

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

13/388 2271

Town/City: Lexington

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



East (left side) and north (façade) elevations

Address: 24 Theresa Avenue

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1915-27

Source: historic maps, style

Style/Form: Bungalow/Craftsman

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone, concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Enclosed sun porch? (Late 20th c?)

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.19

Setting: Located at the intersection of Oxford Street and Theresa Avenue. Densely built, hillside neighborhood contains heterogeneous buildings of similar scale and predominantly early to mid-20th century construction.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2015

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

24 THERESA AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	2271
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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.

24 Theresa Avenue occupies a small corner lot that is lined by hedges around the perimeter. The building is set near the street corner, with modest front and right side setbacks. Maintained chiefly in lawn, the land is level with a few mature trees. A short asphalt walkway leads to the front entrance, and a small paved driveway occupies the east side of the parcel.

The small, nearly square house rises 1 ½ stories from a combination stone and concrete foundation to a side gable roof with exposed rafter ends, no gable returns, and a small center chimney. Walls are clad with wood shingles. Windows typically have 6/1 double hung sash with band molding. The front façade (north elevation) has an off-center, single leaf-door with one 1/1 window to the left and four 1/1 windows to the right, appearing to be an enclosed porch or sun room recessed under the main roof. Paired 1/1 windows form the side elevations of this sunroom. A modern wood stairway with wood railings accesses the front door. A low shed dormer with a triplet of windows is centered on the front slope of the roof.

The west (right side) elevation contains a single window and a set of paired windows beyond the sunroom on the first floor and paired 6/1 windows at the half story. The east (left side) elevation has on the first floor a single-leaf basement doorway with a shed roof centered at grade, paired windows to the left, and a small horizontal window with multiple panes to the right. On its half-story, a center 6/1 window is flanked by smaller 4/1 windows of different sizes. The south (rear) elevation consists of two awning windows at the basement level, a single 1/1 window and a casement window at the first floor, and a half-story dormer with a low shed dormer and a triplet of 1/1 windows.

Well preserved, 24 Theresa Avenue is a typical example of modest, early 20th century suburban housing in Lexington. The house is notable for its broad roof with exposed rafter ends, integral sun porch, and decorative Queen Anne-style window.

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 neighborhood centered around Bow Street and Hillcrest, Cliffe, and Rindge avenues covers a steep hillside between Massachusetts Avenue and Lowell Street along the Arlington town line. The Great Meadows and Arlington Reservoir are located to the west and east, respectively. By 1898, a very short stub of road between Mass. Avenue and the B&M Railroad tracks is labeled Bow Street. North of the tracks, it continues as a pathway to a farmhouse identified as J. A. Wilson. The 1899 directory identifies a James Wilson, farmer and market gardener, with a house off Bow, and a James A. Wilson, market gardener, with a house on Bow. The land remained undeveloped as part of the Wilson Farm until at least 1906.

Most of the streets here were laid out and platted for house lots by 1927; development most likely began after 1918. Development slowly crept up the hillside through the early and mid 20th century, most densely along the grid of streets closest to Massachusetts Avenue. The Wilson farm remained in existence east of Bow Street (in the area now traversed by South Rindge Street) until at least 1950, at which time it encompassed a substantial farmhouse and greenhouse and two other large outbuildings.

The area was likely developed in response to the electric street railway, which began service on Mass. Avenue in 1899. Like Liberty Heights to the south of Massachusetts Avenue (which it resembles, architecturally; LEX.Q), this neighborhood—known as Massachusetts Avenue Terrace and Arlington Heights Terrace— was laid out by Jacob W. Wilbur, a prolific Brookline developer. Wilbur typically sited his subdivisions near streetcar lines and appealed to working class residents.

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Theresa Avenue was laid out by 1922, when there were only three houses on the street, all unnumbered. Based on its style, 24 Theresa Avenue might have been one of these. The households on the street in 1922 included John A. Murray, a traveling salesman, and his wife Rose M.; Wensley Barker, a manager, and his wife Christine; and James Irwin, Jr., a carpenter, and his wife Mary. 24 Theresa Avenue is first depicted on the Sanborn maps in 1927.

The first known residents of the house, in 1932, are Thomas D. Lawrence, a salesman; his wife Mary Irene; Thomas Nash, an operator on the Boston Elevated Railway; and Maurice Nash, occupation unknown. Subsequent residents included Louis B. Bentley, a paperhanger, and his wife Barbara H., who worked at Raytheon (1942, 1945); John L. Ennis, a chemist, and his wife Mary (1955); and John F. Bonasera, a manager, and his wife Anita (1965).

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, 1924, 1932, 1934, 1936, 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



North (façade) and west (right side) elevations

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