

Area J - Parker Street/Upper Clarke Street



The Parker Street/Upper Clarke Street area is one of Lexington's most architecturally-cohesive neighborhoods, despite the fact that the houses were not all constructed at the same time. The sense of place engendered by the tree-lined, straight thoroughfare is further unified by houses which are nearly all of a comparable size, built using common materials, oriented primarily with their gable ends facing the street and with similar lot sizes and setbacks. Stylistically, the area offers a panorama of 19th and early 20th century architectural trends. The development of Parker Street progressed from the Massachusetts Avenue end so that the houses near the north end of the street tend to have Greek revival or Italianate features, while those on the opposite end tend toward vernacular expressions of the late 19th century. Intermixed are a few more recent Colonial revival, Craftsman and Bungalow-style dwellings with less compatible new construction relegated to back lots.

The land was originally lotted in 1872 by Richard Blinn who named the subdivision Belfry Hill Stock Farm. Blinn came to Lexington in 1852. He initially worked as a brakeman on the Lexington Branch railroad and eventually became president of the railroad. Blinn purchased a large parcel of land in what is now Parker Street-Forest Street in the early 1870s and hoped to make a large profit from the sale of house lots. He apparently built the houses at 28 and 30 Forest Street on speculation. The Panic of 1873 brought an end to these plans and Blinn left Lexington for Chicago where he died in 1906. In 1875 there were just four houses on Parker Street, near its north end.



6 & 8 Parker Street

What appears to be the oldest house in the neighborhood, the Tuttle-Wellington House at 49 Parker Street (top right) is a Greek Revival-style dwelling which was moved from Mass. Ave. to its present site in 1892 to make way for the Hancock Church. Constructed in 1840 it is notable as the first of many houses in Lexington built by prolific local builder, David Tuttle. Much later in his career, Tuttle designed the Queen Anne style house at 24 Parker Street (bottom photo) for Ellen Lane in 1885.



49 Parker Street



24 Parker Street



44-46 & 48 Parker Street

The dwellings at 44-46, 45 and 48 Parker Street are all former barns that were moved in the late 19th or early 20th century and retrofitted for residential use.

No one had a larger impact on the growth of the neighborhood than George H. Jackson who came to Lexington in 1868 and lived initially at 7 Parker Street and later at 34 Parker Street for many years. Jackson was in the provisions business, served as a trustee of the Savings Bank and was town assessor. He also owned extensive real estate in the neighborhood - at least eight buildings are listed as being owned by him in 1902 tax records and he probably acquired others in the years that followed. The six houses on Jackson Court were all built for him in the late 19th and early 20th century as rental properties.



7 & 5 Jackson Court, 38 Parker Street

The Parker Street/Upper Clarke Street area includes several buildings which are outstanding examples of their respective styles. These include the Byam House at 15 Parker Street which is one of Lexington's best-preserved gablefront Italianate residences. Typical of the style it displays three-sided bay windows, chamfered posts and paired brackets at the eaves. Also worthy of note is its period carriage house.



15 Parker Street

The most elaborate dwelling in the area is the house at 25 Parker Street, an exuberant Queen Anne design constructed in 1890 by Abram C. Washburn for Daniel Owen. The house incorporates many hallmarks of the style including a wrap-around porch with turned posts, brackets, bay windows and stained glass but is distinguished by more unusual features including a porch pediment with carved foliate decoration and a broken front gable which is finished with patterned wood shingles interrupted by a curved bay window.



25 Parker Street



21 Parker Street



11 Parker Street



34 Clarke Street

The neighborhood also includes a number of good examples of various 20th century styles including Craftsman, Four-Square, Bungalow and Dutch Colonial style dwellings.