

Area Q - Liberty Heights

Sited on the top of a substantial hill in East Lexington, south of Massachusetts Avenue, Liberty Heights is an early 20th century residential neighborhood which was divided into 30' x 80' lots by Brookline developer Jacob W. Wilbur in 1909. It is one of the few areas in Lexington laid out on a grid system and includes homes on Bowker Street, Taft Avenue, Oak Street, Tucker Avenue, Banks Avenue, Ames Avenue, Butler Avenue, Carville Avenue, Baker Avenue, Chase Avenue and Tarbell Avenue.



88 Oak Street & 14 Baker Avenue



19 Charles Street

Born in Maine in 1846, J.W. Wilbur became one of the region's most successful land developers of the late 19th and early 20th century. The entrepreneur worked initially on the railroad and as a streetcar conductor and as was the case at Liberty Heights, many of his subdivisions were sited near streetcar lines. His developments were targeted at the working class, to whom he offered an array of incentives including streetcar fare to the development office, cash discounts, and easy financing. House lots could be purchased outright for as little as \$49.



26 Butler Avenue

In Lexington, the impetus for development was the electric street car line on Massachusetts Avenue which began service in 1899. J.W. Wilbur's other subdivisions in East Lexington included Massachusetts Avenue Terrace on the north side of Mass. Ave. (Fottler/Wilson/Bow, etc.) and Arlington Heights Terrace (Cliffe/Rindge, etc.), as well as East Lexington Farms, East Lexington Estates and Dunster Gardens, that remained undeveloped for many years. Wilbur was also active in a number of other nearby communities including Arlington, Somerville, Cambridge, Everett, Waltham, Watertown, Woburn, Belmont, Malden and Newton. All told, between 1888 and 1909 the J.W. Wilbur Company sold over 74,000 lots in 233 suburbs to over 26,000 customers!



29 Charles Street



42 Baker Avenue

The original houses built in Liberty Heights date primarily to the 1910s and 1920s and are mostly two-story, wood-frame structures. Styles represented include Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Four-Square, Bungalow, Dutch Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival. Additional infill construction took place after World War II in the form of Garrison Colonial, Ranch, Cape and Colonial Revival dwellings.



85 Oak Street



24 & 28 Baker Avenue

The neighborhood also includes at least two houses which are unusual for their rusticated concrete block exteriors.



47 Taft Avenue



25 Bowker Street