

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

Town/City: Lexington

Place: *(neighborhood or village):*

Photograph



Address: 25 Theresa Avenue

Historic Name:

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1915-24

Source: historic maps, town directories, style

Style/Form: Craftsman/Eclectic

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles and trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Detached garage

Major Alterations *(with dates):*

Enclosed front porch, decorative wood shingles and window lintels, side projection, and new/rebuilt garage? (L 20th c?)

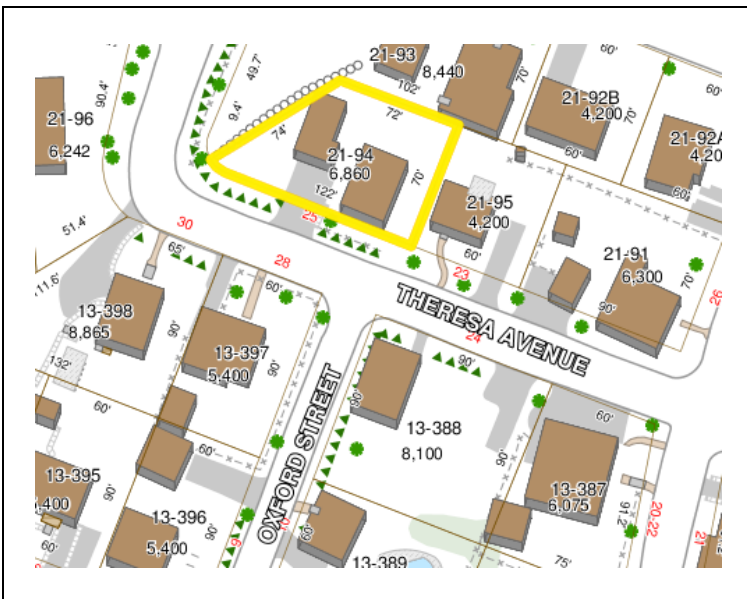
Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16

Setting: Located at the west end of Theresa Avenue, where it bends into Hillcrest 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

25 THERESA AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	2272
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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.

25 Theresa Avenue occupies a modest corner lot with narrow setbacks at the front and right sides. Maintained chiefly in lawn, the level lot is lined by hedges, with scattered shrubs and trees throughout. An asphalt drive extends along the left side of the house. The building consists of a 2 ½ story main block with several small appendages and a detached garage.

The rectangular building rises from a concrete foundation to a front gable roof with no returns and a small center chimney. Walls are clad with wood shingles. Windows typically have 1/1 double hung wash with band molding, and applied lintels with cornice molding. The front façade (south elevation) has a narrow projection across most of the first floor, with a low hip roof and shallow rectangular bay window with a triplet of windows. The small entrance porch on the western end of the first floor has a hip roof supported by square posts, a single-leaf door facing the driveway, and a wood stairway with a modern wood railing. Two widely spaced windows are asymmetrically set on the second floor. The gable peak contains a band of decoratively patterned shingles and a small center window. The raking fascia boards on the façade are ornamented with sawn geometric motifs.

The east (right side) elevation contains a single 1/1 window at the first story and a projecting vestibule with a shed roof, single-leaf door, and a single 1/1 window facing the side. The second story has two widely spaced 1/1 windows. The west (left side) elevation contains one window in its forward bay and a shed-roofed projection with three visible windows towards the back on the first floor. Two widely spaced windows are symmetrically positioned on the second floor.

A large, 1 ½ story garage is located to the west (left) of the house, comprising a shed-roofed front section with two individual vehicle bays and a large rear section with a front gambrel roof. The garage is sheathed with wood shingles. The half-story of the gambrel end contains a band of decorative shingles and a small window centered in the peak.

Well maintained, 25 Theresa Avenue appears to have been significantly remodeled, with a consequent loss of historic integrity. The house is notable for its decorative raking fascia boards.

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.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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.

Theresa Avenue was laid out by 1922, when there were only three houses on the street, all unnumbered. Based on its style, 25 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, with an open porch depicted across the façade. A one-story accessory building (likely a garage) also appears in 1927, in the approximate location of the present garage.

The first known residents of 25 Theresa Avenue, in 1924, are George W. Porter, a chauffeur and later truck driver for Standard Oil Co., and his wife Ethel M. (a.k.a. Maud E.). Their son David A. Porter lived with them in 1930 and 1945 (in the latter year he was serving in the Army). Their nephew George E. Porter, a waiter at a “road house”, accompanied them in 1940. In 1965, George and Ethel Porter were accompanied by Frank Hillis, a carpenter.

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, 1934, 1936.

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: 1930, 1940.

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



West (left side) elevation and garage