

Area AB - First Period Buildings

In 1990 a number of First Period Buildings throughout Eastern Massachusetts were listed on the National Register as part of a Thematic Group Resources Nomination. The designation applies to approximately 110 buildings in 46 communities. The nominated resources include one building in Lexington - the John Mason House at 1303 Massachusetts Avenue. This building is also located within the Munroe Tavern Local Historic District (Area D).



John Mason House, 1303 Massachusetts Avenue

Constructed ca. 1715, the Mason House is a well-preserved First Period house, notable for its somewhat rare framing techniques. It is representative of what appears to be a transitional regional framing technique in which horizontal beams have distinctive "quirk" beads but vertical posts are simply chamfered or left plain. This may have been because the posts were intended to be boxed. In addition, the house displays an all principal rafter roof, a late First Period framing variant found primarily in Middlesex County.

The exterior of the 2 ½-story house exhibits later, altered features including mid 19th century exterior trim and a 20th century front porch. The original center chimney was removed in the early 19th century. Over the years a lean-to addition was added and the roof was raised. The east wing has been extended several times.



The original owner, John Mason, was a prominent early citizen of Lexington who served as assessor, constable, town clerk and selectman at various times during the town's early years. He was also one of eleven subscribers in the purchase of the Green from Benjamin Muzzey in 1711. Mason owned the site of the house by 1706 but the deed was not recorded until 1714 and it is likely that the house was built then. The house remained in the Mason family until 1789. Later owners included Samuel Henley, James Winthrop and James Munroe. The Munroe Family sold the property in 1920.