

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

34/58    2255

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

**Town/City:** Lexington

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

## Photograph



Front (façade) and right side elevations

**Address:** 16 Middle Street

**Historic Name:**

**Uses:** Present: residential

Original: residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1918-30

**Source:** style, Worthen

**Style/Form:** Bungalow/Craftsman

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: rubble on poured concrete

Wall/Trim: aluminum siding

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Detached garage

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Artificial siding, rear additions (L 20<sup>th</sup> c); replacement windows (L 20<sup>th</sup> – E 21<sup>st</sup> c)

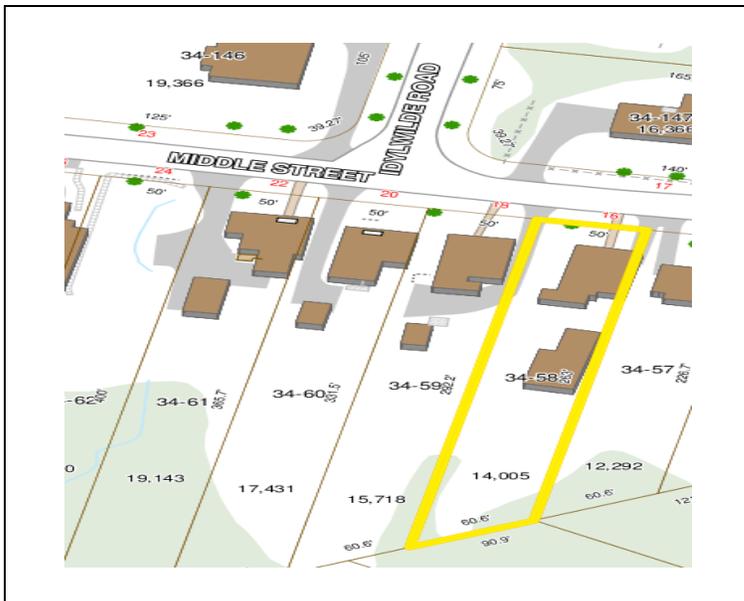
**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.32

**Setting:** Residential side street off Marrett Road. Densely built, cohesive streetscape with houses of similar period, scale, and siting on south side of road; somewhat larger, mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses on north side. Occasional large-scale new construction/re-building.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Wendy Frontiero

**Organization:** Lexington Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): September 2015

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

16 MIDDLE STREET

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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.*

16 Middle Street occupies a long, thin lot with modest front and side setbacks. Maintained chiefly in lawn, the land slopes down from the street and has a mature street tree at the street edge. A straight paved walkway extends from the street to the front entrance, and a narrow paved driveway lines the left side of the house. The building consists of a rectangular main block with a rear addition and a detached garage with its own rear addition

The small main block rises from a poured concrete foundation with rubble above to a front gable roof with exposed rafter ends. A wide roof skirt across the front forms a pediment and encloses a sun porch. The porch is supported on brick piers and accessed by poured concrete steps. Walls are sheathed with aluminum siding. Windows typically have 1/1 double-hung replacement sash with narrow band molding. The front façade has paired windows and an off-center, single leaf door with narrow sidelights. Inside on the main block facade, an off-center single-leaf door has paired windows to the right and a single window on the left. Small paired windows are centered in the half story of the main block.

The left side elevation has paired windows at the side of the sun porch and, on the main block, two single windows of varied sizes and a set of paired windows towards the back. A tall, shed-roofed dormer has exposed rafter ends and no visible windows. The right side elevation has paired windows at the side of the sun porch, three single windows on the main block (including a shorter one in the middle), and a high, shed-roofed dormer with exposed rafter ends and paired windows on its front face. A small rear addition at the back right corner of the main block contains one story under a shed roof. Two pairs of windows (possibly casements or sliders) occupy its right side elevation, which appears to be sheathed in plywood to the sides and above the windows and wood panels below.

A free-standing garage stands behind and to the left of the house. The small original structure has a front gable roof without returns and one vehicle bay within its wood shingled walls. A significant addition behind the garage and projecting to the right of it is also one story high. Its right side elevation contains a single-leaf pedestrian door and a picture window unit.

Well maintained, 16 Middle Street has lost some historic integrity from the application of artificial siding. The house is representative of modest, affordable suburban housing in outlying areas of Lexington during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and contributes to a highly intact streetscape of that period.

## 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.*

16 Middle Street and its surrounding streetscape are an excellent example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbanization of Lexington. Marrett Road was established by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as a secondary radial highway 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 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the area was primarily agricultural up until that time.

New transportation systems established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 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

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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 20<sup>th</sup> century Sanborn maps, probably because of the large area of associated housing development that was adjacent to it.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this area was part of the extensive summer estate of William Harris Cary (1798-1861), his wife Maria Hastings Cary (1801-1881), and their unofficially adopted daughter, Alice Butler Cary (1838-1918). William Cary (1798-1861) was born in Boston and made a fortune importing fancy goods in New York City; his wife was born in Lexington. The Cary family, including William's brother Isaac Harris Cary and his daughters, was a prominent benefactor to the town of Lexington, giving the Cary Memorial Library and Cary Memorial Hall, donations to numerous charitable and religious organizations, and an eponymous educational fund.

Alice Cary inherited a farm of more than 200 acres, with a house and ancillary buildings. After her death, the Cary Estate was acquired by prolific Lexington developer Neil McIntosh, who divided it into a multitude of small house lots. 16 Middle Street may have been constructed by 1922, when many houses already stood on the street, but the changed street numbering systems require further investigation.

The first known occupants of 16 Middle Street, in 1935, were Ashley M. Vessey, a contractor and builder, and his wife Elizabeth E. Historic records from 1918 through 1940 consistently show the Vesseys as residents of Winthrop; 16 Middle Street may have been a summer home. Subsequent residents included James H. Clyde, a machinist, and his wife Elizabeth, who occupied the house from at least 1945 through 1965. In 1965, they were accompanied here by John B. Clyde, a surveyor (and likely their son), and Jeanetta Campbell, a secretary.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Historic maps and atlases: Walling 1853; Beers 1875; Walker 1889; Stadly 1898; Walker 1906; Sanborn 1908, 1918, 1927, 1935, 1935/1950.

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<http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm> Accessed Jul 23, 2015.

Lexington Directories: 1899, 1908-09, 1922, 1928, 1930, 1934, 1936.

Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington." 1980.

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Winthrop directory: 1918.

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998.

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**SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES**



Left side and front (façade) elevations



Garage: front (façade) elevation



Garage addition: front (façade) and right side elevations