the half story of the facade.

The asymmetrical north (right side) elevation has two large windows and an offset doorway in its partially exposed basement, three windows on the first floor, and two on the second. The more irregular south (left side) elevation has one window visible on the first floor, three of varied size on the second floor, and one intermediate level window near the center, suggesting an interior stairway. A small shed-roofed entry vestibule projects from the center of this elevation, with a single-leaf doorway facing the driveway and a 1/1 window facing the street.

Well maintained, 23 Charles Street has lost architectural integrity through the application of artificial siding and trim. Representative of early 20th century, middle-class suburban development in Lexington, the ambitious house is notable for its comparatively large size and scale in a neighborhood of mostly modest housing. It is also distinguished by its striking façade composition, including the bold, rustic masonry base of the front porch and the articulated façade pavilion.

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. 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.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

23 CHARLES STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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The house at 23 Charles Street appears on the 1927 Sanborn map, where it shared a lot with the house immediately uphill (#25); a narrow garage is set between and behind them. By 1935, the parcel was subdivided and the garage (not extant) stood on the property with #23. The first known residents at this address were Walter B. Flewelling, who worked as a stereotyper in Boston, and his wife Blanche E. in 1922. By 1935, the house was occupied by John J. Gandy, a prison guard, and his wife Irene C. Subsequent residents included Roy A. Cook, a fireman and later fire chief, in 1945 and 1955, with his wife Marion G. and two sons in the Army in 1945. They were accompanied in that year by Paul Sullivan, a chiropodist, and his wife Phyllis, a nurse. By 1965 Adam A. Adams, proprietor of an unnamed business, was living here with his wife Alice.

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.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



South (right side) and east (façade) elevations