

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

12-231	Boston North	G	BLM.36
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**Town/City:** Belmont

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Cushing Square

**Address:** 577 Belmont Street

**Historic Name:** Samuel Barnard, Jr. House

**Uses:** Present: residence/school

Original: single family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** 1837 (rebuilt 1895)

**Source:** Camilla French, *Belmont Citizen*, 2/7/1974

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: aluminum siding

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

1895 – house rebuilt after fire – Queen Anne details added

ca. 1920 – bay window west side

1971 – two-story addition, rear, NE corner

date? – aluminum siding

**Condition:** fair (due to siding)

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 14,902 SF

**Setting:** residential neighborhood, set back slightly from street with granite posts and hedge along sidewalk

## Photograph



## Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Belmont Historic District Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): July 2014

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

577 BELMONT STREET

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The house at 577 Belmont Street is significant as a rare example of a temple-fronted Greek Revival house in Belmont. The house was originally built in 1836 but was substantially rebuilt in 1895 after it was nearly destroyed by fire. Although covered in siding, the house still retains considerable architectural detailing characteristic of the style including a wide frieze. The 2 ½-story pedimented façade is three bays wide with elongated first floor window openings and a sidehall entrance which is framed by full sidelights and transom lights. A single-story colonnade in the Ionic order extends across the façade and east elevation. It originally wrapped around the rear elevation as well. The two-story cross gabled addition to the northeast was added in 1971 and echoes the detailing and columns of the original structure. Most of the windows contain 6/6 sash with small cornerblocks at the corners. Several windows including the Palladian windows in the front and west pediments and the arched sash and bay window on the west wall are Colonial Revival-style embellishments added when the house was rebuilt in 1895 after the fire.

The house is setback slightly from the road with a formal shaped hedge alternating with granite posts along the sidewalk. A parking area is located to the west of the house.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The Samuel Barnard, Jr. House is historically significant as the only remaining homestead of the Barnard family, important Belmont market gardeners. It is also of interest for its associations with Anne Whitney and Edward Barnard, two Belmont artists who contributed to Belmont's 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century reputation as an artist's colony.

The house was first built about 1837 for Samuel Barnard, Jr. (1817-1893) when he married Sarah Crafts. Samuel's father, Samuel Barnard, Sr. (d.1847) was quite prosperous – he was a market gardener, a hog breeder, owned part of an ice-cutting business and considerable property. When his father died in 1847, Samuel Jr. (the only son) moved into the family homestead at 603 Belmont (no longer extant) and rented out the smaller house at 577 Belmont. Around 1900 Samuel Jr.'s son Edward built a studio between the two dwellings at what is now 583 Belmont (BEL.37). (Note: The house at 603 Belmont was demolished in 1939).

About 1850 the house at 577 Belmont Street was rented to Nathaniel Ruggles Whitney. His daughter Anne Whitney (1821-1915) became a noted sculptress, one of the few successful American women sculptors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that Samuel Barnard Jr. watched her model a face in the wet sand he was using to root cuttings and encouraged her to study art. Her brother built her a studio shack near her home and in 1860 she opened a studio in Watertown. Among her well known public monuments is a statue of Charles Sumner (1903) in front of Harvard Law School in Cambridge and that of Leif Eriksson (1887) on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

The Whitney family left Belmont about 1876 and one of Samuel Jr.'s daughters, Harriet, married Robert Diaz, an importer and wholesale dealer in cutlery and fancy hardware with a shop on Washington Street in Boston. The couple had four children who were born here. In 1890 Diaz, recently widowed, moved to a new house on Centre Avenue.

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An article in the *Belmont Citizen* on May 18, 1895 reported that the house had been “completely destroyed” by a fire. The fire had begun in the rear of the house and quickly spread to the main portion. At the time it was owned by Mrs. Mary Horne (Samuel Jr.’s daughter) and rented to J. Eastman Chase and family. According to local historian Camilla French the house was rebuilt using the original timbers. Rebuilt during the Queen Anne period, certain changes were made and embellishments added. These included a new staircase design replacing the original curving staircase and the addition of bay windows and Palladian windows.

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1929 the house was rented to Samuel Williston, a prominent lawyer and professor at Harvard Law School. He lived here with his wife Mary. Charles W. Morton was living here in 1932. Mary Barnard Horne died in 1931 and the house left the Barnard-Horne family in 1946 when it was sold by Horne family members to Mae Kendall, a widow (Book 6957, Page 61). Mrs. Kendall started the Kendall Nursery School. In 1958 Mrs. Kendall retired and sold to Joseph Tellier and his wife. John and Ann O'Donnell purchased the property in 1968 and enlarged the school and living space by adding a wing. The building still houses the Kendall Nursery School today.

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