

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

20/33B [] [] [] 2241

Photograph



West (facade) and south 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: 11 Lowell Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1890-98

Source: assessors' records, historic maps

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (with dates):

Replacement window sash (L 20th – E 21st c)

Condition: good to excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.42

Setting: Set above a main thoroughfare near the intersection of Westminister Avenue, close to the Arlington city line. Modest E and mid-20th century suburban houses to each side on Lowell Street; more substantial and upscale Victorian suburban homes along Westminister Ave

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

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Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

	2241
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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.

11 Lowell Street occupies a large, steep, hillside property that extends between Lowell Street on the west and Westminster Avenue on the east. The property is bounded by a substantial stone retaining wall at the Lowell Street edge, with remnants of parking, and two flights of cut granite steps up to the main entrance. The steep front yard is terraced and maintained in lawn and perennial beds; a line of large trees occupies the lower terrace, along with a modern metal picket fence. Along the Westminster Avenue frontage is a fieldstone wall; dressed granite posts with chiseled margins frame openings for a walkway and a large, L-shaped driveway.

The rectangular building rises 2 ½ stories from a brick foundation to a front gable roof with gable returns; it has a cross-gabled side ell of similar height and form and a two-story rear ell with a saltbox gable end. Two slender interior chimneys are located at the ridgeline near the center of the main block. Walls are sheathed with wood clapboards, capped sill boards, corner boards, and a high flat fascia with a narrow bed molding. Windows are typically 1/1 double hung replacement sash with band molding; they commonly occur in contiguous pairs and trios.

All around the house, wall fascia is ornamented with horizontally set, diamond-shaped appliqué and decoratively sawn paired brackets at wall corners. The peaks of the main façade gable and cross-gabled side ell are clad with vertical boards with a scalloped bottom edge. The side ell also displays decoratively pierced panels at the gable returns and a decoratively appliquéd wood panel at the peak of the gable. A one-story porch wraps around the front, south side, and back of the main block; its shed roof is supported by slender turned posts, with the diamond-shaped appliqué on its otherwise plain fascia; it has a wood deck and no railing.

On the façade (west) elevation of the main block, an offset entrance under the porch has a single leaf door, full height sidelights, a rectangular transom, and modest pilasters and entablature. It is flanked by a rectangular bay window with diamond-shaped appliqué on its fascia. Upper floors of the façade contains a narrow center window flanked by a trio of windows on each side of the second floor and, in the half-story, an elaborate Palladian window unit with five window sash of varied sizes and sill and head heights. Its large center sash has a semi-circular glazed transom.

The right (south) side elevation has one single window and a small angled bay on the first floor, under the porch roof. One pair and one triplet of windows are asymmetrically set on the second floor, while a long shed dormer with a hip roof is lit by a pair of windows flanked by a single window on each side. The rear of the main block contains a single window on the first floor, paired windows on the second floor, and a single window centered in the gable peak. The lower rear ell has a ridgeline parallel to the main roof, with a saltbox shape, offset single leaf door, and overhanging second story with a Palladian-motif window motif composed of three non-contiguous rectangular windows.

The cross-gabled ell on the north side rises the same 2 ½ story height as the main block; only one bay wide, it has paired windows centered on the first floor and a single window centered on the second and half-stories above. A one-story, flat roofed appendage fills the northwest corner between the façade (west) elevation of the main block and the cross-gabled side ell. Extending the line of the front porch, it is detailed with trim and windows similar to the main block.

The flat back yard is chiefly occupied by driveway, supplemented by areas of lawn. Located at the back of the lot are two small modern utility sheds.

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	2241
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Well-maintained and well-preserved, 11 Lowell Street is an excellent and substantial example of Victorian country houses in Lexington, with an unusually idiosyncratic design. It is notable for its hillside siting, landscape walls, complex massing, first floor porch, decorative fascia and gable peaks, and variety of fenestration.

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.

Lowell Street appears to have followed a Native American trail and 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. 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.

Although remotely situated in a corner of Lexington (there was no street railway service along Lowell Street), 11 Lowell Street is positioned for a fine view of not only the Great Meadow but also the 28-acre Arlington Reservoir. Straddling the town line between Arlington and Lexington, the Reservoir was created in 1871 to provide drinking water for the town of Arlington. Farmland predominated in this area of eastern Lexington until well into the 20th century, including the 80-acre Reed Dairy Farm, whose farmhouse is located at 72 Lowell Street. Established ca. 1860, Reed sold many of its products in Arlington.

11 Lowell Street first appears on the historic maps in 1898, when it was owned by Thomas Stevens. The property then also included the triangular parcel at the point of Westminster and Lowell streets, which contained a barn. In 1906, the owner was identified only as Sanborn. No information is presently known of these owners/residents. Members of the Greenough family occupied the property from at least 1918 through 1945. Henry M. Greenough (1854-1922) was associated with the Paine Furniture Co. in Boston. His wife Mary A. Greenough lived here at least through 1922. By 1935, only the couple's daughter Helen is identified at this address. A single woman, she had lived in the house with her parents since at least 1920 and remained here through at least 1945. Subsequent occupants included Joseph Lee, retired, and his life Ida J. (1955), and Victoria N. O'Connell, a bookkeeper, and John Vance, a tree surgeon (1965). According to building permits, the house had been in unofficial two-family use since before 1924. The property was subdivided in 1972 for construction of a new house to the north of the original residence, on the parcel at the point of the Lowell Street/Westminster Ave. intersection. The original barn was likely demolished at that time.

Further research is recommended to establish the identities and historic context of the property owners who preceded the Greenough family, and to expand knowledge of the Greenoughs themselves. Connections with the nearby Crescent Hill development in Arlington should also be investigated. Historic photographs would be useful in assessing the architectural integrity of the property.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Kelley, Beverly Allison. *Lexington; A Century of Photographs*. Boston: Lexington Historical Society, 1980.
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<http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm> Accessed Jul 23, 2015.

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	2241
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Lexington Directories: 1899, 1908-09, 1915, 1918, 1922, 1926, 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.

Town of Arlington. "The Res" in Life Along Mill Brook. <http://www.arlingtonmassachusetts.net/parks/res> Accessed Jul 26, 2015.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



South and east elevations



East and north elevations



Landscape detail: Retaining wall and steps at Lowell Street



Landscape detail: Stone wall and posts on Westminster Ave.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Assessors' photograph: West (facade) elevation