

#96

FORM B - BUILDING

AREA H	FORM NO. 33-1
----------------------	-----------------------------

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AH



Belmont

Address 20 Moraine Street

Historic Name _____

Present apartments

Original apartments

DESCRIPTION:

1908

Source Building Dept. Records

Style Colonial Revival

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

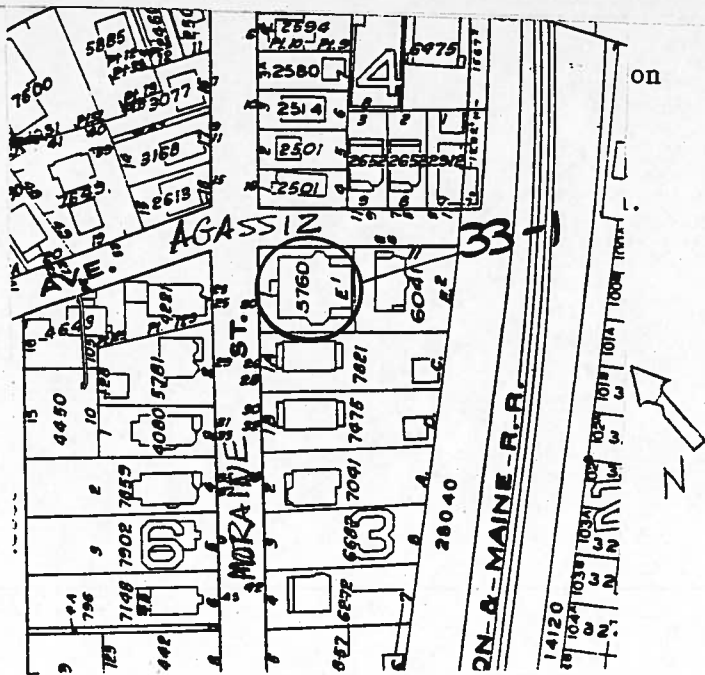
Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) _____

Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage less than 1 acre

Setting Grand scale of building in relation to smaller residential neighborhood. Some additional 3 deckers built behind it.



Recorded by Judy Williams

Organization Boston University

Date November, 1982

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

This building is an unusually elaborate example of a double three decker, a building type which appeared in the late 19th century in the streetcar suburbs of Boston. When constructed in 1908, the building may have incorporated features of a 22-room mansion that stood on this site during the 19th century. Newspaper articles of the day give conflicting reports, but it seems apparent that certain elements, such as the gable roof and entry stairs, may have come from a large Greek Revival dwelling. Given the revivalist architectural tendencies of the

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.) (cont.)

The six-unit three decker was known as "The Thayer" when it was first occupied in 1908, reflecting its ties to the former Phelps-Thayer estate at this location. The original estate mansion, built in the mid-19th century by Abel Phelps and occupied by his daughter, Maria Phelps Thayer, until 1882, was purchased in 1896 by the Veteran Spiritualists Union of Boston and used as a home for the aged. In 1908, it was acquired by a group of Waverley and Cambridge investors under the name of "Waverley Associates" who planned to transform the structure into modern apartments. According to a 1908 Belmont Tribune article, "The plans for remodeling call for the division of the structure, one part to constitute six apartments of six rooms each, and the remainder three apartments for which the plans are incomplete." The second part was apparently the three decker at 6-8 Agassiz Avenue which was known as "The Agassiz." (It should be noted that other newspaper reports mention the mansion being torn down and replaced with this structure; an analysis of the building itself would provide some answers to these questions.)

Although more elaborate than most, the building is still representative of the type of housing being constructed in streetcar suburbs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Waverley had already been established as a commuter suburb by the introduction of streetcar service on Trapelo Road in 1898. The three decker was a logical and economical response to the demand for housing in this area. After construction or remodeling of the

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher) (cont.)

- Belmont Town Directory, 1910
- Betts, Richard B. The Streets of Belmont. 1974
- Belmont Herald, Thursday, July 7, 1977.
- C.J.Frost Map, 1853.
- Belmont Town Atlas, 1898.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: <i>Belmont</i>	Form No: <i>33-1</i>
Property Name: <i>20 Moraine St.</i>	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Architectural Significance:

early 20th century, it seems possible that the builders would have incorporated features of the earlier building into their design. This would have allowed considerable savings in cost as well.

The three-story clapboarded building features a gable roof with central dormer, a five-bay facade, corner pilasters reaching to a dentilled cornice, and a large two-story portico with massive Ionic columns, elaborate brackets and a turned-post balustrade on three levels. The central entry, reached by granite steps, has a dentilled cornice hood mold which is reflected in the window treatment to either side. The gable ends feature a wide boxed cornice, returns, an oculus window on the east and a round arched window on the west, possible remnants from the former mansion. Each side of the building also includes a three-tiered bay window and three story rear "deck" with simple balustrades and posts.

Historical Significance:

Thayer and the Agassiz in 1908, two other three deckers were built at this location. Three deckers made an appearance in other parts of Waverley as well, but none was quite as early as 20 Moraine Street. The Thayer housed both professionals and tradesmen during its early years; among those listed as residing there in 1910 were an electrician, a tailor and a dentist.