

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

22/51	Boston North		
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Town: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)
East Lexington

Address: 739 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name: Adams School

Uses: Present: School

Original: School

Date of Construction: 1912

Source: Hudson, vol.1, p. 402

Style/Form: Twentieth Century Revival

Architect/Builder: Brainerd & Leeds (1912);
Kilham, Hopkins, & Greeley (1931 & 1950)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: brick, concrete

Roof: tar/rubber

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
1931 & 1950 – alterations and additions

Condition: good

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

Acreage: 10.0 acres

Setting: setback from main thoroughfare in 19th
century village center

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): October 2009

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

739 MASS. AVENUE

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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

Setback from Massachusetts Avenue in East Village, the former Adams School dates to 1912. The building is two stories in height above a raised basement. It is constructed of red brick laid in a stretcher bond with buff brick trimmings including a watertable, molded cornice above the second story windows, decorative rectangular panels with diamond motifs on the facade and outline frames on the narrow end elevations. The recessed center entrance consists of transomed double doors with an arched surround decorated by quoins. Above the entrance is a rectangular concrete panel with raised letters reading "Adams School – MCMXII". The arch of the entrance is repeated in a molding above the second floor windows above which are also set into a quoined surround and the arched parapet above. There are bands of four 6/6 windows on either side of the central bay, linked by a continuous concrete sill. The trim is continued on the rear ell and later additions.

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 building was constructed in 1912 replacing the wood-frame, four-room Adams School which was built on a different site in the village in 1859. Extensive building construction in East Lexington during the early 20th century period had resulted in a large increase in the school population and significant overcrowding required the use of the Stone Building for several years.

In 1911 the town voted to build a new brick school on a level piece of land behind the Stone Building. The sum of \$55,000 was appropriated to erect the new school the following year. A building committee consisting of J.O. Richards, A.C. Washburn, F.G. Jones, Frank D. Peirce and Dwight F. Kilgour was assisted by architect R. Clipston Sturgis of Boston who acted as an advisor in the selection of an architect and examination of specifications and plans. Six architects competed for the design contract and Brainerd & Leeds of Boston were chosen. The firm designed a building which was as nearly fireproof as possible. The contractors were E.A. Peabody & Son Co. of Lawrence and the foundations and grading were subcontracted to Bartlett J. Harrington of East Lexington. Excavation for the foundation began on July 22, 1912. An article appearing in the *Minute-man* on August 24, 1912 described the plans:

The building will have the effect of being three stories high in front, as the basement in this section of the building is almost entirely above ground. The exterior is to be of red brick, with a trim of sandstone colored brick, with foundations and other parts of cement. The plans show an imposing façade of simple lines, broken with ornate shields either side of the entrance, on which are shown the national and state seals.

The school was completed in time for classes in September 1913. A photograph of the completed building appeared in the architectural journal *American Architect* in 1917. In 1931 the town appropriated \$85,000 for an addition to the school, designed by Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley. Additional alterations and additions were made in 1950. Kilham, Hopkins, Greeley & Brodie were the architects. Adams School closed in 1980 due to declining school population. Soon thereafter it was sold to the Waldorf School who continue to use it today.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

The firm of Brainerd & Leeds who designed the original 1912 building was engaged in practice in Boston for approximately twenty five years. William H. Brainerd graduated from MIT in 1887 and worked in the offices of Edmund Wheelwright, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge and Francis R. Allen until 1898 when he opened an office with Edmund Leeds. The firm designed various public buildings including the Little Wanderers' Home in Boston, the West Medford Congregational Church, the Christian Endeavor Society Building in Boston, Athol Town Hall and schools in Ashland, Belmont, Billerica, Boston, Franklin, Grafton, Malden, Newton and Swampscott.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

American Architect and Building News, vol. 111, no. 2143, January 17, 1917.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington from its first settlement to 1868* (Revised and Continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913, vol. 1, p. 486-7.

Kollen, Richard et al. *Images of America: Lexington*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing Co., 2001, p. 48.

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Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS data base.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Worthen, Edwin B. *A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts 1620-1946*. Lexington: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946.