

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets

USGS Quad

Area Letter

Form Numbers in Area

22

Boston N.

P

643, 1325-1342

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
 220 Morrissey Boulevard  
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125



Town: Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village): East Lexington

Name of Area: Curve Street

Present Use: Residential

Construction Dates or Period: c.1855-present

Overall Condition: fair to good

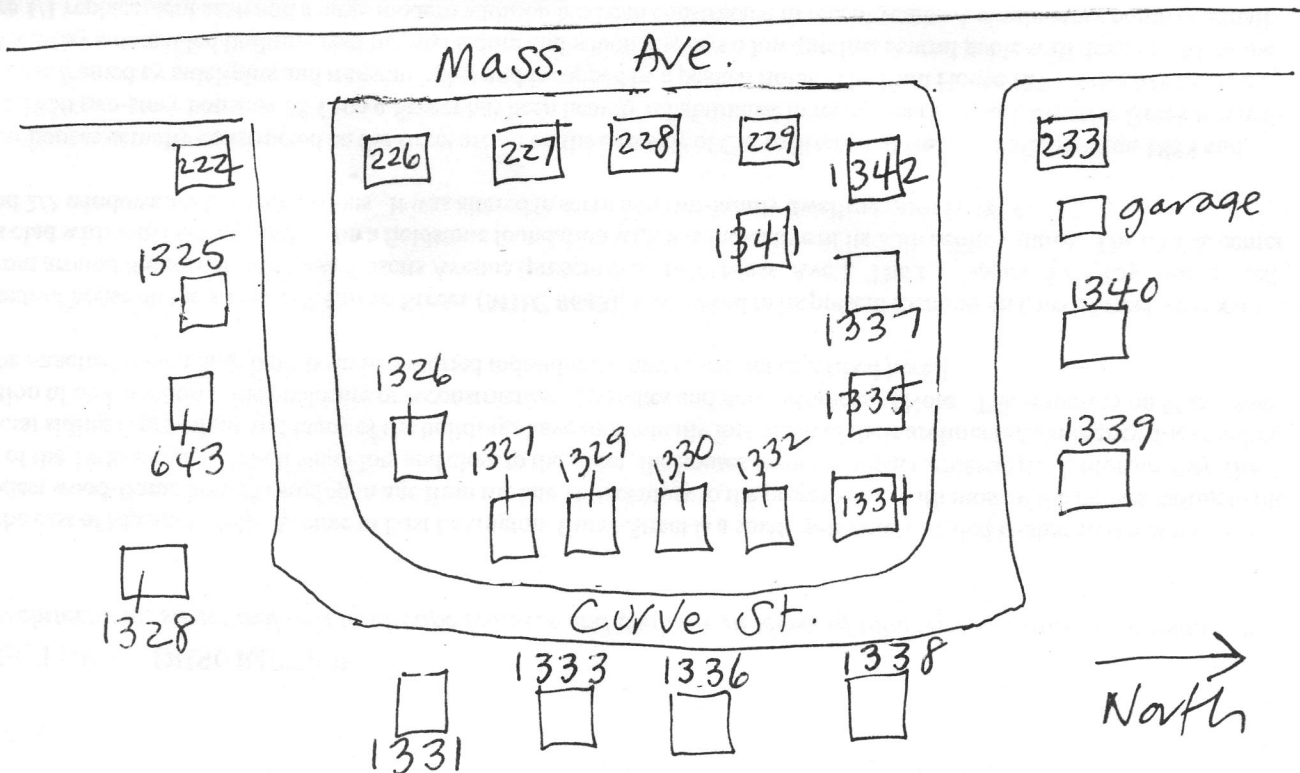
Major Intrusions and Alterations: siding, new windows, additions

Acreage: approx. 7 acres

Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year): July 2000



## AREA FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Located to the east of Massachusetts Avenue in East Lexington, Curve Street is a small, intimately-scaled U-shaped street which is lined by modest wood-frame houses ranging in age from the late 18th century to the present day, with most of the houses dating to the second half of the 19th century. Set on small lots and close to the street, the houses form a compact streetscape. Unfortunately, the use of artificial siding is prevalent and many of the buildings have individually lost much of their architectural integrity due to siding, the installation of new windows, the enclosure or reconstruction of porches and new entrances. [Note: The resources on Mass. Ave. shown on the attached sketch map have been inventoried individually, and so are not described here.]

The oldest extant house on the street, **5-7 Curve Street (MHC #643)**, was moved to its present location on Curve Street between 1924 and 1926 from around the corner on Massachusetts Avenue (present site of 789 Mass. Ave.). The 2 1/2-story, 5 x 3-bay, side-gabled dwelling, is clad with vinyl siding, and set on a fieldstone foundation which is indicative of its 20th century move. The double center entrance and 2/2 windows are both alterations. It was altered to serve as a two-family dwelling prior to 1854.

The first four houses actually constructed on the street are all on the east side of Curve Street and were all built between 1855 and 1875. The c.1850 two-story house at **25 Curve Street** has been heavily rehabilitated in recent years. The distinctive Greek Revival-style entrance is framed by sidelights and transom lights and is capped by a peaked lintel. The Flint House (**27 Curve Street**) is a 2 1/2-story, 3 x 2-bay side-gabled building clad in vinyl siding and which displays a low-pitched central gable wall dormer. All of the windows are 1/1 replacement sash and a large modern addition has been constructed in recent years. A single-story porch originally spanned the facade. The house at **17-19 Curve Street** is a two-story, 4 x 1-bay double house which is set above a brick foundation. The building is sheathed in vinyl siding and a 20th century sunporch spans the facade, replacing what was originally a smaller porch. The house at **15 Curve Street** is a 2 1/2-story, pediment-fronted dwelling. Alterations include the wood shingle exterior and the enclosure of the front porch.

The house at **11 Curve Street** is a small mansard-roofed cottage which rests on a brick foundation. It was probably constructed shortly after the 1875 map. It has been sheathed in aluminum siding and the front porch has been enclosed. The c.1880 house at **8 Curve Street** is a 1 1/2-story, 3 x 1-bay dwelling which is notable for its high kneewall and jerkinhead dormers on the front roof slope. The building has been sheathed in aluminum siding with wood shingles covering the rear elevation; it rests on a brick foundation. The siding on the east end has recently been removed, revealing the original clapboarded exterior and simple frieze. The center entrance is a modern alteration and the windows contain a replacement 6/6 sash.

The row of four Queen Anne-style cottages on the west side of Curve Street (**10, 12, 14, & 16 Curve Street**) were all built for the East Lexington Finance Club and were built with slight variations on the same basic sidehall plan. The houses at **16 and 14 Curve Street** display a double front gable with the other two houses having a single gablefront. All of the buildings except **10 Curve Street** retain their original decorative raking and all of the buildings have a three-sided bay window on the north side. Despite the application of aluminum siding, **12 Curve Street** is the most intact. The front porch retains its turned posts, stick frieze and geometric railing and the windows contain 2/2 sash.

The c.1890 house at **3 Curve Street** is a 2 1/2-story, cross-gable, vinyl-sided dwelling with a wrap around porch spanning the facade and west elevation. The 2 1/2-story, front-gabled double house at **26 Curve Street** appears to date to the late 19th century but has been sheathed in modern wood shingles.

Limited construction occurred on vacant lots in the early 20th century. The house at **18 Curve Street** is a 1 1/2-story, gambrel-roofed building constructed c.1920 but which has seen the addition of vinyl siding and new windows. Two houses were constructed on the street in the post-World War II period. The house at **29 Curve Street** is a two-story, side-gabled Colonial Revival house with a segmental pediment over the center entrance, flanked by fluted pilasters with 6/6 and 8/8 windows. The house at **22 Curve Street** dates to the 1960s. A new duplex is currently under construction at **31 Curve Street**, replacing a c.1948 Cape Cod structure.

Recommended as a National Register District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town  
LexingtonProperty Address  
Curve Street  
Area(s) Form No.Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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

What is now Curve Street (originally known as Flint Street) is notable as the second subdivision laid out in Lexington. It was laid out in house lots in 1855 (five years after Muzzey Street) off Massachusetts Avenue on land that was originally part of the Bowman Tavern property (837 Mass. Ave., MHC #227). The plan of the subdivision is in the Lexington Historical Society archives. According to Edwin Worthen, Curve Street was originally known as "Flintville". Worthen states that Nathaniel Flint laid out Curve Street and built the earlier houses on the eastern side, adjacent to the railroad. Inspection of historic maps indicates that four houses had been built on the east side of Curve Street by 1875 (15, 19, 25, 27 Curve Street.) The 1889 map of East Lexington indicates that at that time George Flint (Nathaniel's son) owned 27 Curve Street.

Two additional houses (8 and 11 Curve Street) were constructed between 1875 and 1889. Five more were built prior to 1898. These included the four cottages on the west side of Curve Street constructed by the East Lexington Finance Club. The Club was formed in 1892 with a membership of twenty-five and made investments in real estate, primarily on Curve Street. Assessors' records indicate that by 1895 the club had purchased a 20,000 square foot lot of land on Curve Street and by the following year's assessment two houses had been completed with two more under construction. On May 24, 1895 the *Minute-man* reported that a builder named Phillips had been engaged to build two houses on Curve Street for the Finance Club. On December 13, 1895, the paper reported that the foundation had been laid for a new house on Curve Street to be built by the Finance Club. A Mr. Johnson was the contractor.

The Finance Club continued to have extensive dealings in Curve Street real estate into the early 20th century. In 1901 the club also owned one of the corner lots of land on Mass. Avenue and Curve Street. The Baptists briefly considered built a church on Curve Street but this was never carried out. The newspaper reports that in 1903 authoress Camille Fairchild purchased one of the Finance houses on Curve Street, which had previously been occupied by Wellington. In 1905 the *Minute-man* reported that the Club purchased the old Flint Estate (27 Curve Street) from Charles Spaulding and was improving it. The 1906 map shows that at that time four of the houses were owned by the Finance Club. In 1909 the Club purchased the real estate of Isaiah Palmer (26 Curve Street). At its height in 1920 the East Lexington Finance Club owned the buildings at 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 26, & 27 Curve Street. The following year the Club began to sell off its holdings and in 1922 only owned 26 Curve Street.

Historically the houses on Curve Street were home to working class residents. In the late 19th century occupations of residents included laundry operator, farmer and stone mason. In the 20th century some of the occupations included farmer, accountant and railroad employees including motorman and train repairer.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey of Lexington, Book 1, Area P, 1984.  
Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913, vol. 1, p. 515.  
Kelley, Beverly Allison. *Lexington: A Century of Photographs*. Lexington Historical Society, 1980, p. 132.  
*Lexington Minute-man*, 5/24/1895; 12/13/1895; 11/16/1901; 4/4/1903; 5/30/1908; 8/21/1909.  
Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998, p. 47.

Subdivision plan of 1855. Lexington Historical Society archives.  
1875 atlas  
1889 atlas  
1898 atlas  
1906 atlas  
Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1908, 1918, 1927, 1935, 1961.

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**DISTRICT DATA SHEET  
AREA P - CURVE STREET**

Assessors	Resource	Address	Style	Date	MHC#
22/27	House	3 Curve Street	Vict. eclectic	c.1890	1325
22/26	Williams-Clapp-Munroe House	5-7 Curve Street	Georgian (alt.)	before 1798 (moved 1924-6)	643
22/28	House	8 Curve Street	alt.?	c.1880	1326
22/29	E. Lex. Finance Club Dwelling	10 Curve Street	Queen Anne	c.1895	1327
22/26	House	11 Curve Street	Fr. Sec. Emp.	c.1875	1328
22/30A	E. Lex. Finance Club Dwelling	12 Curve Street	Queen Anne	c.1895	1329
22/31A	E. Lex. Finance Club Dwelling	14 Curve Street	Queen Anne	c.1895	1330
22/25	House	15 Curve Street	Greek Revival	betw. 1855 & 1875	1331
22/32	E. Lex. Finance Club Dwelling	16 Curve Street	Queen Anne	c.1895	1332
22/24	Double House	17-19 Curve Street		betw. 1855 & 1875	1333
22/33	House	18 Curve Street	Dutch Col.	c.1920	1334
22/34	House	22 Curve Street		c.1962	1335
22/23B	House	25 Curve Street	Italianate	betw. 1855 & 1875	1336
22/35A	House	26 Curve Street	No Style	c.1900	1337
22/22	Flint House	27 Curve Street	Italianate	betw. 1855 & 1875	1338
22/21	House	29 Curve Street	Colonial Rev.	1947	1339
22/20	Double House	31 Curve Street		2000	1340
22/41A	Childs Bldg.	807-809 Mass. Ave.	Italianate	1837?	222
22/40	Double House	821-823 Mass. Ave.	Colonial Rev.	c.1900	226
22/39-2	Bowman Tavern	837 Mass. Ave.	Federal/Greek Revival	c.1820	227
22/38	Childs Residence	847 Mass. Ave.	Italianate	after 1853	228
22/37	House	851 Mass. Ave.	French Second Empire	after 1875	229
22/37	House	853 Mass. Ave.			1341
22/36A	House	859 Mass. Ave.		c.1980	1342
22/19	House	881 Mass. Ave.	Federal/Col. Rev.	by 1828	233

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3 Curve Street



5-7 Curve Street

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10, 12, 14, 16 Curve Street



8, 10, 12, 14 Curve Street

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8 & 15 Curve Street



19 & 15 Curve Street

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19, 15, 11 Curve Street



25 Curve Street



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27 Curve Street



22 & 26 Curve Street

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31 & 29 Curve Street



26 Curve Street