

## Area A - Central Business District

Area A is comprised of that portion of the Battle Green Local Historic District that is generally considered to be the town's central business district. It includes the buildings along the section of Massachusetts Avenue bounded on the west by Clarke Street/Meriam Street and on the east by Winthrop Road and Woburn Street. Also included are various structures on adjacent side streets including Depot Street, Muzzey Street, Waltham Street and Wallis Court. This area includes one property which is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places - the U.S. Post Office at 1661 Massachusetts Ave.



*Aldrich Block, 1736-1740 Mass. Ave.*

Like many downtowns, Lexington's Central Business District mixes old and new, illustrating its continual evolution over the years. Brick buildings in the Colonial Revival style predominate although there are other influences as well.



*1806-1810 Mass. Ave.*



*1625 Mass. Ave.*



*1729 Mass. Ave.*



*1842 Mass. Ave.*



*Depot Building, 13 Depot Square*

In 1830 there were just two or three stores at the Center. A few more were added in the following years but it was the arrival of the Lexington and West Cambridge Railroad and the construction of the depot in 1846 that provided the major impetus for additional commercial activity including hotels and stores. (Later renovated in a Colonial Revival style, the depot itself is reportedly the last remaining covered train shed in Massachusetts.)

An imposing three-story, brick Town Hall with mansard roof was erected opposite Waltham Street in 1871 and in 1874, the Central Block, a large, three-story, flat-roofed commercial structure was built at the corner of Merriam Street. The Hunt Block was built at the corner of Depot Square in 1892.

*The structures on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue, east of Wallis Court, are illustrative of the residences that once lined both sides of the main road. The Federal, Greek Revival and Queen Anne styles are all represented.*



*1620 & 1628 Mass. Ave.*

In the early 20th century a number of older residences on Massachusetts Avenue in what is now the business district were relocated to make way for new construction. For example, the building at 15-17

Waltham Street (below, at left) was moved to its present site in 1903 when the new Hunt Block (below, at right) was constructed at the northwest corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Waltham Street.



*15-17 Waltham St; Hunt Block 1752 Mass. Ave.*

The Muzzey Homestead at the corner of Grant Street was relocated to Glen Road South to make way for the Edison Illuminating Company Building and the former Captain Phelps House was moved back to provide a site for the Theater Block (the house was later demolished). An old store building was moved just down the street in 1905 prior to the construction of the Cary Memorial Library building. The Cary Memorial Hall, at 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, was constructed in 1928 and was one of the first examples of demolition for new construction rather than moving the structure to a new site. It replaced an older mansard-roofed Town Hall building at the junction of Waltham Street and Massachusetts Avenue.



*1775 Massachusetts Avenue*

Today, the appearance of the downtown is much different than it was a hundred years ago. The large, three-story commercial blocks that anchored the north side of Massachusetts Avenue have been replaced by single-story, modern structures. On the other side of the street, the former Lexington Savings Bank, at 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, lost its third floor after a fire in 1950. The building at 1775 Massachusetts Avenue was constructed prior to 1869 and, though much altered, is the only surviving example of the several hip-roofed commercial structures which were once found on the main street.

Most of the historic downtown commercial structures are concentrated on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue. The Robinson Block at 1762 Massachusetts Ave. appears to be the oldest surviving commercial building. Originally a wood-frame, Greek Revival building, it was Colonialized including a brick veneer in the 1920s. Two handsome brick commercial structures, the Aldrich Block (1925) and the Hunt Block

(1903) mark the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Waltham Street. The latter was designed by Lexington architect Willard D. Brown who also designed the Cary Memorial Library and the Town Hall complex.



*1806-1812, 1822, 1834 Mass. Ave.*



The Lexington Theater Block at 1792 Massachusetts Avenue is a two story, yellow brick block constructed in 1916 and designed by W. T. Littlefield. The 600-seat theater originally hosted both vaudeville performances and silent motion pictures. "Talkies" were introduced in 1929. The building is still owned by the Viano family today.

The Lexington Trust Building at 1834 Massachusetts Avenue was designed in 1929 by nationally prominent bank architects Thomas James & Co. The former Marshall & Sons building at 1840 Massachusetts Avenue originally housed an undertaker and contained a chapel. It also dates to 1929.

*1794 Massachusetts Avenue*

Constructed in 1914, the Edison Illuminating Company Substation at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Grant Street is a fireproof steel and brick structure faced in concrete but embellished with Classical Revival features including corner quoins, large arched window openings, copper downspouts and a decorative parapet.



*Edison Substation, 4 Grant St.*



*Post Office, 1661 Mass. Ave.*

In addition to commercial and residential structures, the Central Business District also includes the town's most important public buildings.

The Post Office building at 1661 Massachusetts Avenue is a fine example of Colonial Revival institutional architecture, designed by Federal Supervising Architect, Louis Simon in 1938. It was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

Inside the building is a notable 1939 mural showing Paul Revere's ride by local artist A. Lassell Ripley (1896-1969).

Built in 1928, Cary Memorial Hall is the centerpiece of a three-building Colonial Revival-style municipal complex and is flanked by a similarly detailed town office building (1928) and police station (1957). The three brick buildings were designed by Lexington architect Willard D. Brown and the firm of Kilham, Hopkins and Greeley.



*Cary Memorial Hall, 1625 Mass. Ave.*

At the opposite end of the business district, the Cary Memorial Library is a large fieldstone structure designed in a Craftsman style by local architect Willard D. Brown in 1906. The original building was later supplemented with new wings added in the 1940s and 1970s. In 2004 the renovated and expanded library reopened, its historic features restored and enhanced.



*Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Mass. Ave.*