

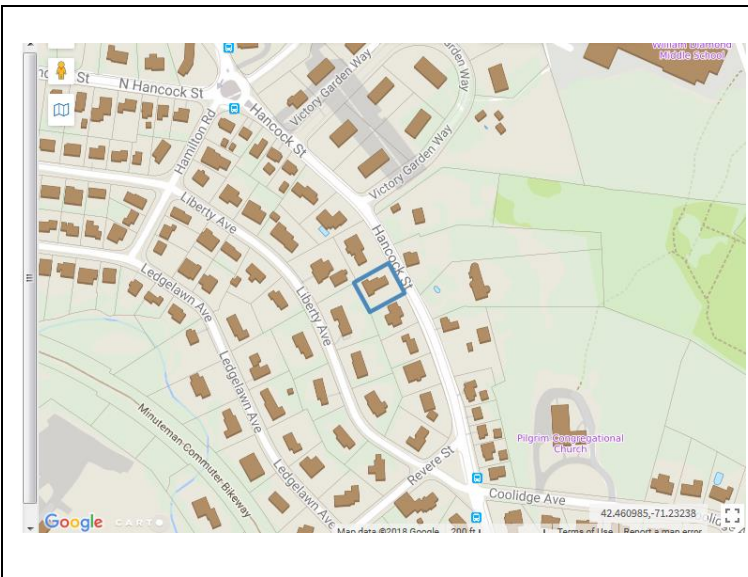
FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Marilyn Fenollosa

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year): September 2018

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

70-8

Boston N

LEX.2284

Town/City: Lexington

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

Address: 88 Hancock Street

Historic Name: Robert and Ruth Custance House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1948

Source: assessors' records

Style/Form: MidCentury Modern

Architect/Builder: Hugh Stubbins (architect); Custance Brothers (builders)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Detached garage

Major Alterations (with dates):

Condition: excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.29

Setting: Located on arterial thoroughfare, set back from the road near Victory Garden subdivision. Near Diamond Middle School and Minuteman Bikeway. Unusual MidCentury Modern building in heterogeneous residential development of various periods, forms, and siting.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

88 HANCOCK STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

LEX. 2284

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.

88 Hancock Street was designed by noted architect Hugh Stubbins, Jr. (1912 - 2006) and constructed by Custance Brothers, long-time Lexington builders. Like the other contemporary houses designed by Stubbins in Lexington (3 and 6 Dover Lane (MHC## LEX.1625 and LEX.1048) and 87 Pleasant Street(MHC# LEX.1638), 88 Hancock Street exhibits the influence of the International Style with its open floor plan, glass walls and undecorated exteriors. As with his other homes, 88 Hancock was sited to blend in with the rural character of the property.

Hugh Stubbins graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1931 and was awarded the MArch by the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1935. In the late 1930s he worked briefly with Royal Barry Wills. At the invitation of Walter Gropius, Stubbins taught for more than a decade during the 1940's and 1950's at the GSD; in 1954 he left teaching to devote himself to his architectural firm, which was to become a highly successful international practice. Stubbins is perhaps best-known as the architect of large-scale structures which have become recognizable landmarks in urban skylines: the Berlin Kongresshalle, Manhattan's Citicorp Building and Boston's Federal Reserve Bank. Stubbins is also widely recognized for his education-related designs, which range from a number of suburban schools to Harvard's Countway Library, Pusey Library and Loeb Drama Center (Harvard University, Stubbins Collection).

The house at 88 Hancock Street is rectilinear with one story plus basement capped by a gable roof displaying a considerable overhang. The structure rests on a concrete slab foundation. Exterior walls are post and beam sheathed with clapboard. Windows include casements and large fixed glass windows which are without trim. The building consists of a compact main block with an appendage at the rear and a attached garage. There is a large chimney centered on the main building block.

Well maintained and preserved, 88 Hancock Street is an excellent example of modest and affordable suburban housing in the distinctive Mid-Century Modern style. It is notable for its clean lines and sympathetic setting, embracing the outdoors -- an essential defining characteristic of the style.

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.

88 Hancock Street had been occupied by the Custance family since its construction until the summer of 2018. Located on land originally owned by George H. Ames, the land was subdivided by an 1897 Plan and subsequently sold in parcels by Continental Realty Co., Inc. to the Custances in 1948.

Robert W. Custance (1898 - 1967) was president of Custance Brothers, Inc., a construction company established in 1911 by his father and uncle and noted for its construction of many of the churches and homes in Lexington. Mr. Custance was a prominent member of, and recipient of numerous honors from, many charitable organizations, including the Battle Green Chapter, Order of DeMolay; Simon W. Robinson Lodge, A.F. & A.M.; Somerville Sixth Masonic District; the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts; and many other organizations. He served on the Boards of Directors of Boston Federal Savings Bank, the Dana Home, and Carleton-Willard homes, in Bedford. He was past president of the Rotary Club, the Lexington Chamber of Commerce and the Lexington Historical Society. Mr. Custance died in a plane crash in Canterbury, NH at the age of 69.

His wife, Ruth B. Custance, an active community volunteer, continued to occupy the property at 88 Hancock Street until her death in 2018 at the age of 94.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Area(s) Form No.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



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