

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

33/78 2248

Town/City: Lexington

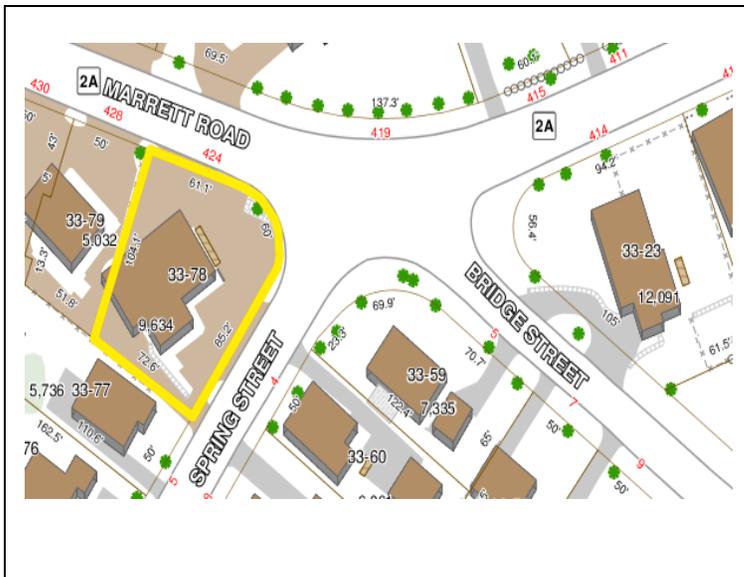
Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Left side (facing Spring St) and front façade (facing Marrett Rd) elevations

Locus Map



Address: 424 Marrett Road

Historic Name: Granfield's Café;
Woodhaven Country Store

Uses: Present: commercial

Original: commercial

Date of Construction: ca. 1922-26

Source: Worthen, town directories

Style/Form: Colonial Revival/eclectic

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: poured concrete

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Ells, fenestration, siding, front porch (L 20th c?)

Condition: excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.22

Setting: Located at busy crossroads of Marrett Road and Spring and Bridge streets. Surrounding development is a mix of heterogeneous, mostly early to mid 20th c residential buildings and contemporary, non-descript commercial buildings.

Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

424 MARRETT ROAD

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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.

424 Marrett Road occupies a compact corner lot overlooking a busy crossroads intersection, where Marrett Road makes a sharp bend. The lot is generally flat at the front and sides and slopes down gently from right to left at the back; the building is surrounded by pavement on all sides.

The building consists of a roughly rectangular main block and two perpendicular side ells, all 2 ½ stories in height. Walls are sheathed with wood clapboards and trimmed with wood sill boards and corner boards (plastic corner boards at the back corners), and a flat wood fascia with bed molding. Windows typically have 6/6 double-hung replacement sash with flat casings; no molding. All four end-gables of the building have glazed lunette windows centered in the half story.

The front façade of the building has a full-length porch with a hip roof, four Tuscan columns, and a concrete floor. Double-leaf French doors form the front entry, with a storefront window to the left. Three windows are set symmetrically across the second floor, and a lunette window in the half-story. The right side elevation of the main block is continuous, with a side entrance set in the end bay towards the front, sheltered by a gabled shed roof on simple sawn brackets. Four windows are regularly spaced across the second floor. The back elevation of the main block features a poured concrete foundation and three window bays, displaying horizontal awning windows high on the first floor, 6/6 double hung windows on the second story, and a lunette window in the half story.

On the left side of the main block, the back portion is several feet wider than the front section and extends to a large perpendicular wing near the back of the main block. This rear wing has three windows symmetrically set in the second story of the end gable, a lunette in the half-story. Its wall facing the front of the property contains a single leaf door with a window centered above. The side of this ell that faces the back of the property contains one horizontal awning window high on the first floor and an offset window on the second floor. A one-story, shed-roofed appendage connects the rear wing to a smaller front wing, which is recessed slightly beyond the front face of the main block. The front wing has two windows centered in the second story on the end gable, and one at the second story facing the front of the property.

Although well maintained, 494 Marrett Road has experienced extensive alterations since it was photographed in the 1930s (see image in *Lexington; A Century of Photographs*: 15). The present main block appears to retain the early massing, and the front wing on the left side, up to the roofline, may also be early. The building in the 1930s view has wood shingle siding, no gable returns, no front porch, 2/2 sash, a completely different storefront and façade fenestration on the main block, and a two-story, shed-roofed addition near the front of the left side of the building. In its 21st century incarnation, the building at 424 Marrett Road is notable as a vestigial reminder of early 20th century commercial development in an outlying area of town.

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.

Marrett Road and Spring Street were established by the early 18th century as secondary radial highways from the center of Lexington to surrounding towns. Present-day Marrett Road between Massachusetts Avenue and Spring Street was known as Middle Street until at least the early 20th century, and the area was primarily agricultural up until that time.

New transportation systems established in the early 20th century opened up large areas of rural land in Lexington for residential and commercial development. Street railway service began in Lexington in 1900 (including a railway line down Waltham Street

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by 1906), replaced by bus lines in 1924. Two state roadways were designated in the town, including Marrett and Middle streets as the Route 2A bypass in the 1920s, and parts of Mass. Ave., Woburn Street, and Waltham Street as components of an early Route 128 in the 1920s and 30s. By 1921, 35 new residential subdivisions were being developed in Lexington. Small commercial centers were established to service the expanding population at various cross roads, including the intersection of Spring Street and Marrett Road. Many of these crossroads included grocery stores and gas stations. Unfortunately, only one of these new nodes—at Marrett Road and Waltham Street—merited documentation on the early 20th century Sanborn maps, most likely because of the large area of associated housing development that was adjacent to it.

In the mid 19th century, 80 acres of farmland at the intersection of Marrett Road and Spring Street comprised the farm of Walter Wellington, a prominent dairy producer who also served as a town selectman and, for more than a quarter-century, as an assessor. Edward F. Porter acquired the farm in 1870 and sold it to James O'Brien in 1878. In 1890, the property was purchased by Edward L. Payson, president of the Emerson Piano Company in Boston, who operated it as the Grassland Stock Farm until 1917. Thoroughbred horses were raised here, and Payson built a large horse barn on the site of what is now 424 Marrett Road. In 1922, the farm was acquired by the prolific local developer Neil McIntosh, who platted the land for residential subdivisions.

Granfield's Café and Market, which also contained a filling station, appeared on the site by 1926. An advertisement in the Lexington directory in that year announces: "Market and Lunch / Everything Fresh – All the Time / Also Real Estate and Insurance / Granfield's Corner, Middle and Spring Sts." Signs on the property in a 1930s photograph also advertise room rentals for \$1. (See attached photo.) William A. Granfield was proprietor of the café from at least 1926 through 1936; he appears to have lived on site with his wife Lilla L. Granfield. In the 1930 census, their occupations were identified as merchant at a "road stand" and school teacher, respectively. By 1945, the building was occupied by George F. Taylor, a grocer, and his wife Elizabeth. From 1951 to 1974, the property was home to the Woodhaven Country Store. Richard M. Stone, employed as a "tester", and his wife Doris, a secretary are identified as living here in 1955. By 1965, storekeepers were again living on site, in the form of Robert L. and Lucille N. Bartholomew. In 1971, Woodhaven Wallpaper and Paint Co. opened in the building and continues to operate here today.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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 _____ . Form B, LEX.642, for 410 Marrett Road. (Prepared by Nancy Seasholes, 1998.)
- U.S. Census: 1930.
- Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Front (façade) and right side elevations (facing Marrett Road)



Rear elevations



Mr. Robert L. Bartholomew

"Granfield's Café in the 1930s": Kelley, p. 15.