

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

61/71A 2244

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



South (facade) elevations

Address: 537 Lowell Street

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1865-90

Source: architectural features, historic maps

Style/Form: No style

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick, concrete block, poured concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Barn, garage, shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Front, rear, and side additions (19th and 20th c), fenestration (20th c)

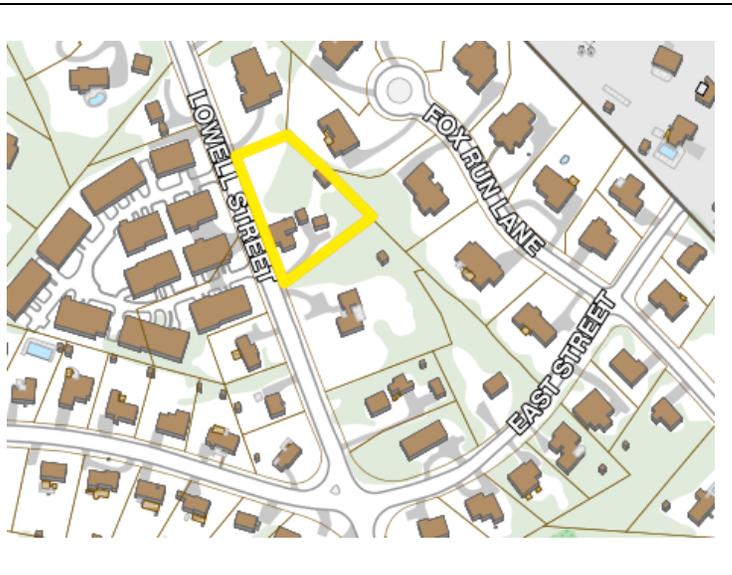
Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.86

Setting: Located on a main thoroughfare through East Lexington, near a major intersection with East Street. Surrounded by residential development of various styles, and scales, mostly mid to late 20th century construction.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

537 LOWELL STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

2244

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.

537 Lowell Street occupies a large lot near the busy intersection of Lowell and East streets, main thoroughfares in East Lexington. The building is set close to Lowell Street, facing the side of the parcel. Several outbuildings are scattered to the east of the house, and a large lawn area occupies the northern half of the parcel. The land slopes gently back from the street. Arborvitae and a small trees line part of the Lowell Street frontage; large trees are scattered throughout the lot. A paved driveway curves into the house from the south, with a brick walkway to the main entrance.

The three by one bay main block rises two stories from a parged brick foundation to a shallow-pitched side gable roof; it faces the side of the parcel. A an irregular series of ells and additions includes a two-story, perpendicular gabled wing extending from the back left (northwest) corner of the main block; a one-story shed-roofed addition along the front (south) wall of the main block; a one-story, gabled addition at the front (south) right corner of the main block, with a cross-gable in front of the main block facade; and a two-story gabled addition at the back right (northeast) corner of the main block. The building has two exterior chimneys on the back walls of the northeast ell and northwest addition.

Walls are sheathed with wood shingles without sill boards, corner boards, or wall fascia. The raking eaves of the main block and northwest ell have molded fascia and gable returns. Windows are chiefly 6/6 double hung replacement sash with a narrow band molding; some early or original 2/2 sash survives.

On the main (south) façade, the one-story, hip roofed addition contains a slightly off-center entrance with a single-leaf paneled wood door, full height sidelights, and gablet above, and a modern granite stoop and step. This addition has a poured concrete foundation. The two windows on the second floor of the main block's façade are not vertically aligned with the door and window on the first floor addition. Extending to the right (east) of the entrance is another one-story gabled addition on a poured concrete foundation, rising to a cross gable with a center pair of casement windows at its western end and a small double-hung window at its eastern end.

Proportioned and detailed similar to the main block, the northwest ell is set slightly back from the plane of the gable end of the main block. It rises from a decorative concrete block foundation and is characterized by 2/2 window sash. Its symmetrical fenestration comprises two symmetrical and vertically aligned windows on each floor. Its rear (north) elevation has two windows on each floor, flanking an exterior chimney. The rear elevation of the large northeast addition displays banded casement windows on the first floor, four single casement windows on the second floor, an exterior chimney, and a small square wood deck.

Two outbuildings are visible from the street; a third appears on maps and bird's eye photographs near the back property line. Closest to the house is a large one-story garage near the northeast corner of the house. It has a front gable roof with gable returns, wood shingle siding, one wide wood-paneled garage door trimmed with a plain flat casing, and one 6/6 window each on the west side and back (north) elevations. To the southeast of the garage is a 1 ½ story, side gabled structure with a saltbox form, concrete block foundation, and wood shingle siding with plain corner boards. It presently contains an apartment. The façade (west) elevation contains an offset entrance with a modern single-leaf door and a modern angled bay window in the center. A low shed dormer extends across the back of the structure.

Well-maintained, 537 Lowell Street is an interesting example of a simple, mid-19th century vernacular farmhouse, with a picturesque accretion of ells, wings, and addition. The building is notable for its modest original/early form, which is still intelligible (including its shallow-pitched gable roofs and one-bay main block and original/early northwest wing); its siting along a major thoroughfare; the large size of its lot; and its collection of outbuildings.

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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.

537 Lowell Street is located near the important crossroads of Lowell and East streets in East Lexington. 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. Appearing as early as the 17th century, East Street is an important early road, facilitating access to the farmland of East Lexington and connecting to the adjacent town of Woburn. This peripheral area of east Lexington remained mostly agricultural and sparsely developed through the early 20th century, however, home to commercial dairy and produce farms.

A building first appears in the location and orientation of today's 537 Lowell Street by the turn of the 20th century, identified as T. Walley on the 1898 map and C.J. Molley in 1906. Molley also owned property and a building diagonally across the road. No information is presently known about these persons. Assessors' records for this house show a construction date of 1861, which has not been confirmed. Further research is recommended to establish more conclusively the date of the house, its early occupants, and early uses of the property.

The first occupants of the property at 537 Lowell Street about whom information is known were Stephen Hotz, and his wife Paraska, who seem to have resided here at least by 1920. Both Austrian immigrants, the couple had five children together, one or more of whom lived in the house through at least 1965. Stephen is described as a machine operator at a pipe fittings company (probably the Jefferson Union Co.) in 1920, farmhand in 1922, and gardener at a private estate in 1930 and later. His daughter worked as a secretary at a printing company (1940, 1945). The sons' occupations included farm laborers on a truck farm (when as young as 11; 1920), gardeners on private estates (1930), radio operator at a radio station (1930, 1940), and farmers at a mink ranch (1940). Stephen lived at this address until at least 1955; Paraska until at least 1965. The property was identified as a farm for at least part of the time that the Hotz family lived here; agriculture may have been a sideline for the family.

Further research is recommended to establish more conclusively the date of the house and early uses of the property. Local historian Sam Doran suggests contacting Guy Doran for additional information on the Hotz family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Lexington Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey, Period Summaries. <http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm> Accessed Jul 23, 2015.
- Lexington Directories: 1899, 1906, 1908-09, 1913, 1922, 1934, 1936.
- Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington." 1980.
- U.S. Census: 1920, 1930, 1940.
- Watertown city directories: 1907.

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| | 2244 |
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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



West elevation



North and west elevations



SE Outbuilding: West (facade) and south elevations