

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

8-52	Boston North	CA	BLM.765
------	--------------	----	---------

Photograph



Town/City: Belmont

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

Address: 21 Elm Street

Historic Name: Richard Hittinger House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1897

Source: Cutter, p. 1494

Style/Form: Shingle Style

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles, wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
garage (1987)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
2006 – renovations, deck

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 17,314 SF

Setting: large lot set behind later houses at 25 and 29 Elm Street

Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): Dec. 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CA

BLM.765

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.

Set on land that was once part of the Hittinger Family farm, 21 Elm Street is now entirely surrounding by early 20th century suburban dwellings. The limited view available from Elm Street reveals a 2 ½-story wood shingled dwelling that is set on a fieldstone foundation and has seen few alterations since its construction in 1897 (see historic photos on continuation sheets). The narrow end faces Elm Street and is capped by a jerkinhead (clipped gable) roof. The overhanging eaves display a wide frieze and modillions. Hip-roofed dormers, two brick chimneys and a belvedere rise from the roof. Single-story porches on stone foundations flank the longer east and west side elevations. There is a three-sided, single-story bay window on the south end and the window openings contain 1/1 replacement windows but lack the shutters visible in historic views.

The house is setback from Elm Street by a long driveway that extends to its west. A stone wall with pillars marks the entrance to the driveway with mature lilacs located next to the west pillar. At the end of the driveway there is a side-gabled garage which is sheathed in wood shingles. Two garage doors face the street and a gable wall dormer is centered between them, containing an 8/8 window. Town building department records indicate that it was constructed in 1987. It was designed by Mark Landsberg & Associates of Newton.

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 was the home of prominent Belmont market gardener Richard Hittinger (1856-1921). He was the son of Jacob Hittinger who established the forty-acre Hittinger Farm in 1849. After 1876 the farm on School Street was operated by Jacob's sons – Richard, Charles and Jacob, Jr. as Hittinger Brothers (1876-1898) and Hittinger Fruit Company (after 1898). This is the last of the dwellings once occupied by the Hittinger family to survive (Charles lived at 375 School Street, Edward at 451 School Street and Jacob at 216 Common Street).

Richard attended local public schools and after completing three years of high school worked on his father's farm. In 1876, at the age of 19, he entered the office of Boston architects Putnam & Tilden where he worked for about a year. He also worked for a short time for a Mr. Rawson who was involved in contracting and building in Boston. In 1876 Richard left the field of architecture and joined with his brother Charles in the market gardening business. In 1884 the brothers erected their first greenhouse. Over the years the facility saw constant growth and development and by 1908 there were nineteen modern greenhouses, a modern boiler house and wash houses and a modern office building on the land between School and Grove Streets. The farm raised lettuce in the winter, cucumbers in the early spring months and three to four crops in the season, selling their produce at Faneuil Hall market in Boston. In 1908 Hittinger Fruit Company had over 36 acres of fruit trees and four acres covered with glass (Cutter 1908: 1494). The orchards were located west of School Street.

Richard Hittinger married (Mrs.) Elizabeth Waite Potter on August 21, 1897 and this house was built at that time. It is not known if Richard Hittinger had a hand in the design. It was built on part of Lot 125 and part of lot 126 of the 1894 Payson Park subdivision and was one of the earliest houses constructed in the Payson Park subdivision (see 1898 plan). The couple had one child, Richard, Jr. born in 1899. Hittinger served as a Belmont selectman for three years and was a member of the Boston Market Gardeners' Association. He died in 1921 and Mrs. Hittinger lived here several years before moving to Arlington about 1925. She died in 1930.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

CA

BLM.765

By the late 1920s the house (previously known as 45 Elm Street), was renumbered 21 Elm Street. Anthony Bicchieri, a retail provisions merchant in Boston was living here by 1927. He was born in Italy in 1887 and came to this country about 1898. Living with him in 1930 were his wife Josephine and his mother Antonetta.

The Hittinger Farm ceased operations in the 1930s. The section of the farm west of School Street was subdivided in 1931; the section east of School Street was subdivided in 1939 after the hurricane of 1938 devastated the greenhouses. The land was developed with single-family homes. This included houses at 25 and 29 Elm Street which occupied what had previously been the front yard of the Richard Hittinger House. Nearby streets including Jacob Road, Philip Road and Elizabeth Road pay homage to members of the Hittinger family (family patriarch Jacob and Richard's wife, Elizabeth).

In the 1940s and 1950s the house at 21 Elm Street was occupied by James and Mary Ford. He was employed as a chauffeur. Later owners of 21 Elm Street included John F. Kelleher. The property was sold by John and Dorothy Kelleher in 1984 to Daniel and Diane Brennan (Book 15937, Page 184). Diane Brennan Garthwaite sold the property in 2006 to Jonathan Hakim and Linda Bilmes (Book 47021, Page 134).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Belmont Historical Society. Hittinger Family File including photographs.

Belmont: The Architecture and Development of the Town of Homes. Prepared for the Belmont Historic District Commission, 1984.

Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named* (2nd edition). Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.

Cini, Marcia M. Area form for Payson Park (BLM.B), 1982.

Cutter, William Richard. *Historic Places and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs Relating to the Families of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 4. Boston: Lewis Publishing, 1908, p. 1494.

"Hittinger Farm", *Belmont Historical Society Newsletter*, June 1982.

Lieberman, Frankie and Judy Williams. Area Form for Hittinger Estate (Area BLM.CA), 1982.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA

Payson Park Land Company Brochures, 1898, 1909.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915, 1922, 1931, 1949.

Stadley, George W. *Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington*. 1898.

Town of Belmont, Building Department files.

U.S. Census, various dates.

Walker, George H. *Atlas of Middlesex County*, 1898.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CA	BLM.765
----	---------



Historic stone wall marks driveway entrance. In distance is garage.
(Visible at right is 25 Elm Street which sits in the front yard).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

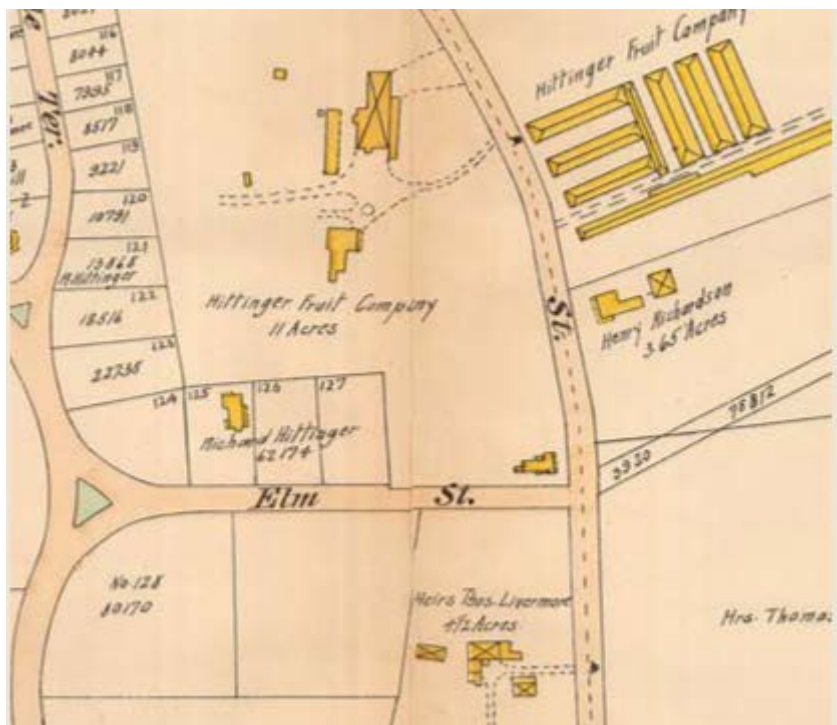
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CA	BLM.765
----	---------



1889 Walker Middlesex County Atlas (no house)



1898 Stadley Middlesex County Atlas (house built)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CA	BLM.765
----	---------



Undated (pre 1930) photographs of 21 Elm Street

Source: Belmont Historical Society

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

21 ELM STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CA	BLM.765
----	---------



Source: Belmont Historical Society