FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
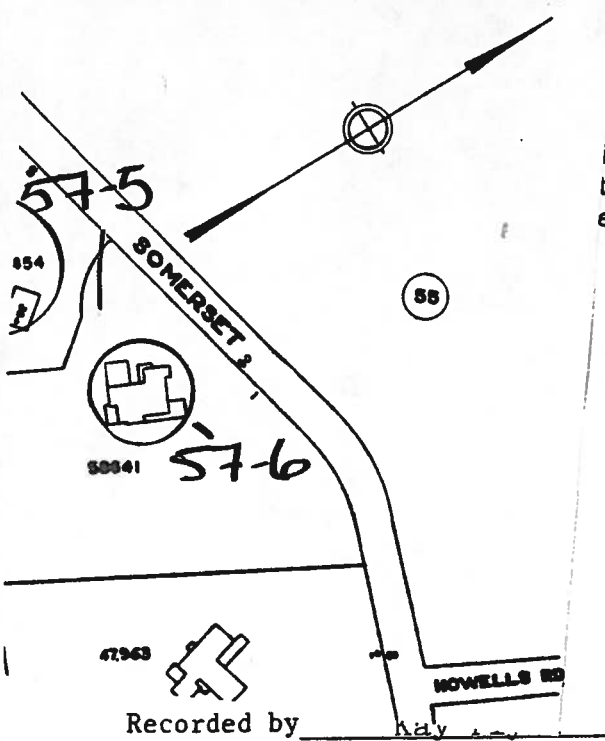
AREA	FORM NO.
X^2	57-6

Belmont

ess 90 Somerset Street

oric Name   "Redtop"

Present   Private residence

Original   Private residence

SCRIPTION:

    1877

Source National Historic Landmark

Style Queen Anne/Shingle/Colonial
                              Revival
Architect McKim, Mead and Bigelow

Exterior wall fabric Wood, stucco, brick

Outbuildings Garage (later) replaced

trellis built for Howells beyond the
                              library
Major alterations (with dates) Red asphal·

shingles have replaced the redwood

shingles; stucco siding once covered
            the redwood shingles.
Moved_____Date_____

Approx. acreage 1¼ acres

Setting a partially-wooded hillside

overlooking Boston and meadowland.

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Recorded by____ Kay_____

Organization   Boston University

Date_____

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

"Redtop" is a 2½-story McKim, Mead and Bigelow-designed house
significant in the fact that it is the only example of this firm's
transition Queen Anne to Shingle Style with design mode Colonial Re-
vival details in Belmont. This house exemplifies what is essentially
a suburban and resort style. The house is ample in massing and sub-
stantial in appearance and spreads low against the ground on a brick
foundation. A horizontal emphasis is produced in the gable by a massive
horizontal wood and window unit; in the second floor with a roofline
                                                              (Continued)
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state
    history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

"Redtop" is the only McKim, Mead and Bigelow-designed house in
Belmont, and is therefore, significant for comparative reasons with other
works of this historically noteworthy firm.

William Rutherford Mead, partner of McKim, Mead and White, was the
younger brother of Elinor Mead Howells, wife of William Dean Howells.
Because of a letter in the Mead Collection at Amherst College by Elinor
Mead written during the construction of "Redtop", there is no doubt
that the third partner involved in building "Redtop" was William B.
Bigelow and not Stanford White. A possible design influence at the
time was the Watts-Sherman House in Newport, R. I. (1874) by H. H.
Richardson.

(See Holiday Farm Area Form Inventory # X^2)

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

Foley, Mary Mix, The American House, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1980.
Merrill, Ginette de B., "Redtop" and The Belmont Years of W. D. Howells
    and His Family, Harvard Library Bulletin, Vol. XXVII, #1, January 1980.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	Form No:
Belmont	57-6
Property Name: 90 Somerset Street	

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Continued):

that continues the horizontal emphasis and contrasting material of the first floor also emphasizes the horizontality. The fenestration is irregular with small panes in decorative design. The twin window gable adds punctuation and Queen Anne playfulness to an otherwise plain mass. Creative wood coffering in window surrounds, sunbursts, turned posts and wooden lathework outline and articulate the windows, entries and porches, floor levels and rooflines in dark wood or red shingle - an excellent contrast against the light stucco.

Because it is already a National Historic Landmark, "Redtop's" association with William Dean Howells has proven its significance with a person important in our history, and therefore, meets Criteria A and B. Because it represents the architectural work of McKim, Mead and Bigelow, and because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a suburban resort-style transitional Queen Anne/Shingle Style with Colonial Revival details - this property meets Criterion C.