

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

Form numbers in this area

Area letter

548-550

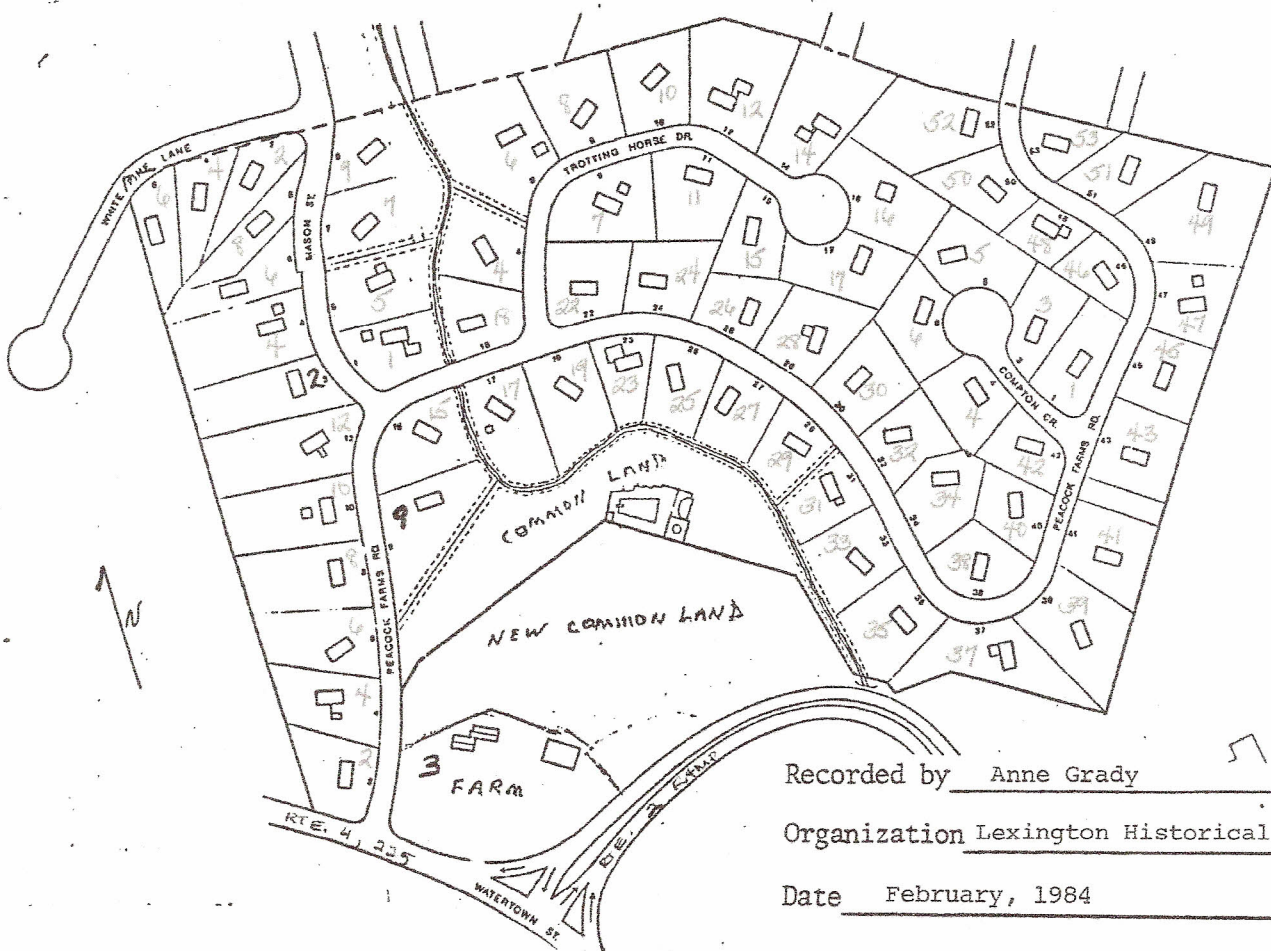
S



Lexington

of area (if any) Peacock Farm

! date or period 1950s



Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date February, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

The Peacock Farm neighborhood is a development of 65 contemporary style houses built between 1951 and c. 1960. The houses are primarily of the award winning split-level design known as the Peacock Farm house. However, there are eight houses of an earlier design, three which were individually designed by architects and one which is a Techbuilt. The houses are sited to take advantage of the natural setting which includes in its 45 acres wetlands, wooded areas, fields, and a substantial rise in elevation.

The first buildings to be constructed were of a one-story design with raised basement, low pitch roof, and vertical cedar siding (see 9 Peacock Farm Road form). In late 1955, that design was superseded by the Peacock Farm house (see 2 Mason Street form). A simple structure with logical division of functions on three levels, the house is characterized by a low pitch roof with one slope longer than the other, broadly overhang eaves and exposed beams, exterior finish of stained vertical cedar siding, linear treatment of windows

(see Continuation Sheet)

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

Land for the Peacock Farm development was purchased in 1951 by architects Danforth Compton and Walter Pierce. Although the Moon Hill development of International Style houses established by The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in 1948 was close by, Compton and Pierce did not choose Lexington for its association with contemporary housing. The name derives from the farm at the entrance to the development where peacocks were raised in the early twentieth century. The 45 acres purchased comprised acreage of the farm. The house at 4 Peacock Farm Road was built as a demonstration model in late 1951. It was the original design described above. Eight of this type of house had been built by 1955. In late 1955, Danforth Compton died and developers Harmon White and Edward Green bought the remaining land.

After a period of informal market research among real estate agents, bankers and prospective buyers, Green and White commissioned Walter Pierce to design a house to meet the needs of the young professional buyers they hoped to attract. Requirements included a three bedroom, one-and-a-half bath house with fireplace and a natural setting for a price of \$20,000. The result was the split-level design known as the "Peacock Farm House."

In 1957 the design won first prize in the national "Homes for Better Living" contest sponsored by the A.I.A. The house was also selected as one of 57 for exhibit in the National Association of Home Builders' Hall of Fame in Washington (Boston Globe, May 16, 1957). As a result of its illustration in national publications such as the New York Times and Time magazine, requests for plans were received. There are perhaps a dozen Peacock Farm houses throughout

(see Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

"First Award." Reprint from House and Home, June 1957.

"First Prize Awarded in Competition." Christian Science Monitor, May ?, 1957.

"Lexington Contemporary at Peacock Farms Wins First Prize in National Competition." Boston Sunday Herald, May 19, 1957.

"Lexington Home Wins A.I.A. Contest." Boston Globe, May 16, 1957.

(see Continuation Sheet)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Community: Lexington | Form No: S |
| Property Name: Peacock Farm | |

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

and broad expanses of glass. The split-level plan was intentionally designed for sloping sites. The living area end of the house was intended to be at ground level as was the garage/playroom area half a story below the living area. Houses were flipped or turned to match the contour of the site. The resulting random orientation of the houses is a key feature of Peacock Farm, and one which distinguishes it from other developments. The natural stained siding and simple design are particularly appropriate for the many wooded lots in the development.

Individually designed houses in the area are: the house at 16 Trotting Horse Drive by Walter Pierce, the house at 23 Peacock Farm Road by Henry Hoover, and the house at 48 Peacock Farm Road. A number of the houses in Peacock Farm have been enlarged. Pierce and Hoover have been responsible for many of the additions.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

the country in such places as Virginia and the Midwest. Five other areas of Lexington were developed by Green and White with Peacock Farm houses: the Grove off Burlington Street, the Glen at Countryside (Woburn Street and Lowell Street) on Turning Mill Road in North Lexington, on Rumford Road, and in 1965 at Pleasant Brook adjacent to the original development site. There are a few isolated examples of the house in Lexington, Belmont, Newton, and Wayland.

Peacock Farm developed along the lines of the other neighborhoods of contemporary houses built in Lexington in the 1940s and 1950s, attracting the same kind of young professional and academic families, their sense of community enhanced by shared interests such as the community swimming pool, neighborhood play groups for children, and use of the development's six acres of common land.

The Peacock Farm Trust oversees neighborhood affairs and administers the architectural restrictions recorded with every deed. Five trustees are elected from among home owners. Restrictions require approval for changes or additions to buildings or landscape, including the removal of trees over four inches in diameter.

Developments of contemporary style houses like Peacock Farm are one of the most significant features of Lexington architecturally (there are ten such neighborhoods). For reasons not yet defined the phenomenon thrived here as in no place else in the Boston area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

"Modern Split-Level Homes Find Acceptance in History-Steeped Lexington." New York Times, September 13, 1959.

Noel Seney. A Split-Level that Makes Sense. Reprint from Better Homes and Gardens magazine for Benjamin Franklin Homes, Lexington, Massachusetts. Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Publishing Company, 1960.

Personal communication from Walter Pierce.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEETTown
LEXINGTONProperty Address
PEACOCK FARMMASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

S

**DATA SHEET
AREA S
PEACOCK FARM**

| Address | Style | Architect | Date | Assessor Number | MHC # |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------|-----------------|-------|
| 1 Compton Circle | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/36 | |
| 3 Compton Circle | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/35 | |
| 4 Compton Circle | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/32 | |
| 5 Compton Circle | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/34 | |
| 6 Compton Circle | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/33 | |
| 1 Mason Street | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1954 | 8/92 | |
| 2 Mason Street | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | c.1956 | 8/88 | 550 |
| 4 Mason Street | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1956 | 8/89 | |
| 5 Mason Street | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1954 | 8/91 | |
| 6 Mason Street | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1967 | 8/155 | |
| 7 Mason Street | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1969 | 8/153 | |
| 8 Mason Street | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1970 | 8/156 | |
| 9 Mason Street | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1969 | 8/154 | |
| 2 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 8/82 | |
| 3 Peacock Farm Road | Federal/Greek Revival | | c.1830 | 7/91C | 548 |
| 4 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1953 | 8/83 | |
| 6 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 8/84 | |
| 8 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 8/85 | |
| 9 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | c.1953 | 8/94 | 549 |
| 10 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1954 | 8/86 | |
| 12 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 8/87 | |
| 15 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 8/93 | |
| 17 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 7/89 | |
| 18 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 7/10 | |
| 19 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1956 | 7/88 | |
| 22 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/22 | |

| Address | Style | Architect | Date | Assessor Number | MHC # |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 23 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary | Henry Hoover | 1958 | 7/87 | |
| 24 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/23 | |
| 25 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/86 | |
| 26 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/24 | |
| 27 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/85 | |
| 28 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/25 | |
| 29 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/84 | |
| 30 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/26 | |
| 31 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/83 | |
| 32 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/27 | |
| 33 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/82 | |
| 34 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/28 | |
| 35 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/81A | |
| 37 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1960 | 7/80B | |
| 38 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/29 | |
| 39 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/79 | |
| 40 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/30 | |
| 41 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/78 | |
| 42 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/31 | |
| 43 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/76 | |
| 45 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/75 | |
| 46 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/37 | |
| 47 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/74 | |
| 48 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1960 | 7/38 | |
| 49 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/73 | |
| 50 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/39 | |
| 51 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/72 | |
| 52 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/40 | |
| 53 Peacock Farm Road | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/71 | |
| 4 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1957 | 7/11 | |
| 6 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1955 | 7/12 | |
| 7 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1958 | 7/21 | |
| 8 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1957 | 7/13 | |
| 10 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Techbuilt) | | 1957 | 7/14 | |
| 11 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1955 | 7/20 | |
| 12 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1957 | 7/15 | |
| 14 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (custom) | Compton & Pierce | 1956 | 7/16 | |

| Address | Style | Architect | Date | Assessor Number | MHC # |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 15 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1957 | 7/19 | |
| 16 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (custom) | Compton & Pierce | 1958 | 7/17 | |
| 17 Trotting Horse Drive | Contemporary (Peacock Farm) | Compton & Pierce | 1955 | 7/18 | |
| 2 White Pine Lane | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1967 | 8/157 | |
| 4 White Pine Lane | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1967 | 8/158 | |
| 6 White Pine Lane | Contemporary (Expanded Peacock Farm) | Walter S. Pierce | 1968 | 8/159 | |

Updated by Bruce Clouette, May 2011