

Area N - Bloomfield Street

A former farmer from Bloomfield, Connecticut named Levi Prosser laid out what is now Bloomfield Street with house lots in 1872. He turned to real estate speculation after buying part of the old William Munroe farm which extended over the hill behind the Munroe Tavern. Bloomfield Street developed in three distinct phases over the next sixty years although Prosser's deeds are an early example of land use controls in Lexington and restricted construction to one house per lot and required a setback of thirty-five feet. A few houses along the street date to the 1870s but most were constructed in the 1880s and 1890s with additional infill construction occurring in the 1920s.



16 Bloomfield Street

The three oldest houses in the development - at 16 & 30 Bloomfield Street and 1430 Massachusetts Avenue display elements of the Italianate and Second Empire Styles. Prosser's own house at 16 Bloomfield (above) is one of the best-preserved Italianate dwellings in town. Prosser served as a member of the first board of trustees of the Lexington Savings Bank and as a selectman before moving to Hartford, Connecticut by 1886.

The economic depression of the 1870s greatly curtailed new construction but building activity along the street picked up in the 1880s, spurred on by the efforts of local developer and contractor John L. Norris. Norris, who had previously built the Norris Block at the Center and a group of cottages on Hancock Avenue, initially lived in the house at 1430 Massachusetts Avenue (corner of Bloomfield Street) before building a new Queen Anne-style house at 1404 Massachusetts Avenue in the late 1880s. His brother George built the house at 39 Highland Avenue in 1888.



1430 Massachusetts Avenue



1404 Massachusetts Avenue

By 1885 the new streets of Eustis and Mt. Vernon (later Percy Road) had been opened up for future construction. In March 1886 the *Lexington Minute-Man* reported that five houses were being built near Bloomfield Street and in August the paper announced that John L. Norris had sold four additional lots in the neighborhood. The paper noted that "It is not many years since this whole section was devoid of a single building, but the enterprise of one man has resulted in a large increase of taxable property to add to the wealth of the town." Like similar neighborhoods of the period, many of the early residents were professionals who worked in Boston.

Most of the houses along Bloomfield and Eustis Streets are Queen Anne-style vernacular structures with characteristic decorative features including bay windows, porches with turned posts, dormer windows or cross gables, decorative trim on the raking eaves and patterned shingles. At least three of the houses on the street - including 60 and 64 Bloomfield Street were constructed on speculation by prominent local builder Abram C. Washburn in the early 1890s. Washburn also built George Norris' house on Highland Avenue which is notable for its distinctive corner tower. Many of the houses in the area are of similar design and retain many original finishes.



23 Bloomfield Street



30 Bloomfield Street



4 Eustis Street



40 Bloomfield Street

The neighborhood also includes several interesting examples of the Shingle Style including the house at 50 Bloomfield Street built for cotton broker Willard O. Armes after an earlier house on the site was destroyed by fire in 1896.



50 Bloomfield Street

Most of the other lots along Bloomfield Street and Highland Avenue were infilled with Colonial Revival and Dutch Colonial dwellings in the 1920s. The neighborhood is noteworthy for its lack of intrusions. In addition to Bloomfield Street, this area form also includes houses on Eustis Street and Highland Avenue.



24 Bloomfield Street



11 Bloomfield Street