

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA A ⁴	FORM NO. 9-1
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Belmont

ss 215 Washington Street

ric Name Shaw House

Present residence

iginal residence

CRIPITION:

1912

rce Belmont Building Department

Style Four-square

Architect

Exterior wall fabric stucco

Outbuildings garage

Major alterations (with dates) none

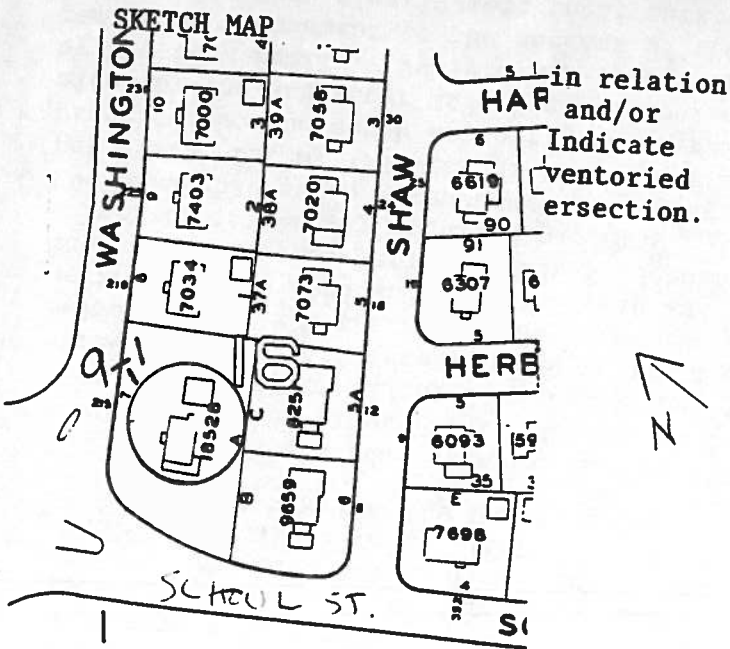
Moved n/a Date

Approx. acreage 18,526 sq. ft.

Setting double size corner lot, well

setback from street among trees and

shrubs; hedge at sidewalk



Recorded by Frankie Lieberman
 Organization Boston University Preservation Studies
 Date 19 November 1982

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

The architectural significance of this building is two-fold. First, it is an early example of the style that became very popular in Belmont in the 1920s, the Craftsman-inspired four-square. Its hipped roof with dormer window, projecting first floor bay window and enclosed porch wing is the prototype for many of the houses in the Stults and Skahan subdivisions of the 1920s and 30s (Area Forms V³ & Y³). Second, the detached garage built to echo the character of the house is an indicator of the importance of the automobile to Belmont's development as a commuter suburb. Overall, the scale of 215 Washington St., its stucco walls and its plantings (numerous trees and shrubs) all combine to illustrate the Belmont ideal of a rural, comfortable, healthful environment.

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

The historical significance of 215 Washington Street lies in its illustration of the continued growth of the market gardening business in Belmont in the 20th C. (For early history of the Shaw family see Form 9-3). The Shaw home at 215 Washington Street was the last estate house built in conjunction with a working market garden in Belmont. In 1912 the Shaw's acquired the Josephine E. Stone property (Area Form T³=V) between Dalton Road and School Street and expanded their operation. Edward H. Shaw, then 33 years old, married Maude P. Johnson and built this house on the northwest corner of this newly acquired property. The business continued to be very successful; the Shaws had seven greenhouses producing three crops of lettuce and other vegetables per year. But by 1931 the pressures for subdivision, caused by cheaper produce being brought from the south in refrigerated railroad cars and the town's continuing growth, aided by the streetcar and then automobiles (see also Area Forms T³, X³ & Z³), were felt by the Shaw family. By 1950 all traces of the farm were gone, only the two Shaw houses remain as a monument to the success of their farm. Although the family settled late in Belmont, they clearly left their mark: three of the six streets in this subdivision are named for family members.

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

Betts, Richard, The Streets of Belmont. . . , pp.284-292
Sanborn, 1922 Atlas
Engineering Department records