

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

6-173	Boston North	B, D	BLM.754
-------	-----------------	---------	---------

Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Payson Park

Address: 404 Common Street (rear)

Historic Name: Ellison Barn

Uses: Present: barn

Original: barn

Date of Construction: ca. 1890

Source: maps

Style/Form:

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards, wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1932 – 2' x 16' addition to front of garage

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 12,237 SF (with house)

Setting: set behind much later dwelling, a remnant of the 19th century in a largely 20th century residential neighborhood

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): November 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

404 COMMON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

B

BLM.754

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 architectural significance of this property is largely the late 19th century barn that survives to the rear of the ca. 1925 house. The barn is a remnant of the 19th century neighborhood before the 20th century land use pattern was imposed. The 1 1/2 story barn was originally part of the property next door at 410 Common Street but when the land was subdivided in 1923, became part of 404 Common Street. The principal elevation faces Payson Road to the south. The first floor level is clad in wood clapboards with wood shingles above. Gable wall dormers break through the eaves on both the north and south sides. Windows include six light sash. According to building permits, a 2' x 16' addition was constructed to the front of the garage in 1932.

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 barn was originally part of the property next door (the present 410 Common Street). It was constructed between 1889 and 1898 according to historic maps and the original owner was Henry Ellison, a farmer, who owned the house and land that extended south to Payson Road. After the death of Ellison's widow, the land was subdivided into separate lots, with the Ellison family retaining the ownership of the house parcel.

The Colonial Revival house to the west of the barn was built in 1926 for S. Robert and Hanna Train. It was owned by Vannevar and Phoebe Bush from 1927 until 1942, although the Buses moved to Washington, D.C. prior to 1940 and rented the house out. Dr. Vannevar Bush (1890-1974) was a professor at MIT and did seminal work on analog computing and was a cofounder of Raytheon. He is best known for his role in Washington, D.C. during World War II where, as President Roosevelt's advisor, he organized the Manhattan Project and oversaw the work of 6,000 civilian scientists designing new weapons. Later owners included Barbara Schmitt (1942-1957), James and Eileen Burns (1957-1964), Alexander and Janet O'Hanley 1964-1986, Janet O'Hanley (1986 and 1992). The present owners, Shih Huei Wang and Show Ling Wang, purchased the property in 1992 from Janet O'Hanley.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named* (2nd edition). Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.
Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA
Robbins, Samuel Dowse, ed. *Who's Who in Belmont*. Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 1972.
Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915, 1922, 1931, 1949.
Stadley, George W. *Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington*. 1898.
U.S. Census, various dates.
Town of Belmont, Building Department files.
Walker, G.H. *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*. Boston: G.H. Walker, 1889.
Zachary, G. Pascal. *Endless Frontier: Vannevar Bush, Engineer of the American Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.