

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets

USGS Quad

Area Letter

Form Numbers in Area

13

Boston N.

AP

1472-1480

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125



Town: Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village): East Lexington

Name of Area: Taft Avenue

Present Use: Residential

Construction Dates or Period: 1934-1937

Overall Condition: good

Major Intrusions and Alterations: none

Acreage: 1.75 acres

Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month/year): June 2000



AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Just uphill from the south side of Massachusetts Avenue near the Arlington town line, is a cohesive cluster of nine residences all constructed between 1934 and 1937 on 8,000 to 9,000 square foot lots laid out as part of the Brick Village subdivision. The nine contiguous dwellings covered by this area form include three Colonial Revival-style houses and six Tudor-inspired buildings, all of which display some brick veneering on the facade. The group of six Tudor Revival dwellings are in particular notable as Lexington's largest such concentration of c.1930 Tudor residential buildings. All of the houses display a fairly high degree of integrity. Alterations have largely been limited to the replacement of the original window sash and the use of synthetic sidings on side elevations.

As has been stated, examples of the Tudor Revival predominate. Four of the houses (**5 Taft Avenue**, **11 Taft Avenue**, **12 Taft Avenue** and **15 Taft Avenue**) are variations on the same form. All four exhibit a steeply-pitched front gable forming the principal facade with a central front chimney. The chimneys may be either tapered or straight and are constructed of various combinations of brick and stone including random projecting brick, clinker bricks, random granite blocks, or more complex stonework on the lower part of the chimney. All of these 1 1/2-story houses feature an arched extension of the front-gabled wall extending beyond the main house in the form of an arcaded wing wall. The other end of the asymmetrical gable front levels off and typically shelters a sunporch behind an elliptical front arch. Two of the four houses (**11 Taft Avenue** and **15 Taft Avenue**) have gabled entrance porches which overlap with the eave line of the main house. The windows on several of the houses appear to have been replaced but a doublehung 6/1 sash seems to have been the predominant original configuration. Most of the windows are set in segmentally arched openings with brick lintels. Shed dormers span both slopes of the steeply pitched gable roof and are for the most part sheathed in wood shingles (unless obscured by aluminum or vinyl siding). Two of the houses, **5 Taft Avenue** and **11 Taft Avenue**, were constructed with a garage underneath the main house.

Two of the houses, **6 Taft Avenue** and **10 Taft Avenue**, display a more subtle and less pure Tudor influence. The house at **6 Taft Avenue** displays a complex hip roof with a second hip over the entrance and a saltbox gable dormer on the side roof slope. A steeply pitched gable slope extends on either side of the hip-roofed mass, punctuated by an arched sunporch or arcaded wing wall as are the four Tudor houses previously discussed. On **10 Taft Avenue** the proportion of projecting stretcher bricks is especially high. The top of the steeply pitched front gable is stuccoed and the asymmetrical gable descends to include an arcaded wing wall. The hip dormer on the side elevation displays exposed rafters reminiscent of the Craftsman style.

The remaining three houses are indicative of a concurrent interest in the Colonial Revival. The houses at **8 Taft Avenue** and **2 Cherry Street** are examples of the Garrison Colonial mode which became popular in the 1930s. As is typical the 2 1/2-story, side-gabled dwellings display a second story which is extended slightly outward to overhang the wall below. The **Cherry Street** house has four pendants suspended from the overhang at the ends of the elevation and adjacent to the entrance. Both of the houses feature a first floor facade clad in a brick veneer while the remainder of the building is clad in wood shingles. (The brick veneer on **8 Taft Avenue** may not be original.) The house at **2 Cherry Street** displays a typical five-bay facade while **8 Taft Avenue** is just three bays wide. The final residence in the cluster, **4 Taft Avenue**, is a two-story, 5 x 2-bay Colonial Revival home completely covered in a brick veneer. The house displays parapet ends with integral chimneys. The center entrance is capped by a semicircular stuccoed recess as are the adjacent facade windows.

While the late 1930s and 1940s saw the construction of additional dwellings on other Brick Village lots, further south on Taft Avenue and along cross streets including Cherry Street, Cary (now Stevens) Street, Daniels Street and Aerial Street, these later houses lack the architectural commonality exhibited in the earlier structures. The residences on these streets include Cape Cods, Colonials and Garrison Colonials.

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

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Lexington

Property Address
Taft Avenue
Area(s) Form No.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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

In May 1933 Harry Johnson laid out a subdivision, known as Brick Village, on land which he owned off Massachusetts Avenue in East Lexington, near the Arlington town line. This segment of Taft Avenue represents part of that subdivision. Directories indicate that Harold S. Johnson was an engineer who lived at 5 Forest Court with his wife Mabel. The southern part of Taft Avenue, from Charles Street to Oak Street was laid out about 1918 but it was not extended to Mass. Ave. to include this portion until the 1930s.

The first houses constructed in the subdivision appear to be the Tudor Revival houses at 5 Taft Avenue and 11 Taft Avenue, both of which date to 1934. The last building in the group, 2 Cherry Street, was constructed in 1937. Directories indicate that the owners of houses had a variety of middle-class occupations including a printer, a salesman, an accountant, a mechanic, a constable, and an auto parts store manager.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Lexington Assessors Records.
Lexington Directories, various dates.
Lexington Valuation Lists, various dates.
Sanborn Insurance Maps of Lexington, Mass., 1935.

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DISTRICT DATA SHEET
AREA AP
TAFT AVENUE

Tax Map #	Resource	Address	Style	Date	MHC #
13/87	John & Christine Clancy House	2 Cherry St.	Garrison Col.	1937	1449
13/41	Evelyn McVetty House	4 Taft Avenue	Col. Revival	1935	1450
13/92	Victor & Ida Ericson House	5 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1934	1451
13/42	Frank Kumer House	6 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1935	1452
13/43	William & Florence McCarthy House	8 Taft Avenue	Garrison Col.	1935	1453
13/44	Bernard & Melita Nickerson House	10 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1935	1454
13/86	Ludwig & Esther Hedberg House	11 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1934	1455
13/45	Joseph & Marion Brownell House	12 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1936	1456
13/87	John & Minnie May House	15 Taft Avenue	Tudor Revival	1935	1457

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5 Taft Avenue



12 Taft Avenue

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6 Taft Avenue



6 & 8 Taft Avenue

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4 Taft Avenue