

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

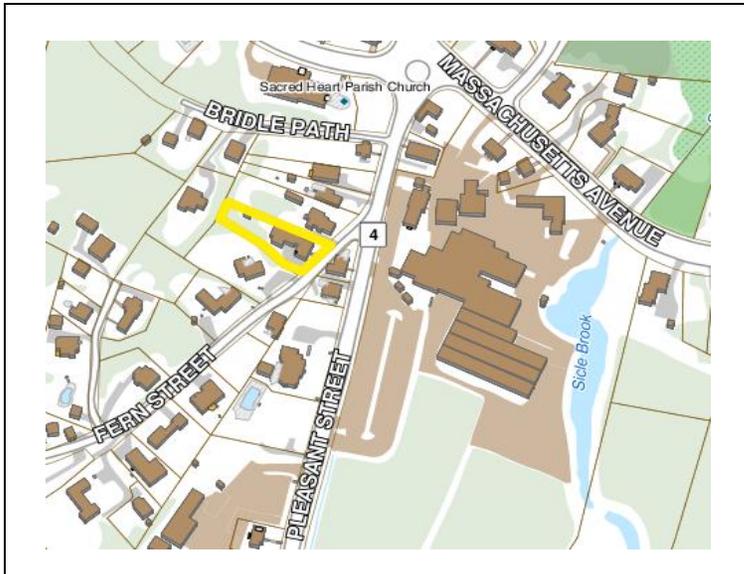
14/127A 2221

Photograph



South (left side) and east (façade) elevations

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year): September 2015

Town/City: Lexington

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

Address: 7 Fern Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1790-1830

Source: assessors' records, historic maps, style

Style/Form: Federal cape

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: granite; concrete at additions

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Attached garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Rear additions, fenestration, main entrance enframingent (L 20th – E 21st century)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.32

Setting: Located close to the intersection of Fern Street and Pleasant Street, a major cross-town thoroughfare, near the village of East Lexington. Dense, heterogeneous residential neighborhood contains buildings of varying size and scale; predominantly early to mid-20th century construction, with scattered earlier sites.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

7 FERN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	2221
--	------

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.

7 Fern Street occupies a long, narrow lot near the intersection of Fern and Pleasant streets. Fern Street rises up from Pleasant at this end, and the lot slopes gently up from the street. A granite rubble retaining wall lines the perimeter of the front yard. Maintained chiefly in lawn, the yard also contains foundation plantings and mature trees. The house is set at an angle to the Fern Street (and parallel to Pleasant Street, which it overlooks). Front and side setbacks are modest. A wide asphalt paved driveway wraps around the left side of the house. A brick walkway leads from the driveway to the front entrance. The U-shaped building consists of a 1 ½ story main block with a rear addition and an irregular sequence of later ells and additions at the back.

The small, three by one bay main block rises from a granite foundation (not clearly visible) to a side gable roof with gable returns, prominent eaves, and a small center chimney. Walls are sheathed with wood clapboard and trimmed with flat sill boards and corner boards and a wide, molded fascia. Windows vary from fixed to double-hung to casement types and have plain casings. The front façade (east elevation) has a center entrance flanked by a quartet of diamond-paned casement windows on each side. The entrance comprises a single-leaf door and half-height sidelights within a pedimented, contemporary Colonial enframing. It is accessed by a modern brick and stone stoop. Centered on this façade is a shed-roofed dormer with a nine-pane casement window.

The south (left side) elevation contains a single window bay centered on the gable end of the main block, with a 6/1 window on each floor. A two-story, shed-roofed addition extends from the back of the main block, with one 6/1 window centered on each floor on its left side elevation.

The north (right side) elevation of the main block has one window centered in each story of the main block. Fenestration on the north elevations of the rear ells appears varied, but is not clearly visible from the street.

A string of extensions extends perpendicularly from the back right corner of the main block, rising 1 to ½ stories under gable roofs. Attached to the back end of these ells, parallel to the main block, is a 1 ½ story garage structure. The garage has a side gable roof and a two-vehicle wide garage door. A wide, shed-roofed dormer is centered above, with paired 6/1 windows. A pedestrian side door is located in a small side-gabled vestibule at the outside end of the garage.

Well maintained, 7 Fern Street has been heavily re-modeled over the last fifty years and has lost much of its historic integrity. Notable are the petite proportions of the main block and its surviving wall trim, particularly the prominent eave line.

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.

Nearby Pleasant Street may have originated as part of a Native American trail system. It was employed early on as an important route from Lexington center to towns to the south, connecting the arterial roads of Massachusetts Avenue and Concord Avenue (an early 19th century turnpike). Fern Street appears as an offshoot by 1853, in the form of a long, unpaved path from Pleasant Street to a building (and presumably farmland) owned by W. Gleason.

The assessors' records for 7 Fern Street show a construction date of 1787. Further research is needed to confirm this date, which is stylistically conceivable. The building seems to be depicted, unnamed, on the 1830 Hales map and again on the 1853 map, when it was labeled "Spaulding." The building (with a short rear ell) was owned by E. Gleason in 1875, Mrs. E. M. Foster

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

7 FERN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

	2221
--	------

in 1889, and W. B. Foster in 1898. The 1899 and 1906 directories show a William B. Foster, police officer, with an unnumbered house on Fern Street; George E. Foster, a clerk at Waldo Brothers in Boston, was boarding with him in those years. Worthen notes that Foster also served as a selectman and fire engineer. The house numbering system in the 1922 directory contains no 7 Fern Street. This property may have been #11 in that year, occupied by Winfield T. Dunn, a salesman, his wife May E., and Charles H. Dunn, a farmer who boarded at that address.

In 1935 and 1945, Emma J. Hadley, the widow of Elinus B. Hadley, was living at this address. She was accompanied in 1945 by Priscilla Hadley, a defense worker, and Philip E. Silva, serving in the Navy, and his wife Virginia. The Woodruff family, consisting of Herbert B., a printer, his wife Thelma, and Mabel F. Woodruff, resided here in 1955. By 1965, Emma Hadley is again identified at this house, along with Philip and Virginia Silva and presumably their son Richard. Philip was a meat cutter and Richard was in the Navy in that year.

Further research is recommended to establish the early history of this building and its possible agricultural associations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Historic maps and atlases: Hales 1830; Walling 1853; Beers 1875; Walker 1889; Stadly 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, 1922, 1934, 1936.

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

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

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998.