

FORM B - BUILDING

Area <u>E</u>	Form no. <u>5-5</u>
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

Town Belmont

s 34 Oak Avenue

ic Name NA

Original Single family dwelling

Present Same

ship:  Private individual  
 Private organization

Public

Original owner Henry McGahey

PTION:

1922

Source Card file-Town Engineer's

Style Unique "urban" form Office

Architect/Builder Henry McGahey

Exterior wall fabric Brick with wood trim and inset tile

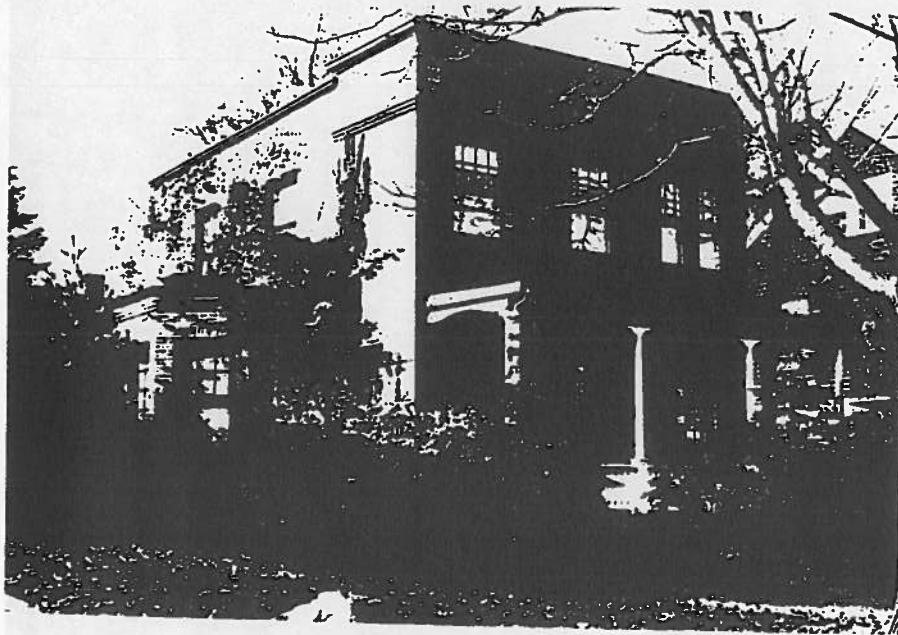
Outbuildings Garage

Major alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

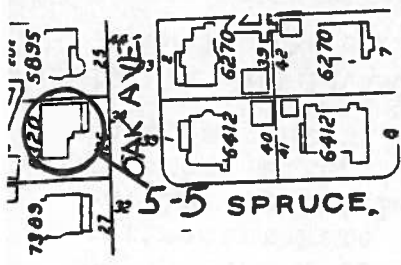
Moved No Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. acreage 6320 sq. ft.

Setting On a typical, casually landscaped development lot in one of the earlier sections of Payson Park



or geographical features.  
Indicate north.



Recorded by Marcia M. Cini  
Organization Boston University  
Date September 1982

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

This single family home is unique in Belmont and probably elsewhere. Its flat-roofed urban form clearly sets it apart from its neighbors. However, it does share some characteristics of its contemporaries: 3 bay facade, use of brick with wood trim, southerly bay projection, modest set back with a set of steps leading to a full-width front porch, and a detached garage at the rear property line. Built as a retirement home for a wealthy Irishman who had made his fortune putting up brick tenements in Boston, it was constructed with the greatest attention to detail. Notable are the carefully laid bricks, inset accent tiles, and handsome matching garage.

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

34 Oak Avenue represents one man's private vision, shaped by his own experience, of the ideal suburban home for his retirement. Although its uniqueness undoubtedly caused comment among the owners of the pre-existing, primarily Colonial Revival, Oak Avenue homes, its builder must be commended for insisting on a high quality home exactly to his liking.

Note: For folklore about the McGahey family, see the Gould interview cited below.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Interview with Miss Elizabeth Gould as found in Belmont Room papers

The McGahey House, 34 Oak Avenue, Belmont

The flat-roofed, red brick house at 34 Oak Ave. was built about the time of World War I by an elderly Irishman named McGahey. He had made a small fortune as a builder, putting up brick tenements in Boston. During most of his life he never married, making his home with two old-maid sisters. When he retired, he married a middle-aged spinster, built two brick houses in Belmont, one for himself on Oak Ave., and the other for his two sisters on Linden St. He bought a car and his wife learned to drive. Everyone resented the tenement style of his flat-roofed brick house, but it was built with the best materials to be had. Mrs. McGahey was a good housekeeper, but so fat she wasn't a good driver of the car, but she never had any trouble with it. In a few years Mr. McGahey and the sisters died within a short time of one another, leaving Mrs. McGahey very well provided for. Then along came an insurance salesman who offered to drive her car. He was a Southerner who said he was homesick. She was lenesome and she took him in as a lodger. He offered to invest her money for her and said he'd make her a rich woman. He called her Mother. Gradually he persuaded her to take in his brother, and between them, in two or three years, they fleeced her of everything she had and she sold the house to pay bills. She went to the young men's home down South and worked as a servant for their mother.

As told by Miss Elizabeth Gould

P.S. A Mr. DeMariano owns the house at present - Jan. 1970. Bailey's owned it before he did. It has only had 3 owners.