FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets	USGS Quad	Area Letter	Form Numbers in Area
51	Boston North	AS	

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

Town: Lexington

Place *(neighborhood or village):*

Name of Area: Wellington Estates

Present Use: residential

Construction Dates or Period: 1940-1950

Overall Condition: fair to good

Major Intrusions and Alterations:

Acreage: approx. 5 acres

Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

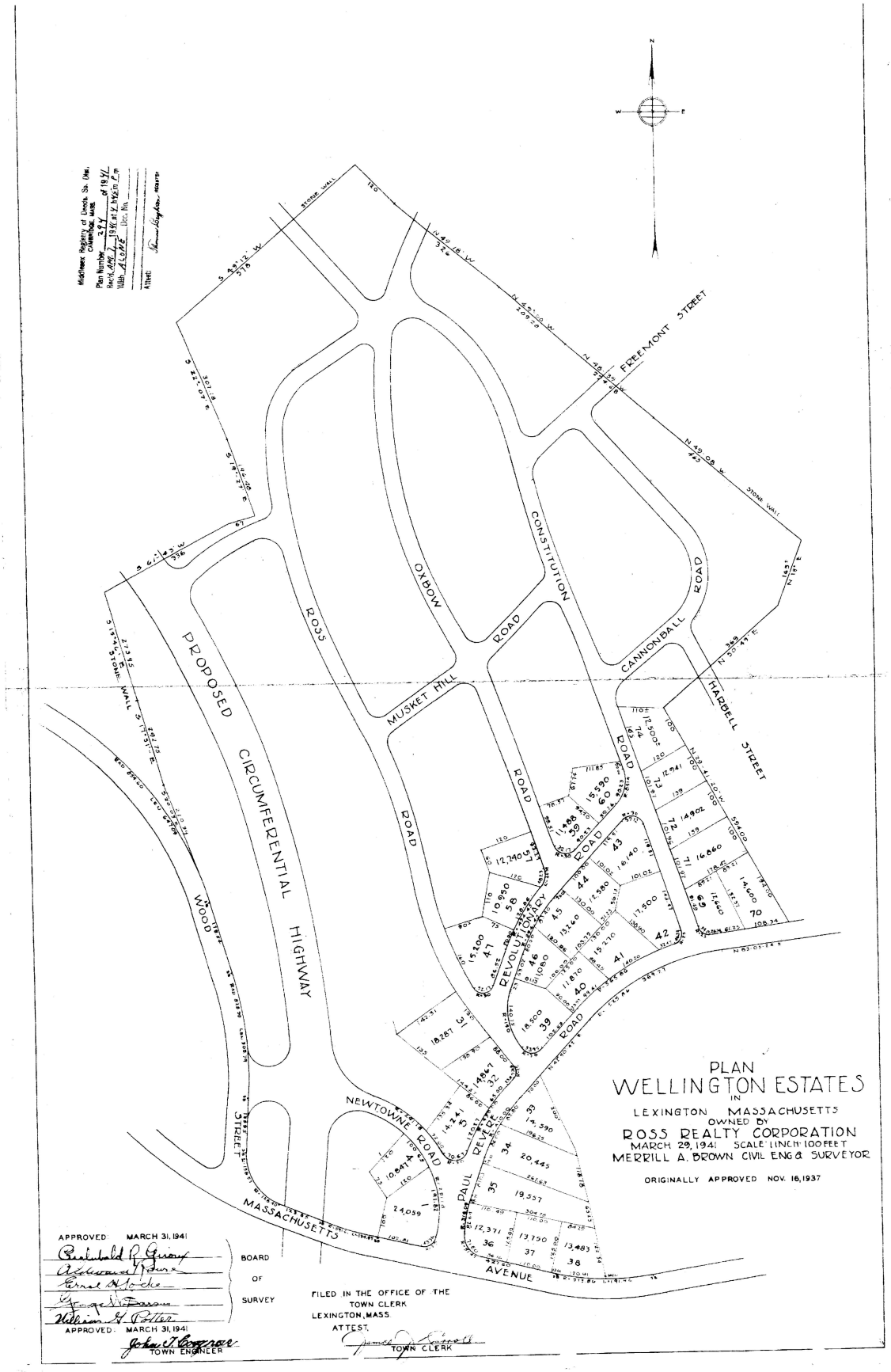
Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date *(month/year):* March 2010

Photograph

Topographic or Assessor's Map

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.


PLAN
WELLINGTON ESTATES
IN
LEXINGTON MASSACHUSETTS
OWNED BY
ROSS REALTY CORPORATION
MARCH 29, 1941 SCALE 1 INCH 100 FEET
MERRILL A. BROWN CIVIL ENG & SURVEYOR
ORIGINALLY APPROVED NOV. 16, 1937
PROPOSED CIRCUMFERENTIAL HIGHWAY
FREEMONT STREET
CONSTITUTION ROAD
OXBOW ROAD
ROSS ROAD
MUSKET HILL ROAD
CANNONBALL ROAD
HARBELL STREET
REVOLUTIONARY ROAD
WOOD STREET
NEWTOWNE ROAD
PAUL REVERE ROAD
MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
APPROVED: MARCH 31, 1941
BOARD OF SURVEY
APPROVED: MARCH 31, 1941
TOWN ENGINEER
FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK LEXINGTON, MASS.
ATTEST:
TOWN CLERK

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Revolutionary Road/Constitution Road (Wellington Estates) neighborhood in Lexington is notable for containing a cluster of Royal Barry Wills Cape Cod-style and Colonial dwellings dating from about 1940 to 1950. The curvilinear subdivision is located just east of Rt. 128 and north of Massachusetts Avenue and is divided into small lots containing about a third of an acre. The modest single-family dwellings are constructed in several variations including 1 ½-story, side-gabled Cape Cod buildings with three and five bay facades, with and without gable dormers. Several of the houses (1 Constitution Road, 2663 Massachusetts Avenue, 7 Paul Revere Road and 3 Revolutionary Road) are capped by gambrel roofs. The most interesting variation on the Cape Cod theme is the house at 2 Constitution Road which has a bowed roof line and corner quoins. The house at 2685 Massachusetts Avenue is a singular example of a Garrison Colonial. Common features include large off-center brick chimneys, 8/12 double-hung windows, the tops of which are tucked under the front eaves and clapboarded exteriors which extend nearly to the ground. Most of the houses have mudroom wings and/or shed/garages sheathed in vertical boards. In a few cases the buildings have been sheathed in vinyl or aluminum siding. Several of the houses including 4 Constitution Road have seen later additions or substantial alterations. There are also several instances of recent infill including 2643 Massachusetts Avenue and 6 Paul Revere Road.

The houses on Revolutionary Road, Constitution Road and Paul Revere Road constitute the largest concentration of Royal Barry Wills' designs in Lexington but are by no means his only local designs. Other Wills' designs include the James Barrington House at 39 Meriam Street (1938), the John Rich house at 43 Woodland Road (1941) The firm also designed the Pilgrim Congregational Church (1960), the Russell Square Condos (1973), and Potter Pond Condos (1980).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

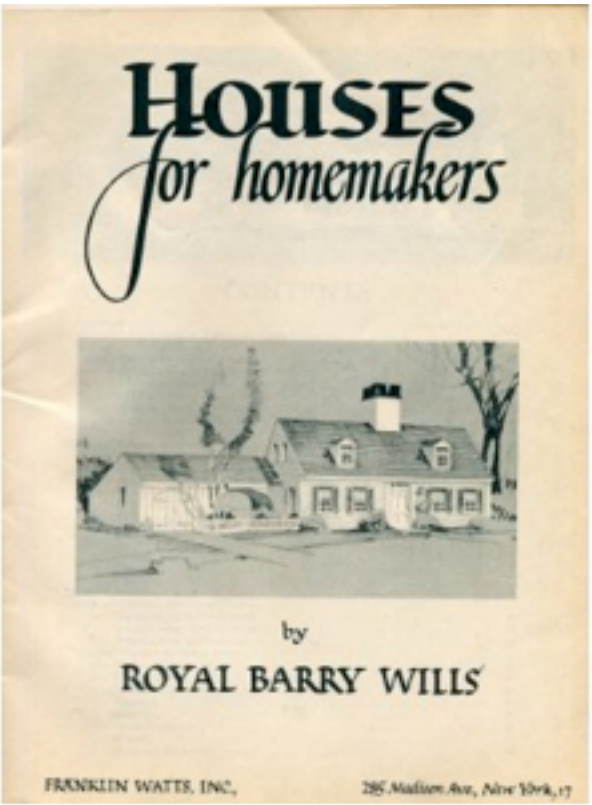
The area including Revolutionary Road and parts of Constitution Road, Massachusetts Avenue, Ross Road and Paul Revere Road was originally laid out as "Wellington Estates" in 1937 by the Ross Realty Corporation although construction did not begin until 1941. The subdivision plan (Plan number 294 of 1941) shows that it was laid out adjacent to the "proposed circumferential highway" which would become Rt. 128. The neighborhood reflects an early local phase of the Cape Cod house construction that intensified in Lexington during the post-World War II building boom. As was typical of the era, many of the original owners were young families where the husband was the breadwinner (occupations included engineer, salesman, bank teller) and the wife stayed home with the children.

The subdivision includes approximately seventeen houses which were designed for Ross Realty by Royal Barry Wills (1895-1962), preeminent Boston architect and master of the Cape Cod style house in its mid 20th century incarnation. Royal Barry Wills grew up in Melrose and graduated from MIT in 1918. After working as a design engineer with the Turner Construction Company from 1919 to 1925, Wills opened an architectural office in Boston in 1925 which he maintained until his death in 1962. His office specialized in small house design including traditional two-story, central hall houses and two-story, garrison houses but became especially well known for their Cape Cod cottages. The houses were set low to the ground with eaves just above the windows. Other character-defining features included an oversized central chimney and a roof pitch that ranged from 8 inches to 10 inches vertically, in twelve inches of run. The sash were made up of from twenty-four to thirty-six individual lights, and clapboards were graduated from a 2 ¾-inch exposure at the foundation to a typical 4-inch that was continued from top of window sill to eaves.

Wills' simple designs met with considerable success. Between 1935 and 1942 he won awards in more than two dozen design competitions including those sponsored by *Pencil Points*, *House Beautiful*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Ladies' Home Journal.* In 1938 *Life* magazine selected him as one of eight architects (four modern and four traditional) to prepare home designs for families in four income categories. In the category for families with $5,000 to $6,000 income, Wills' traditional design competed against a modern design by Frank Lloyd Wright. The selected family in the article chose the Wills house over the Wright design and subsequently the home was built in Edina, Minnesota. In 1940-1 (the same year these houses on Constitution Road were constructed), Royal Barry Wills wrote three books on architecture that were widely read and publicized in both the popular and professional architectural press. By 1946 over a half million copies of his books had been sold and *Life* Magazine declared him the nation's most popular architectural author. Royal Barry Wills went on to win a number of national contests and was also featured in the Saturday Evening Post. He received a Certificate of Honor from the Massachusetts State Association of Architects in 1949 and a fellowship in the American Institute of Architects in 1954.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Gebhard, David. "Royal Barry Wills and the Colonial Revival", *Winterhur Portfolio*, 1992.
Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass. (Plan 294 of 1941)
Royal Barry Wills Associates, Communication with Richard Wills, Dec. 2009. See also firm website
http://www.royalbarrywills.com



Wellington Estates
(Ross Realty/Royal Barry Wills Area)

Name of Original Owner if known	Address	Form/Style	Est. Date
	1 Constitution Road	Gambrel Cape	1941
Donald Harter House	2 Constitution Road	Bowed Cape	1941
	3 Constitution Road	Cape Cod	1941
	4 Constitution Road	Cape Cod	1940
	5 Constitution Road	Cape Cod	1946
	7 Constitution Road	Cape Cod	1946
	2627 Massachusetts Avenue	Cape Cod	1940
Roland Hill House	2663 Massachusetts Avenue	Gambrel Cape	1940
	2685 Massachusetts Avenue	Garrison Colonial	1941
Marvin Bock House	5 Paul Revere Road	Cape Cod	1941
Elliot Worcester House	7 Paul Revere Road	Gambrel Cape	1941
	10 Paul Revere Road	Cape Cod	1942
	12 Paul Revere Road	Cape Cod	1942
Alton Hathaway House	1 Revolutionary Road	Cape Cod	1941
	3 Revolutionary Road	Gambrel Cape	c.1950
	4 Revolutionary Road	Cape Cod	c.1950
	5 Revolutionary Road	Cape Cod	c.1950
	6 Revolutionary Road	Cape Cod	c.1950

10 Paul Revere Road

12 Paul Revere Road

2 Constitution Road

1 Revolutionary Road

2627 Massachusetts Avenue

2663 Massachusetts Avenue

2685 Massachusetts Avenue