

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20/5                2215

**Town/City:** Lexington

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

## Photograph



Front (facade) and right side elevations.

**Address:** 12 Crescent Hill 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: artificial siding and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

None

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Artificial siding (L 20<sup>th</sup> c). replacement windows (L 20<sup>th</sup> – E 21<sup>st</sup> c), rear addition (mid 20<sup>th</sup> c?)

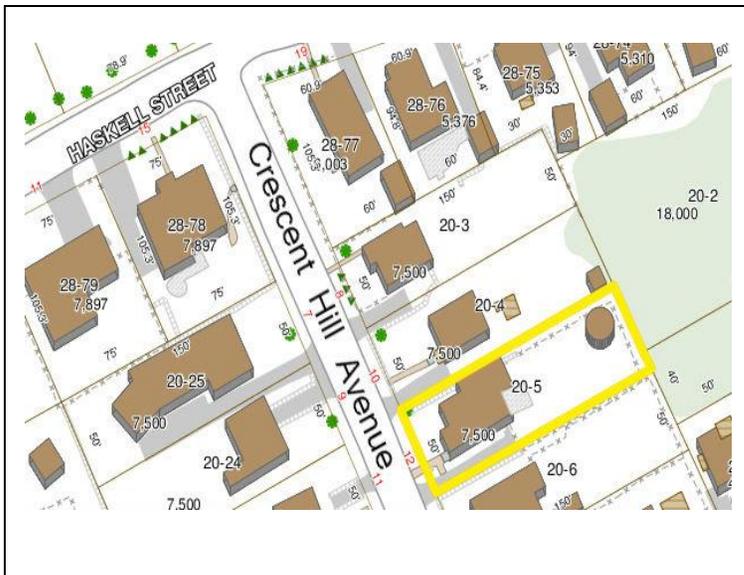
**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.17

**Setting:** Residential subdivision dominated by early 20<sup>th</sup> 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

12 CRESCENT HILL AVE.

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.*

*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.*

12 Crescent Hill Avenue is located on a small lot near the top of a low hill. Generally flat, the property is raised above the sloping level of the street with a fieldstone retaining wall, which is partially parged. The yard is maintained chiefly in lawn, with foundation plantings and an asphalt-paved walk between the street and the front entrance. A narrow paved driveway is located to the right of the house.

The roughly L-shaped main block of the house rises 2 ½ stories from a fieldstone foundation to a front gable roof. A one-bay deep appendage with a shed roof extends across the back (east) of the building. One interior chimney rises from the left slope of the main roof, near the center. Walls are clad with artificial siding and trim. Windows are typically 6/6 double hung replacement sash, without trim. The asymmetrical façade (west) elevation contains an offset entrance and paired windows on the first floor and two individual windows asymmetrically set on the second floor, and one window centered in the pedimented half-story. The front entrance is composed of a rectangular porch with a hip roof, turned posts, a low wood railing with thick square balusters, concrete steps, and a single-leaf, period door with wood panels and one large, square glass pane.

The left (north) side elevation contains one window bay on the main block. A two-story hip roof ell at the back has one 6/6 window facing the street at the second story, and modern awning windows with transoms at the corner of the first floor. The irregular right (south) elevation has three windows on the first floor, one at an intermediate level, and one towards the back of the second floor. A small shed-roofed dormer on this elevation has a one window. The shed-roofed addition has one window at each of its ends.

Well-maintained, 12 Crescent Hill Avenue has lost important original trim but remains a good example of turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban middle class housing. It is notable for its pedimented front-gable façade, ornamental entrance porch, distinctive vertical massing, and relatively large scale in a subdivision of mostly smaller and more compact houses.

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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)

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12 Crescent Hill Avenue first appears on the historic maps between 1898 and 1906, although its footprint in the latter year is not an exact match to the present. Alfred Crosby is the first known owner and resident of the property; he is identified here in 1906. Born in England, Crosby was a furniture maker and repairer. He lived in the house with his wife Sarah, also born in England, and their four children at least through 1922. Subsequent residents included John Podmore, a book finisher, his wife Adeline, and a grown daughter, a clerk (1935). For many years afterward, the house was occupied by the Harvey family, consisting of Russell (insulation business and carpenter), his wife Marjory, and at various times their four sons (including a member of the Marines, a draftsman, sheet metal worker, and meteorologist) and a daughter-in-law (1945, 1955, 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, 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: 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Left side and front (facade) elevations

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