

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number  
21/4A

USGS Quad  
Boston N.

Area(s)

Form Number  
1090



Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village) East Lexington

Address 531 Massachusetts Avenue

Historic Name Smith House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction early 19th century

Source visual inspection

Style/Form Federal

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation concrete block

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

shed

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1920 - moved closer to road?/new foundation installed; betw. 1927 and 1935 - rear addition

Condition good

Moved  no  yes Date betw. 1918 & 1927

Acreage 19286 SF

Setting mixed residential on busy main road



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year) April 2000

## BUILDING FORM (531 Mass. Ave.)

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The house at 531 Mass. Ave. is a 2 1/2-story, 5 x 1-bay, Federal-era residence. Sheathed in wood clapboards, the house is set on a rusticated concrete block foundation, suggesting it may have been moved or raised slightly in the early 20th century. The house is capped by an asphalt-shingled gable roof with eaves which project slightly and are without returns. Fronted by a concrete stoop, the center entrance contains a six-panel door and is flanked by full sidelights with a simple entablature lintel. The window openings consist of new 6/6 sash set into molded surrounds.

Offset to the east is a single-story addition fronted by a wooden deck. A two-story ell set on a concrete block foundation with a rear modern deck extends behind the main house block. The rear addition was constructed between 1927 and 1935.

A driveway extends to the east of the house, descending downhill to a small wood-shingled shed in the back yard.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Describe 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.*

The early history of this house is not known at this time. A house is shown on this site at the time of the 1830 map although the owner is not identified. The 1853 and 1875 maps show this house as being owned by William Smith. William L. Smith (1797-1856) came to Lexington from Sterling about 1820. It was apparently later owned by his son, William H. Smith and still later by another son, George Orlando Smith, who was born in East Lexington in 1832. G.O. Smith was a prosperous importer and dealer in cigars with a business in Boston and was active in the Lexington Historical Society. Smith never married and lived in Somerville for the last few years of his life, until his death in 1903. Smith founded a free bed at the Mass. General and Mass. Homeopathic Hospitals, with preference given to Lexington residents.

The occupants of the house appear to have changed hands frequently in the early 20th century and it was probably rented out. The concrete block foundation which presently supports the structure suggests it was moved a short distance in the early 20th century. Inspection of Sanborn insurance maps suggests it was a negligible move, made between 1918 and 1927. The house was purchased by Martin and Agnes Carrigan about 1930 and was sold by Agnes Carrigan's estate in 1974.

The house was known as 127 Mass. Ave. until the 1930s.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Lexington Assessors Records.

Lexington Directories, various dates.

Lexington Valuation Lists, various dates.

1830, 1853, 1875 maps of Lexington

Sanborn Maps, 1908-1935.

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. NY: Vantage Press, 1998, p. 64.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*