

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Date (month / year): September 2015

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

50/50C/1 [] [] 2250

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (neighborhood or village):

Photograph



Front (Massachusetts Ave.) facade

Address: 2160 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1898-1906

Source: historic maps, town directories

Style/Form: Queen Anne/Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Attached garage, attached residential condominium unit (#2170 Massachusetts Ave.)

Major Alterations (with dates):

Attached garage and residential structure (L 20th – E 21st c)

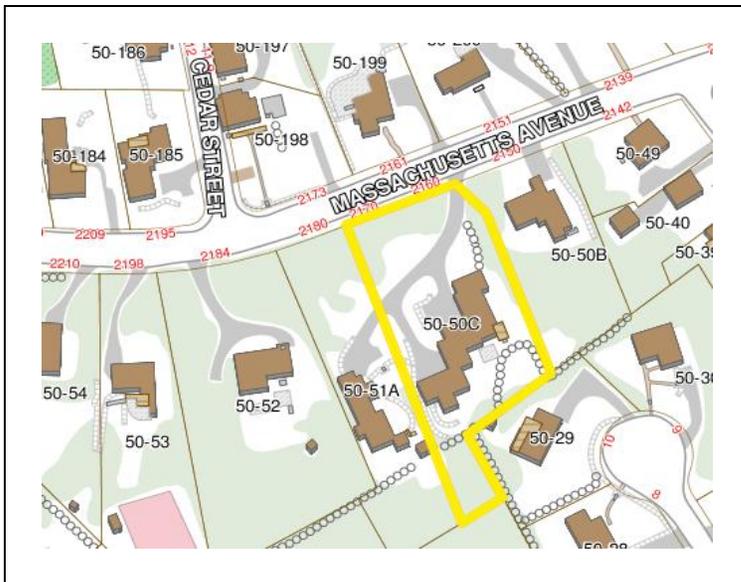
Condition: excellent

Moved: no yes Date:

Acres: 0.67

Setting: Located on busy arterial thoroughfare of Massachusetts Avenue in a heterogeneous residential streetscape. Surrounding buildings are mainly L 19th – M 20th c construction.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

2160 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.

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.

2160 Massachusetts Avenue is part of a condominium property that encompasses attached buildings numbered 2160 and 2170 Massachusetts Avenue. This complex is set on a hillside well above and back from Massachusetts Avenue, and shares a driveway with the free-standing home at 2180 Massachusetts Avenue, which occupies a separate parcel. The paved driveway begins at the front left corner of the large lot at #2160-2170 and crosses the site diagonally to the center of the lot at #2180. 2160 Massachusetts Avenue is positioned near the center of its lot, with a deep front setback and moderate setback on the left side. A thick border of shrubs and trees extends across the street frontage, obscuring visibility of the house. The remainder of the yard is maintained chiefly in lawn, with large foundation plantings. The physical distinction between 2160 and 2170 Massachusetts Avenue is not clear from the street view or assessors records. This survey form concentrates on the front part of the rambling assemblage, a roughly L-shaped structure.

The main block of the building rises 2 ½ stories from a fieldstone foundation to a side gambrel roof with two interior chimneys at the center of the building— one on the front slope, one on the rear slope. Walls are clad with wood shingles. Fenestration is varied, with 1/1 and 6/1 double-hung sash common. The front façade is spanned by a one-story porch under a hip roof, which extends past the left elevation of the main block. The enclosed porch has Tuscan pilasters, banded 12-light windows over low wood panels, and a recessed, off-center entrance with angled sides and a single-light French door. Fieldstone steps and cheek walls with bluestone caps/treads access this entrance.

On the half-story above, a long shed-roofed dormer extends across most of the front slope of the gambrel, anchored on the left end by a large, angled bay window with a high peaked roof, paired 1/1 windows on its front (street) face and horizontal windows with diamond-paned sash high on its angled sides. (The assessors photograph shows that the front facing windows once had diamond panes in the upper sash also.) The right end of the front dormer projects slightly and contains a single 6/1 window under a low hip roof.

The right side elevation of the main block contains a one-story angled bay window with diamond-paned sash towards the front of the first floor, three single windows asymmetrically spaced across the second floor, and two windows centered in the half story.

Attached at the back right corner of the main block is a large, 1 ½ story garage with a front gable roof, clad with wood shingles and trim. The garage structure has a pedimented façade with two arched vehicle bays at ground level and a shallow rectangular bay window with three contiguous casement windows centered in the half-story above. A secondary entrance is located in the connector between the main block and the garage; it consists of a single leaf door.

Well preserved and well maintained, 2160 Massachusetts Avenue is a fine example of an early 20th century, upper middle class country home in Lexington. The modern additions to the rear, while large, have been placed in a subsidiary position to the original construction. The house is notable for its voluminous gambrel roof, handsome proportions, prominent foundation, well-detailed front porch, picturesque dormers, and diamond-paned sash.

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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.

Massachusetts Avenue was established in the 17th century as part of an early highway from Cambridge to Concord. Development of this section of the road, west of Lincoln Street and the town center, was sparse, however, until the beginning of the 20th century.

The house at 2160 Massachusetts Avenue appears on the historic maps between 1898 and 1906. Its first known occupants were Willard C. and Clara A. Hill, who moved here between 1900 and 1906. Willard Hill (1868-1943) was a partner in the insurance firm of Elmer A. Lord & Co., which was located in Boston's Financial District. An advertisement for the company in the 1936 Lexington directory announces:

“For forty-three years our firm has been rendering complete Insurance Service. This experience has built up an organization which today is in a position to extend intelligent under-writing and engineering assistance to those who are interested in complete insurance protection at the lowest possible cost.” (Lexington directory, 1936: 2)

In 1910, Willard and Clara Hill were living in the house with their three young children and an Irish-born maid. Their son Converse was later in business with his father and had a house nearby, at 2101 Massachusetts Avenue, in 1936. Clara Hill occupied the house through at least 1945. Willard and Clara's son Stanley served as an ambulance driver in World War I and was killed in action. Local historian Sam Doran suggests contacting Shirley Stolz, a granddaughter of Willard and Clara Hill who lives across the street from this house, for more information on the Hill family.

Subsequent residents included William R. McEwen, who worked in the insurance business, and his wife Priscilla L. (1955, 1965).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- 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, 1906, 1908-09, 1913, 1922, 1934, 1936.
- Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. “MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington.” 1980.
- U.S. Census: 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Assessor's photograph:
Front (Massachusetts Avenue) façade



Front (Massachusetts Avenue) façade detail:
House and attached garage