

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

25-53	Boston North	AR	BLM.745
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Clark Hill

Address: 1 Clover Street

Historic Name: George & Minnie Armstrong House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1910

Source: building permit

Style/Form: English Revival/Arts & Crafts

Architect/Builder: H. Thaxter Underwood, architect

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: stucco, wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
1981 – rear addition

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

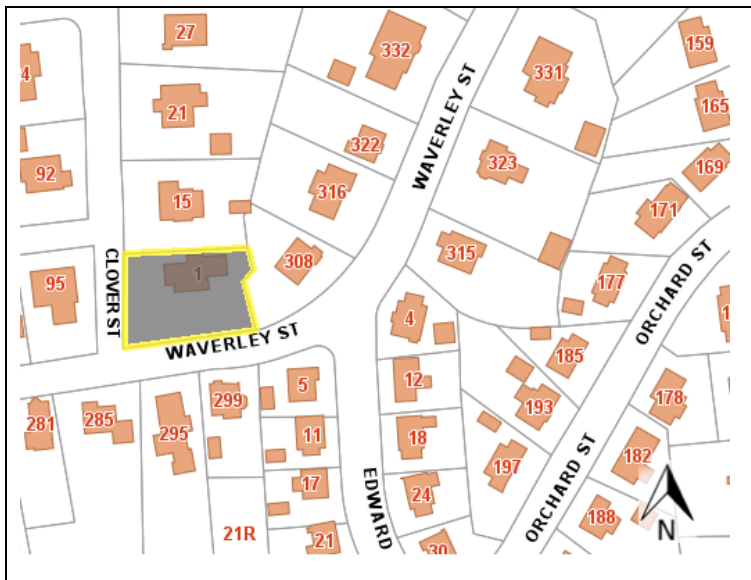
Acreage: 10,779 SF

Setting: neighborhood of similar early 20th century historical revival style houses

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): November 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

1 CLOVER STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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 1 Clover Street is one of a handful of Craftsman-influenced, stucco-finished houses in the Clark Hill neighborhood. The cross-gable dwelling displays a symmetrical gable-front a single bay wide facing Clover Street with an asymmetrical gable oriented to Waverley Street. A large rectangular brick chimney rises from the north slope. The overhanging eaves have prominent projecting purlins, rafter tails and rakings. The proto-modern entry is of special interest and features a single squat Tuscan column supporting an overhang with curved rafter tails. The front door has 4 x 2 glass panes over two vertical panels and a sidelight to one side. Varied windows include a large oriel window on the façade, double-hung 1/1 units used individually and in pairs, with a set of three in the attic. A stained glass window lights the front stair hall. The continuous band of double-hung windows at the corner above the front entry appears to enclose what was originally a sleeping porch. There is a two story addition to the rear with lower level garage accessed from Waverley Street.

A low fieldstone retaining wall of recent construction runs along the sidewalk with two balled posts marking the brick sidewalk leading to the house. The property is shaded by a number of mature trees.

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.

This house is representative of the architect-designed houses built on Clark Hill in the early 20th century following the subdivision of the former Kilburn Estate by a locally-held real estate trust. John Kilburn died in 1904 and in 1909 the estate of Amanda Kilburn sold the estate to the Belmont Associates (MCRD Book 3452, Page 228). The group of well-to-do residents included Frederic Dodge (who lived at 81 Clark Street), Henry O. Underwood, Joseph O. Wellington, John Frenning (who lived at 35 Clover Street), and Francis Kendall (who lived at 47 Clark Street). The Associates hired landscape architect Loring Underwood to design the subdivision. The lots encompassed about 10,000 square feet and Kilburn and Blake Streets, named after the estate owners, were laid out through its center. The Associates placed a number of restrictions on new construction in their subdivision; the restrictions were to be in effect for twenty years. The deeds specified that houses were to be twenty feet from the street except for piazzas and porticos. Only single-family dwelling houses with pitched roofs were to be constructed and the minimum acceptable cost was \$5,500 above the foundation.

This home is one of the first six houses on the southern half of Clover Street constructed in the new subdivision. The land (Lot 28) was sold by the Associates in September 1910 to Minnie Armstrong, wife of George P. Armstrong (Book 3549, Page 378). George P. Armstrong was granted a building permit in December 1910. The couple previously lived at 27 Orchard Street. George Armstrong was the Belmont Superintendent of Schools from about 1909 until his retirement in 1922. They sold the house in 1921. Other long-term owners included Henry Thornton who owned the house from 1923 until 1941. He was also Superintendent of an Iron Works; it is not clear whether he occupied the house. Dr. J. Gordon Scannell was the owner in 1945. The house was purchased by John Firenze in 1952. He died in 1976 and the house is still owned by family members today.

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The house was designed by Belmont architect, H. Thaxter Underwood. Herbert Thaxter Underwood (1872-1950) was the son of Dr. George Underwood, nephew of landscape architect Loring Underwood and grandson of William Underwood, founder of the food concern. He was born in Boston and was a graduate of Boston English High School. He came to Belmont as a young man. It is not known where Thaxter Underwood received his architectural training but he was in practice by 1904. H. Thaxter Underwood maintained an office in Boston and designed a number of municipal buildings in Belmont including the Roger Wellington School (1917), Butler School (1930), and Belmont Police Station (1930). He was also architect for the S.S. Pierce Commercial Block in Cushing Square and a number of local residences including 26-28 Cedar Road, 65 Clark Street, 65 Common Street, 36 Hillcrest Road, and 91 Kilburn Road. Out-of-town commissions included the Sacred Heart Rectory and Convent in Malden and Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel in Acton. Outside of his architectural practice, Underwood served on the Belmont Board of Assessors for twenty-eight years. He lived at 14 Glendale Road.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Belmont: The Architecture and Development of the Town of Homes*. Prepared for the Belmont Historic District Commission, 1984.
- Belmont Citizen*, January 13, 1950 [obituary of H. Thaxter Underwood]
- Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named (2nd edition)*. Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS database.
- Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA
- Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1922, 1931, 1949.
- Town of Belmont, Building Department records.
- U.S. Census, various years.
- Williams, Judy. Area form for Clark Hill (BLM.AR), November 1982.

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by Lisa Mausolf

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The house at 1 Clover Street appears to be eligible for the National Register as a contributing resource in a potential Clark Hill historic district. Constructed in 1910, it is a good example of the Arts and Crafts/English Revival Style that found some popularity in New England during the early 20th century. It was designed by local architect, H. Thaxter Underwood.

Blake Street, Clover Street and Kilburn Road were laid out by the Belmont Associates in 1904 as part of the early twentieth century subdivision of Clark Hill. This subdivision was one of the earliest efforts on the part of local citizens to regulate the density of residential development in town. The architect-designed homes in the neighborhood include Colonial Revival, Craftsman and English Arts and Crafts movement designs.