

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

| | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|---------|
| 17-118 | Boston North | M | BLM.752 |
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 315 Common Street

Historic Name: Bernard Costello House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1967

Source: building permit

Style/Form: Contemporary

Architect/Builder: *Better Homes & Gardens* plan (based on Earl Flansburgh design); Kurt Fuchs, bldr.

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood

Roof: tar & gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 11,583 SF

Setting: mixed residential neighborhood along busy local street

Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): July 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

315 COMMON 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 315 Common Street is a distinctive Contemporary-style residence based on a design by prominent Boston architect Earl Flansburgh. The single-story, flat-roofed dwelling displays a symmetrical H-shaped plan with a central courtyard. The roof has overhanging eaves and a large brick chimney emerges from the southern part of the roof. The house is set close to the street with minimal vegetation screening. The Common Street elevation is sheathed in vertical tongue-and-groove siding and is without openings other than the plain, central front door. The wall adjacent to the door way is recessed slightly from the two adjacent walls and is sheathed in a board and batten siding. On the side elevations large windows alternate with nearly full-height "lancets" or projecting plywood boxes painted yellow that are ten inches deep and are built between two studs. These boxes contain ventilation fins that facilitate the movement of air through the house. Inside the house, floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding doors face the interior courtyard.

A low fieldstone retaining wall runs along the sidewalk and a driveway extends along the north side of the house. A wooden vertical board fence extends to the south of the house, screening the south elevation.

The house at 315 Common Street shares numerous similarities to the house that architect Earl Flansburgh built for his own family in Lincoln in 1963 including plan, windows, and exterior finishes. The biggest difference between the two is setting - the Flansburgh home occupies a much larger parcel of land and is set on a level terrace carved from a hillside rather than close to a well-traveled road as is the case with 315 Common Street.

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 built on land that was subdivided from the adjacent Christopher Grant House property at 325 Common Street, a 1760 Georgian farmhouse. In September 1967 Bernard S. Costello Jr. was granted a building permit. He lived here with his wife Mary. According to the Town Resident Listing in 1971 Bernard was then a 33-year old agent. The couple was still living here in 1973. Channing and Deborah Russell had acquired the house by 1993 and still own the house today.

According to Polly Flansburgh, widow of Earl Flansburgh, her husband was never involved in the actual design or construction of the house. The original owner purchased the plans from *Better Homes and Gardens*. The house design appeared in the November 1966 issue of the magazine; readers could purchase copies of the plan for \$15.00. The builder of the house was Kurt Fuchs.

The architect, Earl R. Flansburgh (1931-2009), graduated from Cornell in 1953 and received his master's degree from MIT in 1957. He spent some time in the United Kingdom on a Fulbright Scholarship. He worked several years with The Architects Collaborative (TAC) before forming his own architectural firm in Boston in 1963. The firm was especially well known for educational commissions. Flansburgh lived in Lincoln where he designed his own home in 1963, during the first year of his architectural practice. The design appeared on the cover of *Architectural Record* in September 1965 and in *Better Homes and Gardens* in November 1966. Flansburgh also designed two other homes in Lincoln at 4 Hawk Hill Road (1970) and 11 Laurel Drive (1964).

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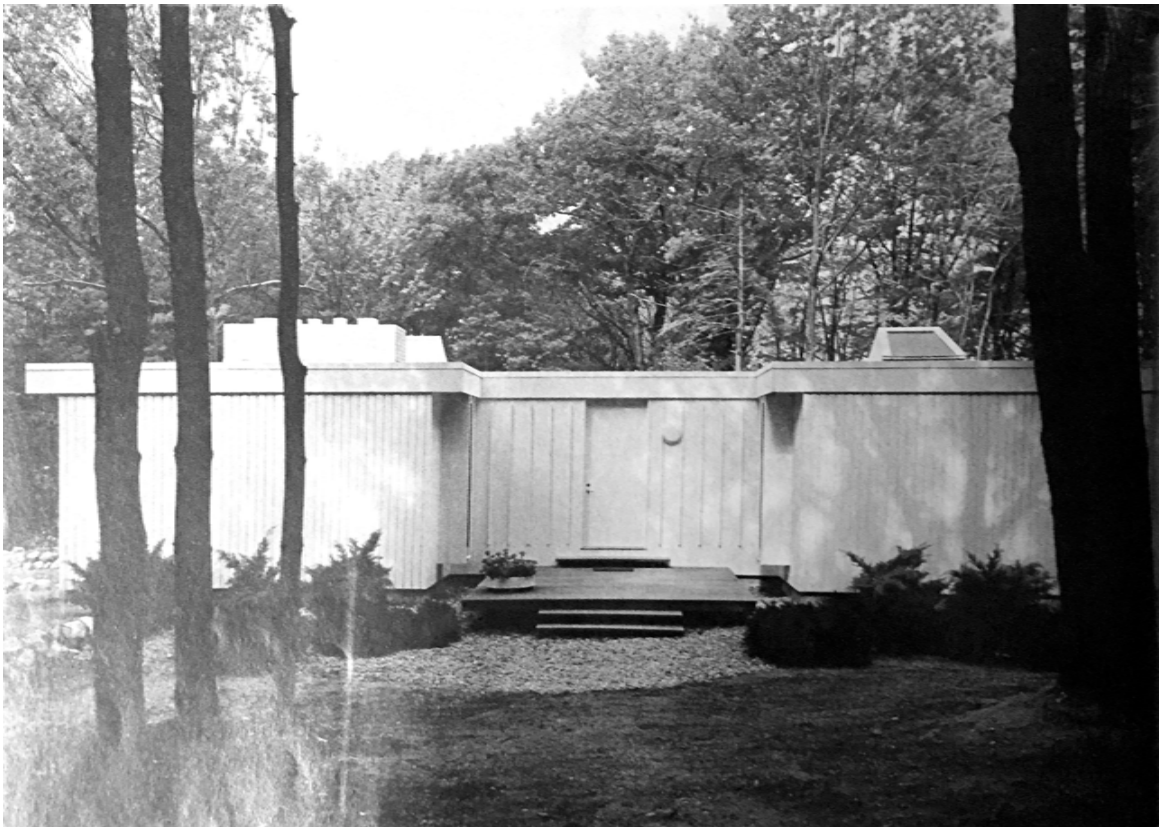
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Seney, Noel. "A Simple House with Magnificent Style", *Better Homes and Gardens*, November 1966, pp. 72.

Town of Belmont, Building Department records

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House designed by Earl Flansburgh and built by Kurt Fuchs

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, November 1966

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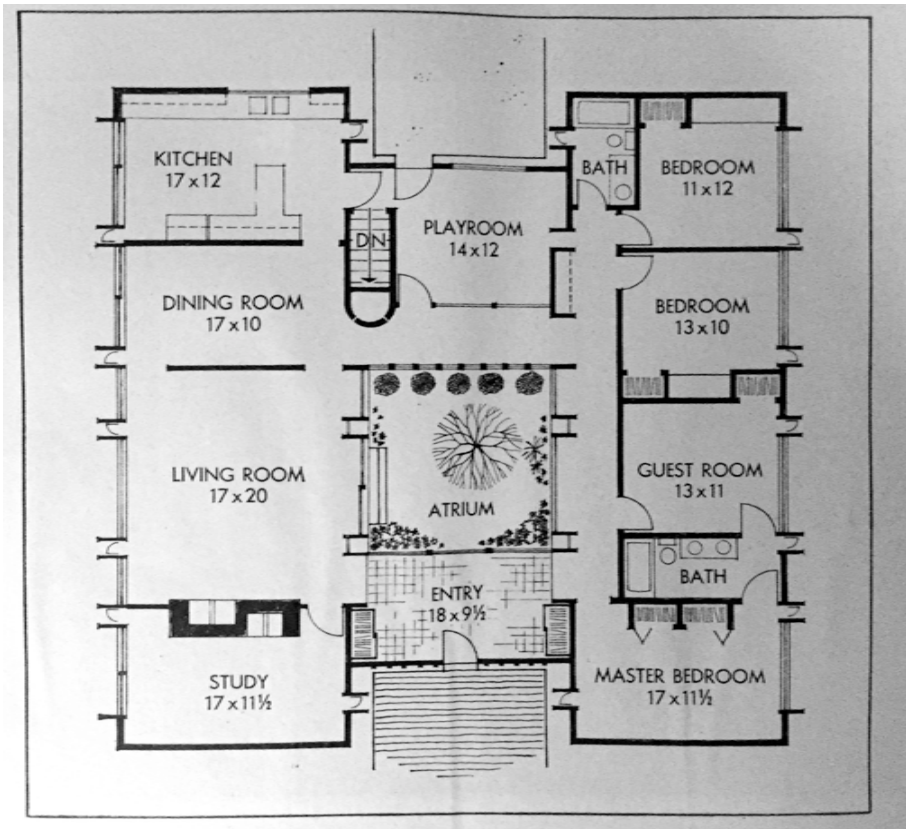
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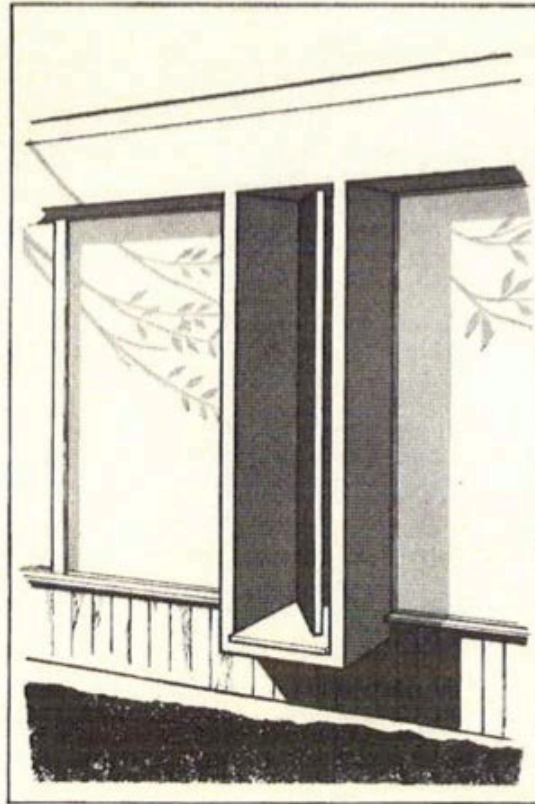
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House designed by Earl Flansburgh and built by Kurt Fuchs
Plans available for purchase from *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine*

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, November 1966



Above: Each of the unusual ventilating "fins" is basically a wooden casement that can be opened to scoop in breezes. A 10-inch-deep plywood box was built between two studs, then hung with a door that swings out from the interior. In summer, screens attach to the outside.

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS, NOVEMBER, 1966

Detail of ventilating fins on house

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, November 1966