

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/79A [] [] 2265

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 4 Stevens Road

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1935-40

Source: historic maps, U.S. census

Style/Form: English Cottage

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: brick and wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Rear addition (L 20th c)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16

Setting: Residential side street between Taft Avenue and Charles St., two blocks from main thoroughfare of Massachusetts Avenue. Densely developed streetscape with buildings of similar size, scale, and period; predominantly early to mid-20th c construction with consistent front setbacks and spacing.

Photograph



North (façade) and west elevations

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

4 STEVENS ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	2265
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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.

4 Stevens Road occupies a small lot near the intersection of Stevens Road and Taft Avenue. The land is level and maintained chiefly in lawn, with foundation plantings and a mature street tree. The building is positioned near the western property line, with a modest front setback. A paved driveway extends along the eastern side of the property, and a straight brick walkway leads from the sidewalk to the front door. The building consists of a 1 ½ story main block with a one-story rear extension.

The main block rises from a concrete foundation to a side gable roof with no gable returns. An exterior brick chimney is located on the east (left side) gable end. The front wall is clad in brick veneer with brick trim, while wood shingles cover the side elevations. Windows typically have 6/6 double hung sash with band molding on the wood-clad walls and soldier course trim on the brick walls. Window and door openings on the brick walls have segmentally arched openings. The façade contains a shallow cross-gabled pavilion on its western half, with a steeply pitched roof, a narrow offset doorway with stone steps, a single 8/1 window to its right, and a 6/6 window centered in the half story. The eastern half of the façade contains a single 8/1 window and a gabled dormer with one 6/6 window. A small screened-in porch with a side gable roof projects from the eastern end of the façade. Clad with wood shingles, its façade elevation and front roof plane are flush with those of the main block.

The west (right side) elevation of the main block contains three awning windows on the first floor and a 6/6 window centered in the half story. A narrow entry vestibule towards the back of this elevation has a shed roof, a single-leaf door facing the street, and two double-hung windows of varied sizes on its west (side) elevation. The east (left side) elevation contains one 6/6 window on the main block, and one on the continuous plane of the rear addition. The 1 ½ story rear addition spans the full length of the main block, with a large cross-gable roof whose ridge is just below the ridgeline of the main block.

Well preserved and well maintained, 4 Stevens Road is a particularly good and particularly intact example of mid-20th century suburban infill housing in Lexington. Employing an uncommon, English cottage style, the house's notable features include its picturesque massing, combination of siding materials and textures, cross-gabled entry pavilion, segmentally arched brick openings, and integral side porch. The overwhelming scale of the rear addition is fortunately not visible from the street.

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.

The small grid of streets bordered by Massachusetts Avenue, Hibbert Street, Taft Avenue, and Bowker Street represents an early area of suburban infill in Lexington center, near the Arlington town line. Immediately south of Taft Avenue is Liberty Heights (LEX.Q), a hilltop subdivision laid out by Brookline developer Jacob W. Wilbur in 1909 and developed in the teens and twenties. The growth of both these neighborhoods followed the arrival of the electric street railway on Massachusetts Avenue in 1899 and was directed at working class residents.

In the area adjacent to Massachusetts Avenue known as Dexter Hillside, Hibbert and Sylvia streets, which straddle the Lexington/Arlington line, were laid out, platted, and partially developed by 1898. The only other evidence of development here at that time is the L-shaped beginning of Charles and Cherry streets, where ten house lots were laid out but vacant. By 1927, both Charles and Bowker streets extended from Massachusetts Avenue to Taft Avenue, and the western ends of Cherry Street, Stevens (then Cary) Road, and Camden (then Smythe) Street pushed a few lots eastward from Charles. Development was gradual through the 1920s and 30s and was virtually complete, with the present network of streets, by 1950.

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The western stub of Stevens Road, then named Cary Street, was in place by 1927, with buildings on all three of the lots platted there. The eastern end, off Taft Avenue, was laid out and three lots platted out by 1935, but no houses were yet constructed there. (The eastern end was also named Cary Street.) As late as 1935, a very long and narrow, undeveloped and unplatted parcel—200 to 300 feet wide and more than one-third of a mile long— extended south of Massachusetts Avenue between Charles Street and Taft Avenue. The ends of Stevens Road were finally connected by 1950, when all the land was platted and all but one of the lots was developed. The name Cary Street was replaced by Stevens Road between 1955 and 1965.

The house at 4 Stevens Road was built between 1935 and 1940. The first known occupants, in 1940, were Bryant W. Patten, a machinist in an auto parts business, his wife Clare G. Patten, and their two young sons. In 1945, Bryant was serving in the Navy. The family lived here at least through 1955, when Bryant was employed as a teacher. By 1965, the house was occupied by nonagenarian Annie MacKenzie and Catherine Robinson, an administrative assistant.

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.
- Lexington Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey, Period and Area Summaries.
<http://historicsurvey.lexingtonma.gov/index.htm> Accessed Jul 23, 2015.
- Lexington Directories: 1899, 1908-09, 1922, 1928, 1934, 1936, 1938, 1942.
- Lexington *List of Persons*: 1935, 1945, 1955, 1965.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Lexington." 1980.
- _____. Form A – Liberty Heights, LEX.Q. Prepared by Anne Grady and Nancy Seasholes, 1984 and 2001.
- U.S. Census: 1940.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



East (left side) elevation