

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

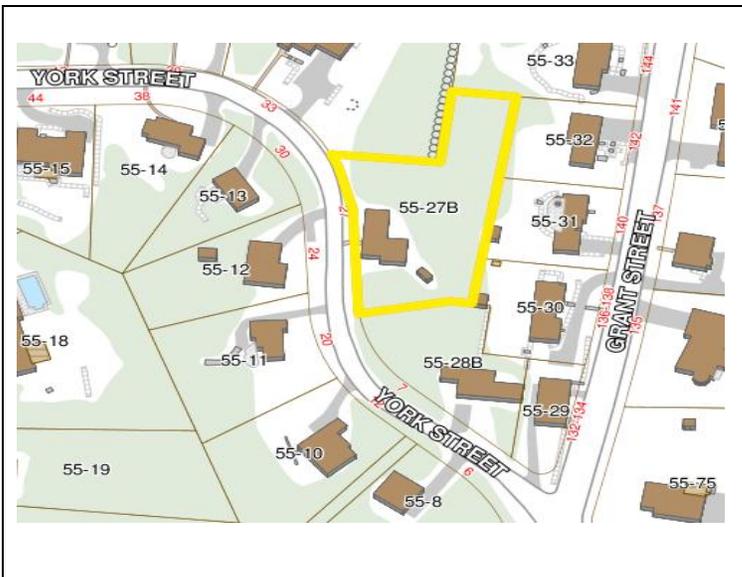
22/27B H 2174

Photograph



Front (facade) elevation

Locus Map



Town/City: Lexington

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

Address: 27 York Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1895 - 1925

Source: historic maps, town directories,
architectural features

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone, poured concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Front and back additions, fenestration, exterior chimney
(20th c)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.73

Setting: Built above a steep slope on the side of Merriam Hill on a narrow winding road. Surrounded by eclectic 20th century residential development and heavily wooded lots.

Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

27 YORK STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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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.

27 York Street occupies a steeply sloped, heavily wooded lot between York and Grant streets on Merriam Hill. The building is set close to the street, with broad side setbacks. A substantial stone wall composed of large irregular cut stones and fieldstones lines the street edge; a gravel-covered parking area is located up the hill to the left of the house. Stone pavers compose a walkway from the street to the main door. The building consists of a 1 ½ story main block with a small shed-roofed extension at the left side of the façade and a relatively large contemporary addition at the right rear corner.

The main block rises from a fieldstone and poured concrete to a side gable roof with gable returns. A massive fieldstone chimney rises on the exterior of the left side of the façade, tapering significantly at the top, while a small brick chimney rises from the outside of the right side of the façade. Walls are sheathed with wood shingles and trimmed with a narrow fascia having a slender bed molding. Windows typically have 6/1 double hung sash, some with plain flat casings, some with band molding. They are irregularly placed across the building facades. The low, shed-roofed extension at the left of the front façade is anchored to the main block by the fieldstone chimney; it is articulated by a group of three contiguous 6/6 windows and surmounted by a gable dormer with a 6/1 window and cornice molding. The main doorway is off-center on the façade, trimmed with simple band molding; it is flanked by a three-part picture window to the left and a single window to the right.

The left side elevation of the main block is symmetrically composed, with two small six-light windows on the first floor and a 6/1 double hung window in the half-story. The right side elevation is roughly symmetrical, with a fully-exposed basement behind its fieldstone foundation. The central basement door has a shed-roofed hood with plain braces and a six-light window to each side. The first floor contains a large 12/12 window flanked by smaller 6/1 sash; an 8/8 window is centered in the gable peak.

The right rear addition is one-story with a flat roof, supported by exposed steel I-beams over a poured concrete foundation. Visible fenestration comprises two contiguous pairs of tall casement windows with large transoms above. A low shed-roofed dormer appears to span most of the rear elevation.

27 York Street is an informally and eclectically evolved cottage, distinguished by its over-scaled fieldstone exterior chimney and the substantial masonry wall along the street edge. The house's survival on Merriam Hill as a very modest, picturesque cottage is notable.

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 assessors' records for 27 York Street show a construction date of 1850, which has not been confirmed. In 1906, this area was still part of the Hayes estate, which encompassed the 1883-84 mansion, 400 acres of land, and numerous outbuildings. The 1898 map shows an informal loop road to the east of the mansion that accessed a variety of barns and outbuildings. It is thought that the house at 27 York Street may have been one of the auxiliary buildings or outbuildings for the Hayes estate. This provenance also has not yet been confirmed, although one of the unnamed buildings shown on the 1898 map appears to be a possible match in size, shape, orientation, and location. The siting of the house and its massive stone wall strongly suggest a connection with the Hayes estate. The style, forms, and materials of other exterior features of the building, however, indicate an early 20th century construction (or renovation) period, which is consistent with the subdivision and later development of Merriam Hill.

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The present route of this section of York Street (as a public road) appears to have been established between 1918 and 1927, and possibly as early as 1906-18. The 1922 directory identifies three households on York Street, none of them with street numbers: Wilkinson Riley (no occupation identified) and his wife Martha A. Riley; F. Stetson Humphrey, a vocal teacher in Boston; and Herbert Stephens, who worked in the advertising business in Boston, and his wife Dawn Mills, who lived on York "near Grant." The 1934 and 1936 directories identify the property at 27 York as vacant in those years, but the *List of Persons* for 1935 identifies Ralph and Ann R. Downs at this address (no occupations listed). Subsequent residents included Norman C. O'Neill, in the Navy, and his wife Dorothy C., who worked at Raytheon, in 1945; James R. Merrill, an engineer, and his wife Anna M. in 1955; and Philip Lieberman, a scientist, and his wife Marcia in 1965.

Further research is recommended to determine the early history and evolution of this building, including a possible affiliation with the Hayes estate. If connected with the Hayes estate, this house would be one of only two remaining Hayes estate buildings, the other being the former carriage house at 60 Meriam Street.

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 Summaries. <http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm>
Accessed Jul 23, 2015.

Lexington Directories: 1899, 1906, 1908-09, 1922, 1934, 1936.

Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington." 1980.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Right side elevations



Left side elevation



Assessors' photograph: Front (façade) elevation



Detail of masonry wall and chimney