



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Chandra Harrington, *Chair*; Elizabeth Lyster, *Vice Chair*; Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*
Joseph V. Ferrara, Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, Yuting Zhang, *Members*
Florrie Darwin, Scott Kyle, Michael Rogove, *Alternates*

Date: 5/29/26

To: Tanya L. Ford, Executive Director
Election Commission

From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Request for Verification of Registered Voters

As required by Chapter 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, the Historical Commission requests that the names on the attached petition be verified as being registered voters of the City of Cambridge. THIRTY NAMES NEED TO BE VERIFIED TO VALIDATE THE PETITION.

Please sign and return to the Historical Commission via interoffice mail.

Signatures checked by Maggie McKinnon Date 6/4/2020

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2020 JUN -4 PM 2:47
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
ELECTION COMMISSION

Petition for Designation Study of a Landmark or Neighborhood Conservation District

We, the undersigned registered voters of the City of Cambridge, request the Cambridge Historical Commission to initiate the process of designating the building or neighborhood named below, bounded by or containing properties located on the named streets, as a Landmark or Neighborhood Conservation District under Chapter 2.78, Article III of the Code of the City of Cambridge.

**CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

Address if a single property, or boundaries if a district: 58-60 Lexington Ave.; 64-66 Lexington Ave.; 68-70 Lexington Ave.; 80 Lexington Ave.; 86 Lexington Ave.; 90 Lexington Ave.; 96-98 Lexington Ave.; 102 Lexington Ave.; 108 Lexington Ave.; 112 Lexington Ave.; 118 Lexington Ave.; 124 Lexington Ave.; 128 Lexington Ave.; 134 Lexington Ave. and 140 Lexington Ave.

Significance of the proposed landmark or district: This petition is to initiate a study of each of the fifteen (15) gambrel-roofed duplex houses noted above, all designed by Elmer Buckley in 1912-13, noting that each has significance as they contribute to a truly unique, cohesive environment and demonstrate a uniformity of design not seen anywhere else in Cambridge.

West of the Tory estates a rural district stretched far into Watertown. In the 17th century, John Stratton's farm occupied almost all the land from Mt. Auburn Street to Fresh Pond between Lexington and Aberdeen avenues. A cartway known as Fresh Pond Lane (which only partially followed the current street of that name) ran up a gentle slope to a bluff above the pond. Most of this territory remained rural until the last quarter of the 19th century, and intensive development did not occur until after World War I (see figure 4.77).

Jonas Wyeth farm

In 1717 Stratton divided his property along what is now Larch Road, giving his son Samuel the eastern half and his son John the western. Samuel died in 1723, and in 1738 his heirs sold 40 acres with the family house and barn to John Hastings, a Watertown shoemaker. The land remained in his family until 1837, when his great-grandson sold it to Jonas Wyeth (a distant relation of Jonas Wyeth 2nd, the real estate dealer on Garden Street). The next year Wyeth sold 11 acres on Fresh Pond to his cousin Nathaniel, who was engaged in the ice-cutting industry. Jonas, who had leased the Fresh Pond Hotel from his uncle Jacob and "retired with a satisfactory fortune," built a new house facing Brattle Street about 1839 that survives at 17 Fresh Pond Parkway, though greatly remodeled (Paige, 705; figure 4.85; see also figure 4.89).

Wyeth's widow sold most of her land to Stephen Niles and Lewis Rice, who cooperated with Person Davis's partnership to lay out Lexington Avenue and Hawthorne Avenue (now Grozier Road) with 47 generous 15,000-square-foot lots (see figure 4.88).³⁰ Niles and Rice were soon caught up in the Panic of 1873, and their subdivision remained untouched for decades. Hawthorne originally extended to Brattle Street, but it had attracted no buildings except the Russell School (1896) when Fresh Pond Parkway eliminated the lower end in 1899 (see figure 5.57). A

Lexington Avenue's eclectic mixture of two-family houses, three-deckers, and apartment buildings was quite different from the neighborhood envisioned in the 1880s. The 15,000-square-foot lots were impractically large in the constrained economic environment of the 1890s. On the east side, most were resurveyed into smaller lots, but some attracted creative developers. James M. Hilton built the most highly decorated three-decker in the city, the Lowell, at 33 in 1900 (see figure 6.221). In 1911 John J. Powers put up a stucco apartment building, the Lexington, at 95–99, and in 1913 seven Mission style houses went up on Gracewood Park. On the west side, builder John L. Malcolm replatted the old Niles and Rice subdivision into narrow, 5,000-square-foot lots and populated them with sixteen two- and three-family gambrel-roofed houses (figure 4.84).

The Brattle Street frontage of Josiah Wyeth's house remained empty until 1954, when it was subdivided and an archaeologically correct Georgian farmhouse and a prefabricated Techbuilt house went up side-by-side on Lexington Avenue. Ten years later, architect Hugh Stubbins built a house for himself on the Lake View corner, filling in one of the last open lots on Brattle Street (see figure 6.209).

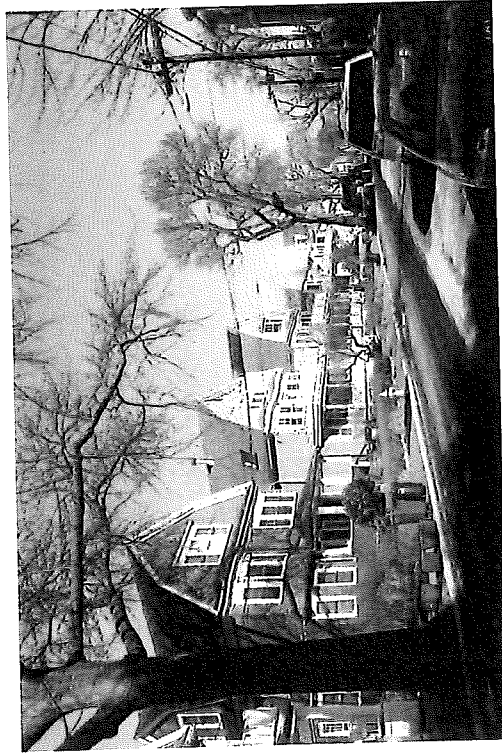


FIGURE 4.84 The sixteen gambrel-roofed duplex houses at 58 through 140 Lexington Avenue designed by Elmer Buckley in 1912–13 demonstrated a uniformity of design not seen elsewhere in Cambridge. Photo 2009.

FIGURE 4-83 Lake View and Lexington avenues in 1916, with suburban development well under way. The titles of properties outlined in blue have been registered (confirmed) by the Massachusetts Land Court. Hawthorne Avenue was renamed Grozier Road in 1924.

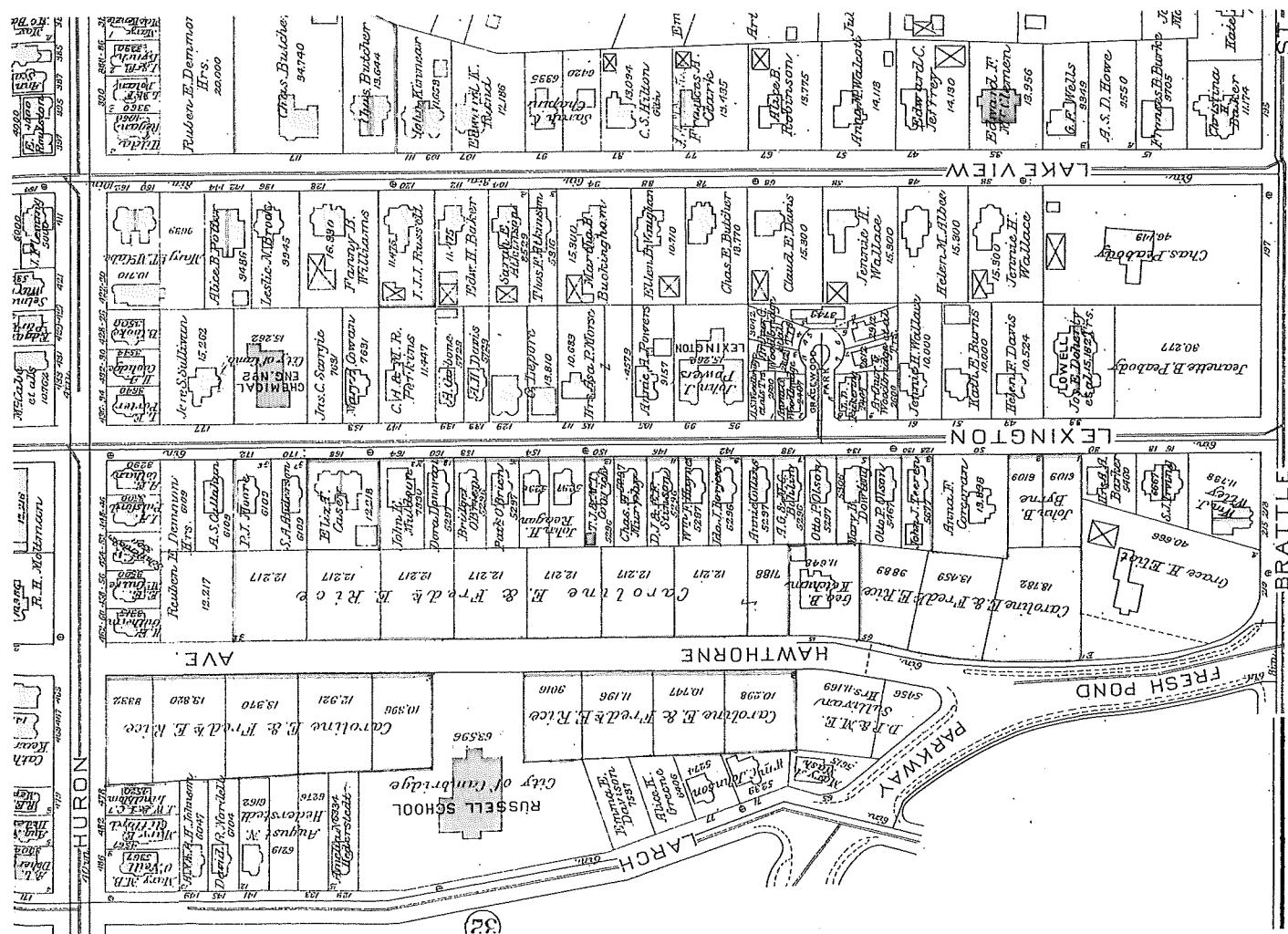


FIGURE 4.84 The six Lexington Avenue design alternatives of design not selected.