

## Area S - Peacock Farm

Located near the Arlington town line and just north of Routes 2 and 4/225, the Peacock Farm neighborhood is a development of contemporary style houses built between 1952 and 1958. It was the third important planned modernist development to be begun in Lexington, after Six Moon Hill and at about the same time as Five Fields.

In 1951 Danforth Compton and Walter Pierce, recent graduates of the M.I.T. School of Architecture, purchased 42 acres of land that had been a dairy farm in the 19th century. The original c.1830 farmhouse and barn still stood and can still be seen today, at the entrance to the modern development. As the name suggests, peacocks were raised here in the early twentieth century.



*3 Peacock Farm Road*

With a goal of making contemporary styling accessible to those with limited budgets, Compton and Pierce designed a single-story house with raised basement, low pitch roof and vertical cedar siding that was available in several sizes. The entry was at mid-level and the houses incorporated large expanses of glass. The house at 4 Peacock Farm Road was built as a demonstration model late in 1951. A total of seven houses of this type had been built by the time of Danforth Compton's unexpected death in 1955.



*4 Peacock Farm Road*

After Compton's death, the remaining land was sold to developers Edward Green and Harmon White who commissioned Walter Pierce to design a house to meet the needs of their target market - young

professionals. The resulting split level design was known as "The Peacock Farm House" and was a three bedroom, one and a half bath house with a fireplace and an open floor plan.



*53 Peacock Farm Road*

On the exterior the house was characterized by a low-slope asymmetrical gable roof with broadly overhanging eaves, stained vertical siding and bands of windows. In order to fit flat or sloping lots, the house could be flipped or turned, resulting in a random orientation of houses that distinguishes the Peacock Farm neighborhood from other, more traditional developments.



**EXTERIOR ELEVATION.** Jury's comment: "The well integrated facade makes the house look considerably larger than it really is. The site planning is excellent, especially the large lot (117' frontage)."



**PLAN.** Jury's comment: "The house has excellent circulation between living/dining and bedroom areas. The plan provides best economical planning." (Floor area is 1,600 sq. ft. including garage.)

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of the Homes for Better Living Awards  
sponsored by the  
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**House & Home**  
*Better Homes and Gardens and INC.*

**CRITERIA:** "An excellent solution of the same problem: the planning, arrangement of interior circulation, and treatment of the facade."

**REPORT:** House & Home, Inc.  
AIA-CRPA, Columbia & Park  
LOCATION: Lexington, Mass.

The standardized design kept the houses moderately priced and the "Peacock Farm House" sold for just \$20,000. The design won numerous awards including first prize in the 1957 "Homes for Better Living" contest sponsored by the American Institute of Architects. Walter Pierce conveyed the rights to reproduce the Peacock Farm House to Green and White and the developers later built them in five other locations in Lexington. Other examples are found in the communities of Wayland and Newton.



*28 Peacock Farm Road*

By 1958 the Peacock Farm neighborhood (including homes on Peacock Farm Road, Mason Street, Trotting Horse Drive, and Compton Circle) was complete with the construction of 52 "Peacock Farm" houses, four custom-designed dwellings and one Techbuilt house. (Additional houses on Mason Street and White Pine Lane were added in the late 1960s.)



*16 Trotting Horse Drive*



*Techbuilt House, 10 Trotting Horse Drive*

Like the other similar contemporary neighborhoods in Lexington, Peacock Farm attracted young professional and academic families who appreciated amenities such as the neighborhood swimming pool and a strong sense of community. As part of the social objectives imbued in the original development, the architects set up a community organization, established architectural restrictions and set aside eight acres of common land. The architectural restrictions were reaffirmed by the membership in 2001.



*2 Peacock Farm Road*