

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20/4 2214

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Front (facade) and right side elevations

Address: 10 Crescent Hill Avenue

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1898-1906

Source: historic maps

Style/Form: no style

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: artificial siding and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Artificial siding (L 20th c); garage (mid 20th c?)

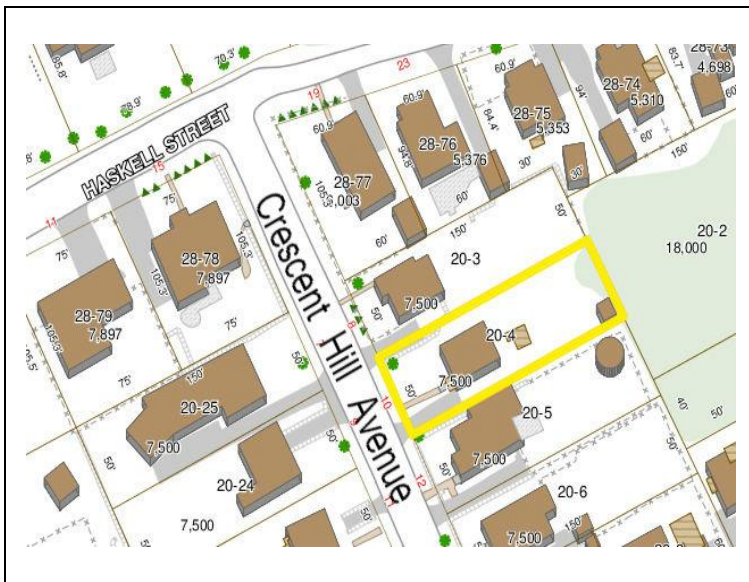
Condition: good to fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.17

Setting: Residential subdivision dominated by early 20th century houses similar to each other in scale, style, and setting. Houses set close together with modest setbacks, sidewalks with planting strips, and street trees on both sides.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

10 CRESCENT HILL AVE.

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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.

10 Crescent Hill Avenue occupies a small flat lot on the east side of Crescent Hill Avenue. Set well back from the street, the building has narrow side setbacks and is maintained chiefly in lawn, with foundation plantings at the front and side. Two mature trees occupy the front yard, with others scattered along the right property line. A concrete block retaining wall and low hedge line the street edge, with a straight paved walk between the street and front entrance and a paved driveway to the right of the house.

The three by two bay rectangular main block with a small side ell rises 2 ½ stories to a front gable roof with gabled returns that have been boxed in. One interior chimney is located at the center of the ridge line. A one-bay deep, one-story addition across the front of the house has a shed roof; it may represent an enclosed porch. Windows are typically 1/1 replacement sash without trim. One 2/2 sash remains in the attic story. The façade (west) elevation has an offset, single-leaf doorway and one single, one paired, and one triple window on its one-story addition. Its small entry porch contains wood railings with square balusters and wood steps. The left (north) side elevation features two symmetrical, widely spaced windows on each floor. The right (south) elevation has two asymmetrically placed windows on the second floor and an attached garage on the first floor. The garage features a shed roof, one vehicle bay facing the street, and two six-light windows on its right (south) side. A tall fieldstone retaining wall extends along the uphill (right) side of the property.

10 Crescent Hill Avenue significantly pre-dates its surroundings, a largely early to mid 20th century development. Although it has lost valuable original siding and trim, the house is notable for its deep front setback, front gable orientation, distinctive vertical proportions, and simplicity of form.

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.

Crescent Hill Avenue is part of a turn of the 20th century subdivision off Lowell Street, adjacent to the Arlington town line. Lowell Street appears to have originated as a Native American trail that was developed as an important transportation corridor in the Colonial period. A new regional turnpike system radiating from Boston was established in the early 19th century; Lowell Street formed part of the Middlesex Turnpike (ca. 1806), which extended from Cambridge to Tyngsborough and the New Hampshire border. This peripheral area of East Lexington remained mostly agricultural and sparsely developed through the early 20th century, however. The Great Meadow marshlands occupy an extensive area bordered by Lowell Street to the east, the Arlington town line to the south, the railroad to the west, and Maple Street to the north.

Crescent Hill Avenue is part of a subdivision also known as Crescent Hill, which was laid out between 1875 and 1898, under the ownership of Thomas Elder "et al" in the latter year. Its grid of streets sprawls across the town line into Arlington; its many small lots were apparently intended for modest suburban housing, although there was no street railway service along Lowell Street. Hugh Thomas Elder (1844-1902) worked as a printer and later foreman for the *Boston Herald*. He was active in union organizing, political activities, and the development of cooperative banks, "eventually becoming a prosperous... real estate agent" in Arlington Heights. (Stevens: 5)

10 Crescent Hill Avenue does not seem to exist on this site in 1898 but is clearly present by 1906, under the name of T. Tolson. An advertisement in the 1906 Lexington directory has this appeal from Tolson, who appears to have been a real estate agent or speculator:

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“As you cannot get rich by hard work, try investing and speculating as others have done, and become rich; remember the first step to wealth is to own your own home, and not throw your hard earnings away to landlords and have nothing; now don't go away out 10 or 15-cent carfare from Boston, when you can buy land and houses just as cheap adjoining North Cambridge, where it is building up fast, and where you can sell or rent your place very quickly; good house lots at 5 cents per foot and upwards; town water in front of lots, shade trees on sidewalks; stone given free to build all cellars; money loaned to build; good many lots fronting on Massachusetts Avenue; no taxes or interest for three years; titles guaranteed. See T. Tolson, Or salesman at office on the land, 60 Massachusetts Avenue. First electric car stop in Arlington.”

The first known residents at this address were William H. Wheatley, a farmer, and his wife Charlotte B., in 1922. Both were immigrants, he from England, she from Sweden. In 1920, they were living in this house with three sons and a boarder; William's occupation in that year and 1910 was janitor. Subsequent occupants included Arthur S. Barnes, a clerk, and his wife Alice E. (1935 and 1945); Elliott W. Lloyd, a pipe fitter, and his wife Mary B. (1955); and John J McCarthy, a machinist, and his wife Marl (sic) (1965).

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 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.

Stevens, Doreen and Aimee Taberner and Sarah Burks. *Arlington's Cultural Heights: 1900-1925*. [Arlington, Mass.:] Arlington Historical Society and Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, 2013.

U.S. Census: 1910, 1920, 1930.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Left side and front (facade) elevations

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