
Area K - Forest Street

Forest Street was largely developed in the late 19th century and displays a mix of late 19th and early 20th century styles including the Italianate, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque, Classical and Colonial Revival. This area includes one property individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Hancock School at the corner of Forest and Clarke Streets (33 Forest Street). Constructed in 1891 to replace the original, wood-frame Hancock School on Waltham Street which was destroyed by fire, the red brick structure with pink granite trim and matching mortar is an impressive example of Romanesque Revival architecture and was designed by the prominent Boston architectural firm of Hartwell and Richardson. The building, which was later converted to condominiums, was damaged by fire in 2008.



Hancock School, 33 Forest Street

The first house built on Forest Street was 8 Forest Street which may even predate the laying out of this section of the street in 1850. Its Greek Revival-style door surrounds suggest a construction date of about 1840 and its attached barn is a reminder of earlier times.



8 Forest Street

Development of Forest Street began in earnest in the early 1870s as construction of dwellings began on a speculative basis. By October 1872 J.E. Hodgeman, a butcher, had built three houses on Forest Street - probably the mansard-roofed cottages at the east end of the street - a relatively rare occurrence in Lexington (the only other similar cluster is found on Hancock Avenue). In 1873 Hodgeman built another on the corner of Forest and Waltham Streets (125 Waltham Street). The newspaper praised his enterprise, stating he has "done as much as any of our citizens to build up and improve the town." Hodgeman's

decision to move his slaughter house to the outskirts of town greatly increased the value of properties in the neighborhood.



3 Forest Street



7 Forest Street



125 Waltham Street

Also in 1873 another would-be developer, Richard Blinn, built houses at 28 and 30 Forest Street. Blinn had started out as a brakeman on the Lexington Railroad and eventually rose through the ranks to become its president. He purchased a large parcel of land in what is now Parker Street-Forest Street in the early 1870s and hoped to make a large profit from the sale of house lots. The Panic of 1873 brought an end to these plans and Blinn left Lexington for Chicago. Others who built residential structures for profit in the neighborhood included a Mr. Sloomayer who constructed the Queen Anne-style dwellings at 18 and 22 Forest Street in 1896 and lawyer A.E. Scott.



28 & 30 Forest Street

Mixed development continued along the street in the late 19th century including the construction of two important Lexington landmarks. The Hancock School, already discussed, was completed in 1891. Just down the street, the Old Belfry Club was built at the corner of Forest and Muzzey Streets in 1893. Designed by R.M. Bailey of the Boston architectural firm of Bailey and Lennon, the Shingle Style structure was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1979.



Old Belfry Club (no longer extant)

Across the street from the Belfry Club, Miss Theodora Robinson had a kindergarten building constructed in 1899. In 1918 this building was redesigned in a Neo Classical style by Willard D. Brown for use by the First Church of Christ Scientist. In recent years it has been converted to residential use.



16 Forest Street

Like many areas in Lexington, Forest Street also demonstrates the late 19th century propensity for moving structures. The Georgian-style Amos Muzzey house at 42 Forest Street has actually been moved twice during its lifetime - from Massachusetts Avenue to Waltham Street in 1834 and to its current site in 1894. The house next door at 40 Forest Street was the ell to the house in its second location.



42 Forest Street

Among the long-time residents of the neighborhood in the late 19th and early 20th century was prominent local builder Abram C. Washburn, who resided at 36 Forest Street for almost forty years and all of his productive career. The house began as a one-story cottage but Washburn added two additional stories in 1896. Unfortunately the stickwork, patterned shingles and other decoration which originally embellished the house are now obscured by siding. Washburn appears to have found the design for his house in an October 1886 issue of the *Scientific American-Architects and Builders Edition* and used the same design for the house he constructed for G.S. Norris at 39 Highland Avenue.



36 Forest Street

Forest Street originally ended at about 38 Forest Street. The initial extension occurred beyond Clarke Street in 1888 and ultimately the road was completed through to Massachusetts Avenue in 1927. The houses on the west end of Forest Street date to the early 20th century and are more closely-spaced and predominantly Colonial Revival in style.



34, 36 & 38 Forest Street