

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

18-76	Boston North	O	BLM.734
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Walnut Hill/Waverley

Address: 41 Cedar Road

Historic Name: Dr. Roger Taft House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1915

Source: deeds

Style/Form: Dutch Colonial

Architect/Builder: Louis Grandgent, architect
(Grandgent & Elwell)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: stucco, wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

garage (1915)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

between 1922 & 1931 – rear (southeast) addition

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 14,244 SF

Setting: neighborhood of similar early 20th century historical revival style houses

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

41 CEDAR ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

41 Cedar Road is a two-story early 20th century dwelling designed in a Dutch Colonial mode with an ubiquitous gambrel roof. The façade and rear elevation are stuccoed with wide wooden clapboards sheathing the remaining elevations as well as the shed dormers extending across the front and rear roof slopes. A painted brick exterior chimney is centered on the west end of the building. The paneled wooden "Dutch" door is highlighted by a delicate surround featuring fluted Ionic pilasters, a plain frieze, dentils and a curved entablature above a rectangular transom. The adjacent windows contain double-hung 12/12 windows with entablature lintels and paneled shutters. The windows in the front shed dormer are smaller 8/8 units and include two pairs flanking a central window emphasized by a pediment surround. The shed dormers originally also had shutters. At the southeast corner is a small cross gambrel addition which was constructed between 1922 and 1931.

The house is set on a level lot measuring less than a half acre with a low rubble retaining wall running along the sidewalk. A driveway extends to the west of the house, terminating at a small one-car, stuccoed garage with a gambrel front which was built at the same time as the house.

The house at 41 Cedar Road is one of several architect-designed, stucco homes in various styles located in the Walnut Hill neighborhood.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The Walnut Hill subdivision was laid out in 1910 as a neighborhood of single-family residences that were developed gradually, lot by lot as opposed to the speculative type development that dominated most of Belmont's suburban growth. The property was subdivided by Winthrop L. Chenery, a prominent local resident who was a fruit farmer and also served in various important town positions. It was developed between 1910 and the early 1930s. Chenery placed "suitable, but not burdensome, restrictions" on the lots in the subdivision (Walnut Hill Real Estate Brochure).

The house at 41 Cedar Road was constructed about 1915 for Dr. Roger Taft, a dentist, who lived here with his wife Edna. The land was sold by Arthur and Alice Stone to Edna Taft in 1914 (MCRD Book 3891, Page 585). According to the architects, the design of the house reflects the challenge of designing a small, compact yet attractive house of moderate cost. Photographs and plans of the house were published in three national architectural publications: *House Beautiful* in Feb. 1916, *Architectural Forum* in May 1917 and *Architectural Record* in 1920.

Architect Louis Grandgent (1887-1974) was born in Cambridge, the son of Charles Grandgent who was a noted Harvard professor lecturing on Dante and Romance linguistics. Louis graduated from Harvard in 1909 and continued his studies at MIT, receiving a B.S. in 1912. He opened two offices for the practice of architecture in July 1914 at 44 Bromfield Street in Boston and at 208 Essex Street in Salem, just a day before the beginning of World War I. The Salem office was headed by Stanley B. Elwell, a 1910 graduate of Cornell. By the early 1920s Grandgent had moved to Ohio where he was the architectural director at Antioch College. During the 1930s he worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority on designs for a demountable (prefab) house. Grandgent later moved to Atlanta and died in Frankfort, Kentucky in 1974.

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The Taft family lived at 41 Cedar Road for over thirty years. In 1920 Roger Taft was just 32 and the couple lived here with their two young sons and a maid. By 1930 the couple had four children, ranging in age from an infant to 17. The house at 41 Cedar Road was sold by Dr. Taft's widow, Edna Taft, to John and Laura Miller in 1959 (MCRD Book 9483, Page 553).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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U.S. Census, various years

Walnut Hill Real Estate Brochure.

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Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

House of Dr. Roger B. Taft, Belmont, Mass. Louis Grandgent, Architect
 Walls of stud construction with siding on ends and stucco on front and rear. Floor area 925 square feet, exclusive of porch
 Cost \$7.00 per square foot

Source: *Architectural Forum*, vol. 26, May 1917

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Source: *Architectural Record*, 1920

HOUSE OF DR. ROGER B. TAFT
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

GRANDGENT AND ELWELL, ARCHITECTS

Plan: 25 feet wide by 37 feet long.
Type: Dutch colonial adaptation.
Number of rooms: Eight rooms and bath.
Material: Outside—Stucco on the north and south sides, clapboards (wide) on the east and west sides. Shingle roof. Interior—Finish all made to special design; hardwood floors throughout.
Attic: Storage space in the attic with convenient ladder arrangement.
Cost: \$5600 without planting or grading.
The problem in this house was to get a small, compact yet attractive house of moderate cost. On the first floor is a good-sized living-room with an open fireplace. From this room, through a double glass door, opens, to the south, the brick-paved living-piazza.
The hall is arranged to give, as much as possible, the feeling of openness with the least loss of space.
The dining-room is lighted by two windows on the north, and a large Whitney Casement on the east. The dining-room is connected with the kitchen through a serving pantry. This serving-room is well supplied with cabinets for china, and with drawers and cupboards below.
The kitchen is not too large, and is conveniently arranged with regard to the closets, ice-

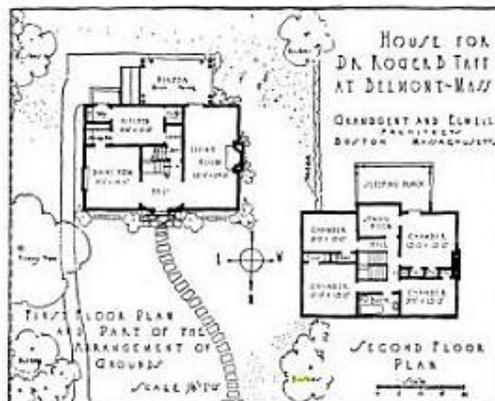


Showing the front door and wooden shutters.

chest, and communication to the front hall and cellar stairs.
On the second floor are five chambers and a bath. The rooms are all square, and except for small closets in the extreme outer corners the walls and ceilings are straight. There is a sleeping-porch over the living-piazza, which connects directly with the owner's chamber. In the winter, when the sun is needed, this porch is open; and in the summer awnings can be used.
In the attic is good storage space, which is much appreciated in the small modern home. Access to this storage space is obtained by a convenient swinging stair, which, when not in use, swings out of sight into the ceiling. These stairs have a hand-rail on either side, and are also designed for the easy handling of trunks, boxes, and other heavy objects.
Closet room has not been forgotten in this house. Each room has a good, ample closet; the owner's room has two, and there is a linen closet with shelves and drawers on the second floor.
The stairway, at the rear of the square hall, ascends at a right angle with the front door so that the lines of the stairs, turning on themselves at a one-step landing, are seen in profile as the photograph shows.



On the left is the charming front of the house. The long horizontal line of the corridors in the second story is happily broken by the peak of the dormer in the middle.
The roof lines in the rear are diversified by the slight extension of the sewing-room on to the sleeping-porch. The balustrade is excellent.



Floor plans and placing of house.



Source: *House Beautiful*, Feb. 1916

