

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
427-444, 452	K

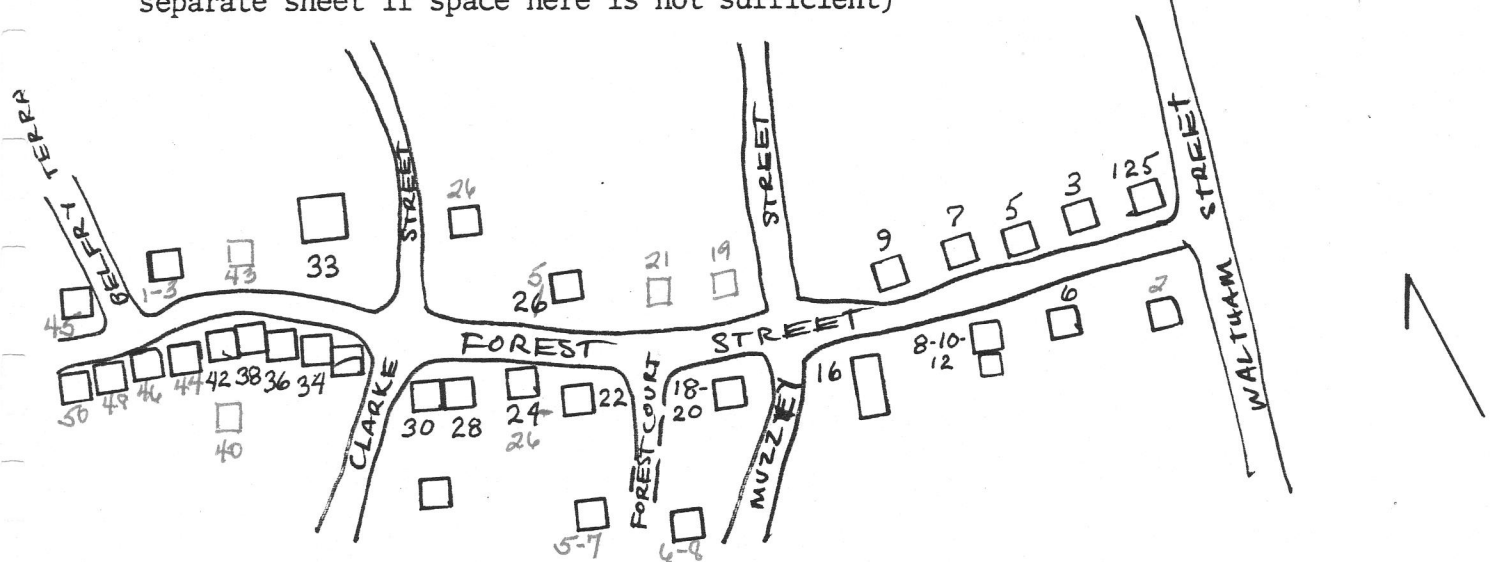


Lexington

of area (if any) Forest Street

of date or period c. 1850 to c. 1930

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Anne Grady, Nancy S. Seasholes
 Organization Lexington Historical Commission
 Date April, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

William Dean Howells described Lexington in 1884 as "as plain and sober a town as fifty years ago except for the new, more ornamented houses being constructed on side streets. . . examples, in one story and a half, of the mansard architecture so popular in our wood built suburbs." He must have had Forest Street in mind when he made this statement for along with Hancock Avenue, Forest Street was the main locus of these cottages in Lexington. Four of the original five built here survive at the southeastern end of the street with few changes. These houses form a cohesive and significant group. All retain porches with decorative posts; three have slate roofs; one has patterned slates; several have original bracketing; and all but one have original clapboarded finish. Although development of Forest Street began at the east end, the street was not built up progressively. The rest of the street is an interesting mix of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century styles. The street, however, possesses

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Forest Street, or at least its easternmost end, is part of Lexington's first major land development. In 1850, Gorham Bigelow, the landowner of the area now between Forest and Muzzey streets and the owner of the hotel on Main Street (Massachusetts Avenue) opposite Waltham Street, was in financial difficulties. He therefore decided to sell some of the land he had owned with Benjamin Muzzey (1795-1848); Muzzey Street was thus laid out as far as Forest Street, which was put through joining Muzzey and Waltham streets, and the land between Muzzey and what later became Clarke Street was divided into house lots.

Development along Forest Street did not take place as early as along Muzzey; the 1853 map shows only one house on Forest, the one now 8-10-12 Forest Street, which may already have been there when Forest Street was laid out. By 1876, however, although this house remained the only one on the south side of Forest Street, almost every lot on the north side between Waltham and Muzzey had been built on; these are the houses now at 125 Waltham Street, and 3, 5, 7, and 9 Forest Street (see relevant forms). Forest Street had also been laid out as far as Clarke Street and two houses built on the south side at the corner of Clarke (see 28 and 30 Forest Street forms). These houses had been built in 1873 by Richard D. Blinn, the owner of most of the land along the proposed Forest Street extension and Parker Street. Blinn had started out as a brakeman on the railroad and had risen to be its president; he bought the Parker-Forest street land in 1870 to 1872, expecting to make a large profit from the sale of house lots. But the Panic of 1873 ended his plans and he left Lexington for Chicago.

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Howells, William Dean. Three Villages, p. 20. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1884.

Kelley, Beverly Allison. Lexington, A Century of Photographs, p. 122. Boston: Lexington Historical Society, 1980.

Lexington Minute Man, November 20, 1891, May 5, 1893, June 4, 1893

(see Continuation Sheet)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: K
Property Name: Forest Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

architectural integrity because of the similarity of scale and building materials of all but two of the buildings.

At 16 Forest Street is the stuccoed Christian Science Church, remodeled from a kindergarten building in 1918 by Willard Brown, Lexington's most original early-twentieth century architect. The elements of the building's design are classical, but are combined with Brown's usual creative sense into a highly individualistic building. The building echoes to some degree Lexington's first town hall, also a building with columned two-story central element and one-story wing on either side. Six Forest Street may have been an early design by Willard Brown.

At the corner of Forest and Clarke streets is the major focal point of the street, the Hancock School, designed by Hartwell and Richardson in 1891 and now successfully converted to condominiums (listed on the National Register). A fine example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture rendered in red brick with pink granite trim and matching brick/pink mortar, the building is one of the few monumental structures in Lexington.

It is worth noting that the street lost another major focal point to fire in 1979. The Old Belfry Club built in 1893, a popular social club in Lexington for years, was perhaps the town's most impressive Shingle Style structure. Designed by R.M. Bailey of Bailey and Lemon, architects of Boston, the structure cost a total of \$13,775. A contemporary account described the building as being in a "semi-colonial style of architecture" and indicated that the architects had had great difficulty with the room arrangement because the decision had been made to give women full equality with men (see description in the Lexington Minute Man, June 9, 1893).

The oldest building on Forest Street is the Amos Muzzey house at number 42, moved from Massachusetts Avenue by way of Waltham Street. It is a mid-eighteenth century structure, or earlier, and preserves certain features, such as window placement and roof profile, from that date.

Other noteworthy structures on Forest Street include contractor Abram C. Washburn's own house at 36 Forest Street. Washburn built many houses in Lexington in the late nineteenth century, on speculation or to the specifications and plans of others. Here we get a chance to see Washburn's own predilections. The house, we are told by the newspaper, had two stories added to it in 1896, including a turret. The second story finishes are among the most elaborate uses of patterned finish of the period and include diagonal flush boarding, stickwork, and staggered butt and hexagonal shingles.

The buildings at 18-20 and 22 Forest Street are termed apartment buildings in a contemporary account, the only reference to apartments in Lexington of the turn-of-the-century period. These are substantial Queen Anne structures with no indication on the exterior of multiple occupancy and indeed, since they are now two and one family dwellings respectively, the term may never have been appropriate. Behind these buildings, Forest Court was put in after 1906. Here are the most utilitarian structures on the street, as deserving as any in Lexington of the term tenements.

(see Continuation Sheet)

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (continuation sheet 2)

The buildings at 28 and 30 Forest Street are well preserved examples of Italianate Vernacular architecture. They were built probably on speculation or as rental units by Richard Blinn.

There are examples of the work of Lexington's two most prominent carpenters on Forest Street: Abram C. Washburn built the house at the south corner of Clarke Street in 1886 and David Tuttle built the house at the south corner of Muzzey Street in 1888. The houses are rather simple in profile and both make extensive use of patterned (staggered butt) shingles on the second floor.

Houses north of the Hancock School and 42 Forest Street, built between 1918 and 1930, are modest structures in Colonial Revival styles.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

By 1889 Forest Street had been extended beyond Clarke Street and two houses built on this extension (see 36 and 38 Forest Street forms); a house had been moved from Waltham Street in 1887 to join the two already near the corner of Forest and Clarke streets (see 24 Forest Street form); and one built on the corner of Forest and Muzzey streets, later moved back on the lot to face Muzzey Street (see 32 Muzzey Street form). Other than this, however, the south side of Forest Street from Waltham Street almost to Clarke Street remained unbuilt (except for the house originally there) as did the north side from Muzzey Street to Clarke Street and along the extension. Some of this had changed in 1898 with the building of the Old Belfry Club and Hancock School along the north side and a few more houses along the south, but most of the rest of the development of Forest Street had to await the completion of the Forest Street extension through to Massachusetts Avenue in 1927.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Lexington Minute Man, n.d. Book of clippings in possession of Elizabeth W. Reinhardt.

Mulliken, Everett. "Some of My Recollections of the Houses in the Vicinity of the Common and the People Who Lived in Them." Typescript, Worthen Collection, Cary Memorial Library, Lexington, Massachusetts.

1853 map

1876 map

1889 map

1898 map

1906 map

1918 Sanborn map

1927 Sanborn map

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**AREA K
FOREST STREET**

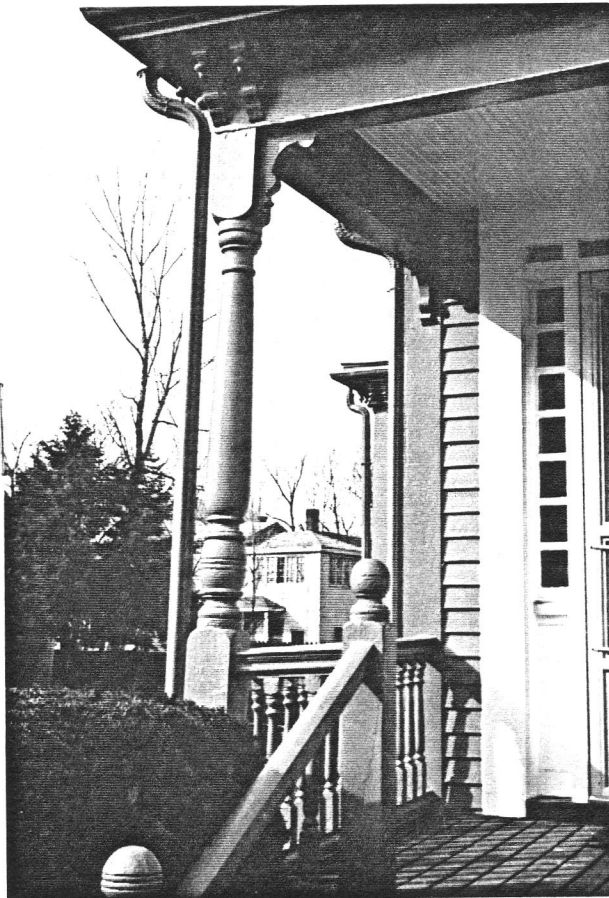
Address	Style	Date (if known)	MHC Number
125 Waltham St.	Second Empire	1873	452
3 Forest St.	Second Empire	c. 1874	427
5 Forest St.	Second Empire/Queen Anne	before 1875	428
6 Forest St.	Dutch Colonial Revival	just before 1910	429
7 Forest St.	Second Empire	c. 1874	430
8-10-12 Forest St.	Greek Revival/Italianate	c. 1840-1850	432
9 Forest St.	Second Empire (altered)	c. 1875	431
16 Forest St.	Neo-Classical Revival	c. 1900	433
18-20 Forest St.	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	1896	434
22 Forest St.	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival	1896	435
24 Forest St.	Italianate (altered)	1847	436
25 Forest St.	Single Style/Dutch Colonial Revival		437
28 Forest St.	Italianate	1873	438
30 Forest St.	Italianate	1873	439
33 Forest St.	Romanesque Revival (Hancock School)	1891	440
34 Forest St.	Colonial Revival		441
36 Forest St.	Stick Style	c. 1885	442
38 Forest St.	Queen Anne	c. 1885	443
40 Forest St.	(ell of Amos Muzzey House)	ca. 1834; moved 1894 from Waltham St.	681
42 Forest St.	Georgian (Amos Muzzey House)	moved 1894 from Waltham St.	444
43 Forest St.	Queen Anne		
5-7 Forest Ct.	? (fieldstone foundation, small-paned stained glass window, sided, flat roof); barn		
6-8 Forest Ct.	Queen Anne/Colonial Revival		

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Lexington Historical Society

OLD BELFRY CLUB

Around 1892 a parcel of land at the corner of Muzzey and Forest Streets was purchased and on January 24, 1894, this wood-framed building was dedicated for use as one of the first social clubs in Lexington. Contrary to the times, women were given full membership and two

women were even installed as officers. Land, building, and furnishings were bought for a total of \$13,775. At one time, this highly popular social club had a tennis court and bowling alley for members' enjoyment. The Old Belfry Club was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1979.

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From Kelley, Beverly Allison, Lexington: A Century of Photographs
(Boston: Lexington Historical Society, 1980)

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