

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

17-33	Boston North	AQ	BLM.106
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Waverley

Address: 256 Slade Street

Historic Name: Martin Powers House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1922

Source: building permit

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Bates & Wigglesworth

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: concrete, brick, wood

Roof: rubber

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
ca. 2000 – new windows

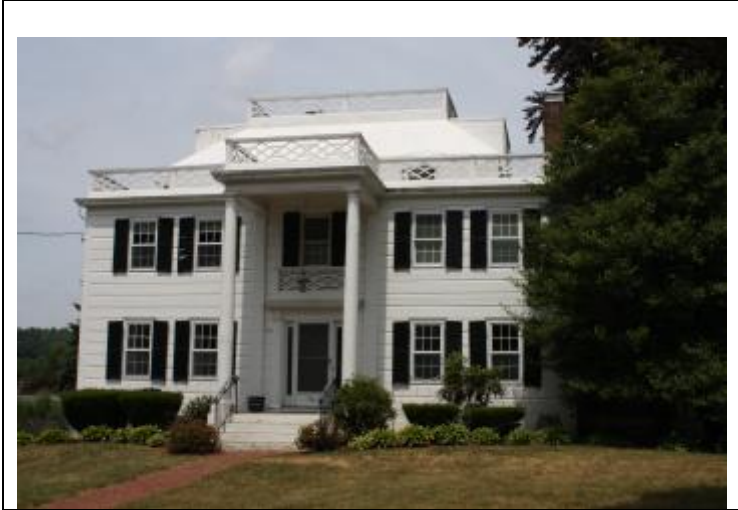
Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 12,644 SF

Setting: mixed twentieth century neighborhood of houses

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

256 SLADE 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 256 Slade Street is an unusual early 20th century dwelling which combines Colonial Revival detailing with reinforced concrete construction throughout. The two-story, hip-roofed structure displays a five-bay façade with a concrete façade which has the appearance of flushboard siding. The side elevations have a brick veneer. The center entrance has a Classically-inspired door surround with pilasters, entablature and full sidelights and is fronted by a monumental-scaled portico with two-story concrete columns. Capping the main entrance, the portico and the roof all are decorated by Chippendale-inspired panels and/or balustrades. Windows contain 6/6 sash with shutters. A two-car garage is located underneath the house.

The house at 256 Slade Street may be the only remaining example of Wigglesworth's reinforced concrete house designs. It was built shortly after the house he designed at 217 Common Street which was publicized in national trade publications (*Concrete* Jan. 1922) and is no longer extant. Other Colonial Revival designs by Wigglesworth including 223 and 234 Slade Street and Colonial Terrace, do not appear to be of reinforced concrete construction.

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 marks the site of the mid 19th century Winthrop Chenery mansion. In 1919 the twenty-acre property was purchased by the Common Street Associates who subdivided the former estate into residential lots. The March 1922 Sanborn map shows this as a vacant lot.

Architect Victor H. Wigglesworth purchased the lot from the Common Street Associates in May 1922 (Book 4514, Page 335). In May 1922 Bates and Wigglesworth applied for a building permit to construct the present house, valued at \$10,000. Constructed of reinforced concrete with a garage underneath, the house was built by J. Pempstrom of Everett. The house was built shortly after Wigglesworth built another reinforced concrete house on Common Street (217 Common Street, no longer extant). That house received the following write-up in *Concrete* magazine in January 1922, which applies equally to the Slade Street house:

One of the most unusual achievements of concrete housing in the last year is on Common street, Belmont, Mass., the work of V.H. Wigglesworth, architect.

It is of reinforced concrete throughout – walls (which are double), floors, stairs, and roof – even to the tile, which are monolithic with the roof slab. Yet the casual observer would never suspect it to be anything else than a particularly well preserved example of the New England colonial farm house, with wide, heavy drop siding and beautiful two-story front columns. Even the hooded doorway with its moldings are of concrete, monolithic with the structure as a whole.

While this seems to be flying in the face of a common architectural conception that a structure should express the material of which it is made – Mr. Wigglesworth stoutly maintains that the lines of the old farm houses are so good for their own sakes – drop siding and all – that they deserve preservation in a permanent and worthy material. The forms for walls proper were carefully made for horizontal courses about 2 ft. high and were used repeatedly with very little waste. They are so faced as to produce the drop siding effect.

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Surfaces were carefully pointed, filled with a cement wash and rubbed with fine carborundum. The walls were then given a finish of special white paint.

In September 1924 the completed house was sold to Martin Powers of Medford (Book 4771, Page 192). Martin Powers lived here with his wife Mary; he worked as a manager in Boston. By 1935 the house had been sold to Retired U.S. Army Major Daniel Brinsmade. In 1940 Major Brinsmade, then 66, was living here with his wife Bertha and stepdaughter Barbara Billings. In 1949 the house was sold by George and Barbara Barlow to F. Paul and Marjorie Morgan (Book 7422, Page 421). Later owners included Vincenzo and Filomena Lucido (1952-1960); Julian and Clarice Schwinger (1962-1972); Roy & Jacklyn Macridis (1972-1983); and Richard & Margaret Hickey (1983-2002). Stephen McEvoy purchased the house in 2002 and sold it two years later to Kim and Susan Tang, the present owners (Book 44407, Page 92).

Victor Hugo Wigglesworth (1885-1958) was born in Hyde Park in 1885. Nothing is known about his educational background other than the 1940 Census indicating that the highest level of schooling he received was the first year of high school. In 1910 he was living with his mother in Chelsea and the local directory lists him as an architect. He and his brother Charles appear to briefly form a partnership and are credited with the design of several Colonial Revival buildings in Chelsea including buildings on Bellingham Square and the Chelsea Day Nursery.

Wigglesworth married Mary Winthrop Shackford on May 25, 1916 and designed the houses on Colonial Terrace in Belmont that same year. He and his wife lived at #4 Colonial Terrace for several years. In addition to Colonial Terrace, Wigglesworth also designed other dwellings in Belmont including 24 Cedar Road (1913), a Prairie Style dwelling, 20 Highland Road (1915), a house for his own use at 214 Common Street (1922, no longer extant), another across the street (217 Common Street, no longer extant), several other houses on Slade Street including 223-225 Slade Street and 234 Slade Street, and another house for himself at 21 Knox Road (no longer extant). Many of the buildings he designed were of concrete, fireproof construction. Examples of his work were published in a number of early 20th century journals including *Carpentry and Building*, *The Builder's Journal* and *Concrete*. In 1929 Wigglesworth was awarded a patent for a tie for binding spaced walls together. The Common Street and Slade Street houses are credited to Bates & Wigglesworth, Architects and Engineers. His partner, Stacy C. Bates graduated from MIT in 1911. It appears that Wigglesworth did not always primarily work as an architect. Draft records indicate that in 1917 he was chief draftsman for the John H. Hammond Jr. Cruft Laboratory in Cambridge and at the time of World War II he was an engineer for Fay Spofford and Thorndike in Boston. Wigglesworth was still living in Belmont in 1955 but died in Newburgh, New York in 1958.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com.

Belmont Directories, various dates.

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.*Concrete*, January 1922.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA

Robbins, Samuel Dowse. *Who's Who in Belmont*. Belmont: 1972.

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.

Williams, Judy. Inventory form for 256 Slade Street (BLM.106), 1982.

Williams, Judy. Area form for Common Street Associates Subdivision (Area AQ), 1982.

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.

Constructed in 1922, the Martin Powers House at 256 Slade Street is eligible for the National Register, Criterion C, as a unique local example of an early 20th century reinforced concrete single family dwelling. It was designed by local architect Victor Wigglesworth (1885-1958). Many of the buildings he designed were of concrete, fireproof construction and examples of his work were published in a number of early 20th century journals. In 1929 he was also awarded a patent for a tie binding spaced walls together. This house appears to be the only remaining example of Wigglesworth's reinforced concrete designs.