

FORM B – BUILDING

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

57/107	Boston North		
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Photograph



Address: 32 Hill Street

Historic Name: Leon & Jane Lipshutz House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1950

Source: deeds

Style/Form: Contemporary

Architect/Builder: Leon Lipshutz

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Date? - additions

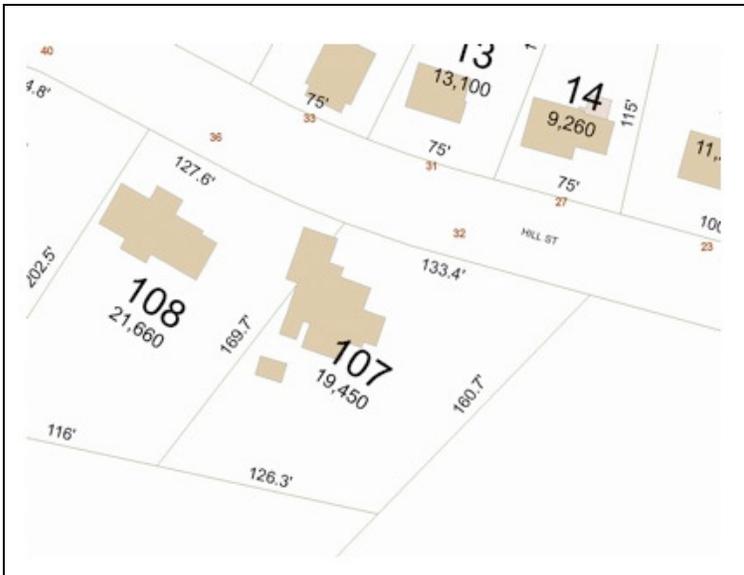
Condition: good

Moved: no | x | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 0.45 acre

Setting: mixed residential

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): January 2010

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Although altered, this house was constructed in 1950 by architect Leon Lipshutz for his own use and significant as a precursor to later contemporary designs including the houses at Conantum in Concord and later, the Techbuilt house. The house is capped by a gable roof displaying a considerable overhang and rests on a cinder block foundation. Exterior walls are now sheathed in wood shingles and windows include double-hung units and large fixed glass windows which are without trim. There is an attached carport.

The design of the house was described by fellow architect Carl Koch:

Leon had recently built himself a house in Lexington, three stories high, at a cost which was about half as much per square foot as the typical custom house. The ways in which he had saved his money were various. They originated mainly from his remarkably close knowledge of building supplies and processes. He determined on a simple shape – the classic “house shape” in fact, with a pitched roof and four straight outside walls. He planned it so that it might be built on a slope with a livable first floor/basement, of which one side was mostly window. The dimensions of his roof and rooms were determined no more on aesthetic principles than by question of what sizes of lumber were available, and could be used without cutting or waste. The gable ends of the house were mostly glass; this made the third story, under the roof, bright and usable, without cutting the roof line for dormers. All his double-hung window units were of the same size. Most structural members were planned so as to require no finish, and to act as trim. (Koch, *At Home with Tomorrow*: 133)

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 was designed by architect Leon Lipshutz for his own family in 1950. Lipshutz was a partner in the office of Carl Koch & Associates, best known for the Techbuilt and other prefabricated homes. The house was an important influence on the firm’s designs for the Conantum residential development in Concord in 1951. As Koch later recalled:

The way we arrived at the design of the house was sort of interesting. Leon Lipshutz in my office wanted a home of his own, and he decided to see how efficient and economical a house he could plan without having a site to put it on. This was sort of backwards from all of my architectural training. In most architecture, you fit the house to the site. They had to come together. So he did plan a house and then bought a site in Lexington. So we decided if we were going to work Conantum the way we thought it could be worked, it would be to have the owners actually be the investors. They would select a lot and select a house. They would have a chance at least of looking around. If they wanted a house with a basement, we wanted to be sure they didn't pick a site that was solid ledge everywhere. As with Leon's house, we had managed to make the lower level a very livable level by the house being sited on a slope so that half of the foundation was exposed almost down to the basement level.

In Lexington, Carl Koch & Associates is best known for the collection of Techbuilt Houses at Middle Ridge/Turning Mill (see Area I), designed in 1955. Lipshutz continued to own this house until 1989.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

32 Hill Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Garrellick, Renee. Interview with Carl Koch, August 10, 1992, part of the Concord Oral History Program.
http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Fin_Aids/OH_Texts/Koch.html
- Koch, Carl and Andy Lewis. *At Home with Tomorrow*. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1958
- Lexington Assessors Records.
- Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.