

Belmont Historic Resources Survey Project



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Preservation Tools

- Documentation Inventory is the basis for all decision-making/efforts
- Designation of historic resources
 - State and National Register
 - Local Historic Districts and Neighborhood Conservation Districts
- Physical Preservation
 - Stabilization/Rehabilitation/Restoration
 - Preservation Restrictions
- Demolition Delay and other preservation measures

Text for Slide 2 - Preservation Tools

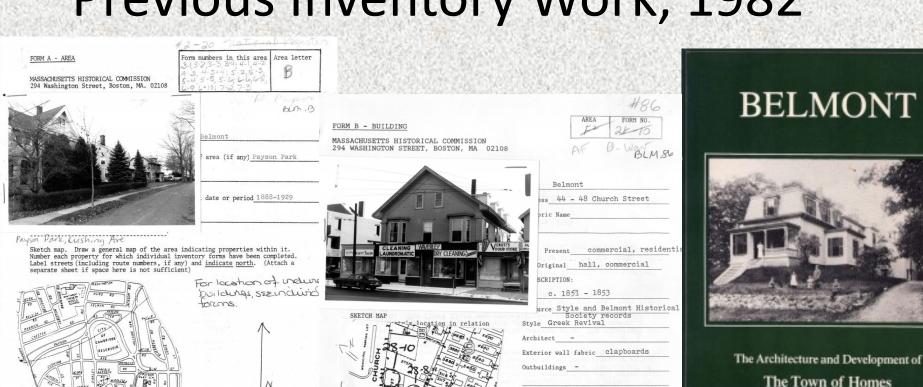
The inventorying of historic resource is the foundation for all subsequent preservation planning. It provides a summary of what defines a community, what makes it different and should be the basis for all future decision making and preservation efforts.

Inventory work might be followed up with other preservation strategies including listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places, and the designation of local historic districts and/or neighborhood conservation districts.

In other cases, inventory work might provide useful information that could be incorporated into stabilization/ rehabilitation or restoration efforts or in securing preservation restrictions to protect noteworthy properties. Good inventory work is also critical to inform Demolition Delay ordinances and other preservation measures.

Let's begin by taking a quick look at the state of preservation planning in the town of Belmont.

Previous Inventory Work, 1982





Date November, 1982

Recorded by Marcia M. Cini Organization Boston University

Date September 1982

Date ? Moved yes Approx. acreage less than 1 acre Setting Commercial center of Waverley

Major alterations (with dates) storefront, 20th century

(Staple additional sheets here)

Text for slide 3 - Previous Inventory Work, 1982

Prior to the current inventory project, the last concerted survey effort took place over thirty years ago. In 1982 the Town contracted with the Preservation Studies Program at Boston University to prepare a comprehensive architectural and historic survey of the town of Belmont. That effort produced approximately 100 forms that described the history and development of various neighborhoods and areas as well as about 300 forms that covered individual buildings. At the end of the project a book was also published.

Thirty years later that survey effort still provides some useful information but is badly in need of update. Survey forms used by the Mass. Hist. Comm. have changed and much more detail is now required. The earlier forms provide little information concerning original owners and contexts and many of the properties have seen alteration. In addition, many buildings that we consider significant today were not included.

National Register Listed Properties



Belmont Railroad Station/Lions Club Building

THIS PROPERTY
HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES
BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



Railroad Bridge

Text for slide 4 - National Register Listed Properties

In terms of preservation planning, Belmont has also seen limited efforts in putting resources on the National Register and today there are few listings for a community with such a rich architectural heritage. Properties currently on the Register include the former Railroad Station (now the Lions Club) and the Railroad Bridge at Concord Avenue.

National Register Listed Properties



Abraham Hill House, 388 Pleasant Street



McLean Hospital National Register District

Also Metropolitan State Hospital National Register District (in Belmont open space that is part of expanded Beaver Brook Reservation)

Text for slide 5 - National Register Listed Properties

Also on the Register is the Abraham Hill House at 388 Pleasant Street which is part of a First Period Multiple Property, multi-town nomination. The McLean Hospital District was nominated in 2002 and encompasses over seventy resources including buildings, structures, foundations and landscapes. The Metropolitan State Hospital District was nominated to the National Register in 1993 and includes properties in Waltham, Lexington, and Belmont. The area that falls within the town of Belmont consists of open space which is part of the expanded Beaver Brook Reservation.

National Historic Landmark



William Dean Howells House ("Red Top")
90 Somerset Street

Text for slide 6 - National Historic Landmark

The house at 90 Somerset Street (also known as Red Top) is notable as the town's only National Historic Landmark, a designation reserved for nationally-significant properties and a step above National Register (there are only 256 in the state). It was designated in 1971 for its association with writer William Dean Howells. The Shingle Style House was designed by his brother-in-law William Mead, a partner in the noted architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White.

Pleasant Street Historic District

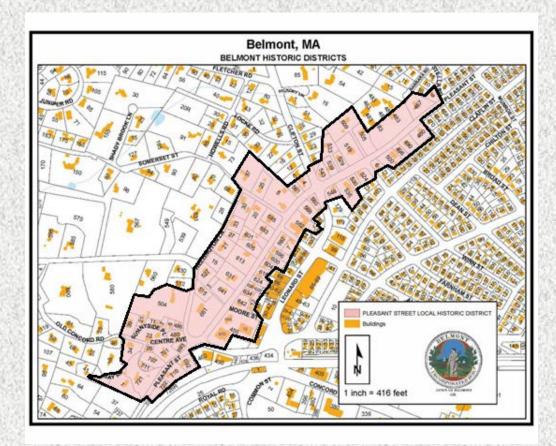
(National Register and Local Historic District)



661 Pleasant Street



631 Pleasant Street





642 Pleasant Street



536 Pleasant Street

Text for slide 7 - Pleasant Street Historic District (National Register and Local Historic District)

Shown here, the Pleasant Street Historic District is both a National Register and Local Historic District.

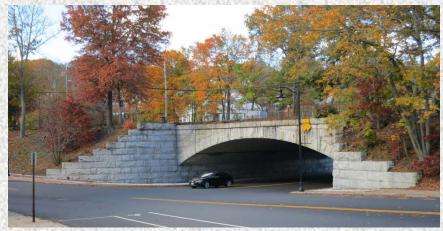
Common Street Local Historic District



War Memorial



Wellington Station



Railroad Bridge

Text for slide 8 - Common Street Local Historic District

In addition, there is also the Common Street Local Historic District which oversees these properties.

Richardson Farm Local Historic District



306 Washington Street



336 Washington Street

Text for slide 9 - Richardson Farm Local Historic District

The Richardson Farm Local Historic District was established in 2013 and includes the historic buildings and landscape features of two properties, located at 306 and 336 Washington Street. The Joseph Bright House at 306 Washington was built in 1781. The Thomas Richardson Homestead at 336 Washington Street was built in 1807 and was later updated c.1890 with Queen Anne features. The property includes more than 10 acres of actively farmed land – the Richardson Farm has been in cultivation since 1634. The land is protected by an agricultural preservation restriction held by the Belmont Land Trust.

Rehabilitation



Former Harvard Lawn Fire Station 89 Fairview Avenue





46-48 Leonard Street

Text for slide 10 - Rehabilitation

Not all preservation in Belmont is initiated by the town; there are also numerous examples of on-going private investment.

Preservation Restrictions/Agreements



Former Belmont Center Fire Station



McLean District



Belmont Town Hall



Former Waverley Square Fire Station

Text for slide 11 - Preservation Restrictions / Agreements

There are also several properties in town, with preservation restrictions or agreements by which the Historic District Commission reviews proposed changes. These include the former Belmont Center Fire Station, the former Waverley Square Fire Station and the McLean District.

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING 220 Morrissey Boulevard BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission Date (month / year): May 2016

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

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

346 Lake Street

Town/City: Belmont

Place: (neighborhood or village):

Date of Construction: 1910

Architect/Builder: unknown

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Outbuildings/Secondary Structure

asphalt shingles

10,534 SF

Setting: area of single family homes ranging from 19^{th} to 20^{th} century

Historic Name: Edwin Tobey House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Boston North BT BLM.521



346 Lake Street

Survey Goals



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING 220 Morrissey Boulevard BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission Date (month / year): July 2014

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.



225 Prospect Street



Exterior Material:

Town/City: Belmont

Place: (neighborhood or village): Belmont Hill

Historic Name: Albert Locatelli House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Foundation: concrete

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

225 Prospect Street

52-9 Boston BA BLM.810

Date of Construction: 1929 Source: building permit Style/Form: English Revival

Wall/Trim: brick, stone, wood clapboards

Roof: Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates):

Condition: good Moved: no ⊠ yes □ Date:

63,203 SF Setting: large formally landscaped lot with stone wall

Text for slide 12 - Survey Goals

The overall goal of the present survey was to complete or update inventory forms for historic properties throughout the town and to cover the full range of resources from the vernacular to the high style. As part of this goal, I drove all over Belmont, looked at historic maps, scoured over assessors' records and building permits to compile a list that was then reviewed and ranked by priority (A B or C) by a subcommittee of the HDC. Out of the more than 600 properties that were considered worthy of survey, only 200 could be inventoried as part of the current project. We selected those that were the best examples of their style or form, had the most integrity and/or were unique examples. The remaining 400+, which were ranked B or C, await future survey. A list of all the properties considered for the survey will be included in my final report.

What is important in Belmont's history?

- Age (generally greater than 50 years)
- Integrity
- Significance
 - Historic themes
 - Associations with important people
 - Architectural style, design (both representative and outstanding examples)

Text for slide 13 - What is important in Belmont's history?

In determining what is important in Belmont's history and should be inventoried, we look at various factors. Typically, a building needs to be older than 50 years. It also should have a high degree of integrity – would its original owner still recognize it? Resources also need to have significance which can fall into several categories. In Belmont important historic themes include the evolution of the farming community, the history of market gardening, the growth of the community in the 19th century due to the arrival of the railroad and in the 20th due to the access to Boston afforded by streetcars. There is the important history of various community centers and developments, some laid out on former farm land and by prominent local residents for the common good as well as more speculative developments.

Some properties are significant because of their associations with individuals – in Belmont these include locally prominent families such as the Underwoods, Wellingtons, Chenerys and the Hittingers as well as the hundreds of prominent residents who lived here and commuted to work in Boston and Cambridge including scientists and professors at MIT and Harvard. The last reason that we inventory properties is for their architectural style or design and we work hard to include both representative and outstanding examples.

Pre-1900 Buildings Not Included in 1982 Survey



55 Alexander Avenue



307 Pleasant Street



95 Clifton Street



84 Claflin Street



389 Common Street

Text for slide 14 - Pre-1900 Buildings Not Included in 1982 Survey

Before I started the project the HDC had laid out several goals for this survey. One priority was to inventory pre-1900 buildings that had not been covered in the 1982 survey. Here you have five examples of buildings that had not been recorded previously. The mansard roofed cottage at 55 Alexander Avenue was built by the Locke family of farmers, 307 Pleasant Street is a Greek Revival dwelling built by the Frost family. 95 Clifton Street is a Federal style house later updated in the early 20th century. 84 Claflin Street was the Winn Farmhouse and was moved to its present location in the late 19th century and 389 Common Street was once located on the historic Cushing-Payson estate.

Commercial Buildings Older than 50 Years



Locatelli Blocks, Leonard Street



Strand Theater, Trapelo Road



46-48 Leonard Street



12-20 Church Street



63 Trapelo Road

Text for slide 15 - Commercial Buildings Older than 50 Years

Another goal of the new survey was to record some of the commercial buildings that had been missed. For example, new forms were prepared for the Colonial Revival Locatelli Blocks on Leonard Street constructed in 1940, the Strand Theater on Trapelo Road which was built in 1920, the Perault Building at 46-48 Leonard Street which dates to 1896 and is the oldest commercial building on Leonard Street, the Daley Building in Waverley Square which dates to 1904 and the former Harvard Trust Bank building in Cushing Square, built in 1935.

Other Religious Buildings Older than 50 Years



First Church of Christ, Scientist 199 Common Street



First Armenian Church 380 Concord Avenue



Open Door Baptist Church 300 Pleasant Street



Christ Lutheran Church 597 Belmont Street

Text for slide 16 - Other Religious Buildings Older than 50 Years

Also surveyed were all religious buildings that were 50 years or older that had not been previously inventoried. The inventory forms for other church properties which had previously been surveyed were also revised to insure that they included all church-related structures.

Clusters of Historic Resources



Colonial Terrace (off of Orchard Street, near Wellington School)



Belmont Park (School, Goden, Myrtle, Oak Streets)

Text for slide 17 - Clusters of Historic Resources

Another emphasis of the inventory was to prepare forms for structures in some of Belmont's distinctive neighborhoods that combine architecture and character and contribute to Belmont's uniqueness. Shown here are just two such areas — Colonial Terrace and Belmont Park. A list of these special areas will be included in my final report.

Historic Accessory Buildings Built Before 1921



41 Willow Street



90 School Street



404 Common Street

Text for slide 18 - Historic Accessory Buildings Built Before 1921

While I was out doing fieldwork I was also on the lookout for surviving historic accessory buildings that were built before 1921.

Distinctive Early 20th Century Residences



58-60 Oakley Road



210-212 Payson Road



256 Slade Street



43 Village Hill Road

Text for slide 19 - Distinctive Early 20th Century Residences

I also recorded a number of distinctive early 20th Century residences. 58-60 Oakley Road is located across from the Benton Library and is notable for its rubble, stucco and stick work exterior. It was constructed for Everett Benton's daughter Dorothy and her husband. The unusual two-family at 210-212 Payson Road was built in 1910. The Colonial Revival dwelling at 256 Slade Street dates to 1922 and was designed by local architect Victor Wigglesworth. Although it appears to have a flush board façade, the house was actually constructed of reinforced concrete. The house at 43 Village Hill Road is one of several English Revival dwellings in Belmont designed by well-known architect Royal Barry Wills.

The Work of Local Architects: Victor Wigglesworth



24 Cedar Road



256 Slade Street



Colonial Terrace



20 Highland Road

Text for slide 20 - The Work of Local Architects: Victor Wigglesworth

The survey highlighted the works of several local architects.

Victor Wigglesworth was born in 1885 and does not appear to have had any formal architectural training. He designed a diverse range of buildings in Belmont over a short period, beginning in 1913 when he designed the Prairie Style house at 24 Cedar Road. He designed several houses in Belmont of reinforced concrete construction of which only 256 Slade Street survives. He designed Colonial Terrace in 1916 and lived in #4 Colonial Terrace for several years. 20 Highland Road dates to 1915. By 1917 he was working as chief draftsman for the Cruft Laboratory in Cambridge. He lived in Belmont into the 1950s.

The Work of Local Architects: H. Thaxter Underwood



26 Cedar Road



1 Clover Road



464-470 Trapelo Road



14 Glendale Road

Text for slide 21 - The Work of Local Architects: H. Thaxter Underwood

The survey also includes various works by H. Thaxter Underwood, another local architect of note. He was the son of Dr. George Underwood and the grandson of William Underwood, founder of the food concern. Working with his uncle, landscape architect Loring Underwood he designed the bathhouse for the Underwood Pool and a number of houses in the Walnut Hill area (26 Cedar Road) and the Clark Hill area (1 Clover Road). His commercial buildings include 464-470 Trapelo Road and the S.S. Pierce Building in Cushing Square. He also designed the Belmont Police Station. He designed 14 Glendale Road for his own use and lived here until his death in 1950.

Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architect



105 Juniper Road, 1936



Eleanor Raymond, Architect

Text for slide 22 - Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architect

One of the other priorities the HDC voiced for the inventory was to include the town's important mid-20th century resources. These include several houses designed by architect Eleanor Raymond including 105 Juniper Road. This illustration of the interior is in the collection of Historic New England.

Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architects



69 Pinehurst Road, 1948



The Architects Collaborative/ Walter Gropius, Architects

Text for slide 23 - Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architects

Other highly significant buildings in town include this International Style house at 69 Pinehurst Road, designed by Walter Gropius and Benjamin Thompson of The Architects Collaborative in 1948. Gropius was the founder of the German school of design called the Bauhaus and later taught at Harvard. He and Thompson designed this house for Dr. Clarence Howlett, an industrial engineer.

Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architects



77 Snake Hill Road



Snake Hill Road Development

1940-1946

Carl Koch, Architect



83 Snake Hill Road



15 Snake Hill Road

89 Snake Hill Road

Text for slide 24 - Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architects

The Snake Hill Development designed by architect Carl Koch was described in 1946 by Progressive Architecture as one of the best known and most significant groups of contemporary houses in the world. Koch studied under Walter Gropius and developed this community housing project initially as a way to design an inexpensive home for himself and his family (he lived at #77). The first five houses were built in 1940 followed by an additional three in 1941 and one last house one for Koch's sister in 1946. Although there have been many alterations and additions, the development is still of note today.

Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architect



315 Common Street



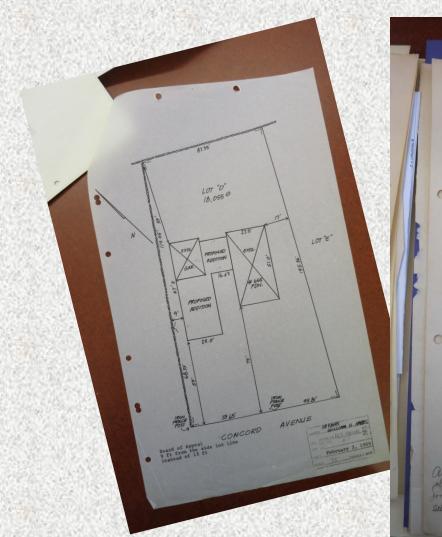


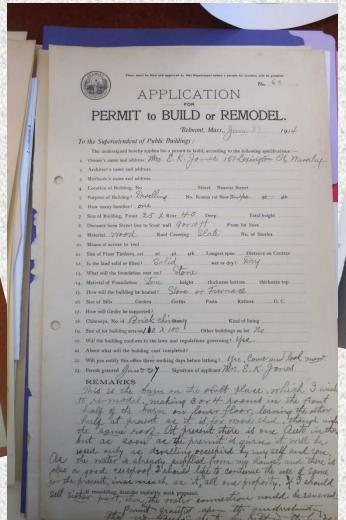
Better Homes & Gardens, Nov. 1966 Earl Flansburgh, Architect

Text for slide 25 - Works by Significant Mid-20th Century Architect

The house at 315 Common Street was constructed according to designs for a house by Earl Flansburgh that appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine in 1966.

Sources: Building Department Records







Text for slide 26 - Sources: Building Department Records

In addition to developing new inventory forms to cover the underrepresented resources, I also was charged with revising and updating a number of the previous 1982 inventory forms. In some cases, corrections were made, information about original owners and architects were added and information was added relative to alterations that had been made to buildings over the last thirty years. The Building Department files provided a wealth of information including original permits and drawings.

One of the interesting aspects of the survey was the volume of new information that is now more readily available thanks to the internet and the digitization of source material. For example, in researching the house at 41 Cedar Road, I stumbled on an article on the house that appeared in *Architectural Record* in 1920.

Sources: Architectural Publications





41 Cedar Road today and in Architectural Record, 1920

Text for slide 27 - Sources: Architectural Publications

And even for buildings that had been surveyed in 1982, new information was found. In the case of a house at 72 Cushing Avenue I was able to find an illustration of the house shortly after it was constructed, contained in an advertisement for building materials.

Sources: Architectural Publications



72 Cushing Avenue, today and in 1914



Text for slide 28 - Sources: Architectural Publications

The Belmont Historical Society was also a source of historic photos including for this house at 21 Elm Street.

Sources: Belmont Historical Society





Hittinger House, 21 Elm Street

Historic photo courtesy of Belmont Historical Society

Text for slide 29 - Sources: Belmont Historical Society

In total I have produced about 200 inventory forms – about 130 forms for new properties and 70 that revise pre-existing forms that were incomplete, insufficient or contained errors. This is significant progress but there are still many buildings that should also be surveyed and forms that need to be updated.

Summary of Findings

- There are a number of neighborhoods with clusters of significant structures and distinctive character (i.e. Belmont Park, Colonial Terrace, Payson Park, Clark Hill, etc.)
- Additional National Register listings should be pursued
- This survey will inform the list of buildings subject to the Demolition Delay By-Law
- Continue work on expanding the inventory and updating and correcting old 1982 inventory forms including those in the Pleasant Street Historic District

Text for slide 30 - Summary of Findings

To summarize my findings...There are a number of areas in the town that exhibit a combination of architecture and character that may make them worthy of consideration for the creation of local historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts.

The Town should work to increase the number of properties listed on the National Register. While not preventing demolition, the Register can elevate a property in the local consciousness, it can trigger important tools for preservation including eligibility for federal historic tax credits, preservation easements, and reviews of federal undertakings.

The survey should also be used to inform the list of properties protected by the Demolition Delay By-Law. Work on the inventory should be ongoing. This should not be an effort that concludes with this survey – it is an organic process and there are still many forms to be updated and new resources to be studied.

Next Steps...



Paul Samuelson Nobel Prize, Economics, 1970



Resided at 75 Clairemont Road 1940-1994

Text for slide 31 - Next Steps...

One area which also needs to be looked at in the future is how to inventory properties associated with significant individuals. Due to its proximity to the Boston area and in particular Harvard and MIT universities Belmont has had many significant individuals in residence over the years. The list is exhaustive and includes Nobel Prize winners, politicians, business people, artists, musicians, writers, scientists, economists, scholars, sports figures and media types. While it is nearly impossible to inventory the residences of all of these significant persons, additional efforts should be made to establish linkages between buildings and persons.

Final Products

- PowerPoint Presentation will be available on the HDC webpage early next week (http://www.belmont-ma.gov/historic-district-commission)
- Final survey report, inventory forms and narratives on Architectural Styles and Areas of Town will be available on the HDC webpage in early January.
 - Paper copies will also be available for review in the Office of Community Development (OCD)
- Copies of the inventory forms will be forwarded to the MHC and will also be available on their MACRIS website (http://mhc-macris.net/)
 - Forms from 1982 can be viewed there as well

Text for slide 32 - Final Products

This Power Point presentation will be available on the HDC website in the near future. In the next few weeks, I will be wrapping up the web component of this project which will include links to the inventory forms that have been prepared, overviews of some of Belmont's notable neighborhoods and areas and a section on Architectural styles that will include photographs of many Belmont buildings. This is hopefully a resource that will enlighten local residents about the town's many historic resources and can be expanded and updated as new information becomes available. Copies of the Inventory forms will also be forwarded to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and will be made available on their website. That website already includes all of the inventory forms previously produced for properties in town.



The End

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