

Walnut Hill

The Walnut Hill area is located near the center of Belmont and is bounded on the west by Common Street, north by Fairmont Street, east by Goden Street and south by Hillcrest Road. Initially laid out in 1910, it was developed over more than twenty years, giving it a diversity of architectural styles. Many of the homes have beautifully landscaped settings.

Walnut Hill was one of about thirteen major subdivisions laid out in Belmont between 1898 and 1912. Unlike some of the other subdivisions it was developed gradually, lot-by-lot over more than twenty years. The land was subdivided in 1910 by prominent resident, Winthrop L. Chenery, who was a fruit farmer and held various positions in town government. Chenery's subdivision took its name from his father's farm, which was once located on the west side of Common Street. The Queen Anne house at 19 Fairmont Street was originally built by W.L. Chenery in 1886 on the east side of Common Street. It was moved to its current location in 1914 when the area was subdivided.



19 Fairmont Street

Several other residences in the neighborhood also predate the 1910 subdivision. The house at 35 Cedar Road is a Shingle Style residence constructed for M. Abbott Frazar, a Boston taxidermist and furrier, about 1890. It is notable for retaining an original period carriage house. Other pre-1898 houses are visible at 49 and 56 Fairmont Street.



35 Cedar Road

In order to preserve the character of the neighborhood W.L. Chenery distributed lots in the subdivision to “desirable purchasers”. The result is a collection of diverse, architect-designed early 20th century residences in a range of styles. The earliest houses, built between 1910 and 1920, are especially noteworthy. Most of them display stuccoed exteriors, a material that was popular during this period nationwide but was not all that common in Belmont.



26 Cedar Road

One of the earliest houses constructed in the subdivision is 26 Cedar Road, built for Howard Stone in 1911. It is unusual in that it was designed as a two-family. A variation on the Craftsman style, it was designed by local architect H. Thaxter Underwood, the same year he designed the locker rooms/bathhouse for the Underwood Pool. The house was featured in the real estate brochure that advertised the Walnut Hill development. A couple of years later Underwood also designed the brick Colonial at 36 Hillcrest Road.

Two houses in Walnut Hill were designed by MIT-trained architect, Allen Winchester Jackson. The house at 200 Common Street is a good and fairly early example of the English Revival style, dating to 1912. It was built for Thomas Ticknor, publisher of the Riverside Press in Cambridge. The same year Jackson also designed the Classical/Colonial Revival dwelling at 16 Cedar Road for Mary Dodd, the widow of a Boston banker.



200 Common Street



16 Cedar Road

Another local architect, Victor Wigglesworth, designed two very different residences at Walnut Hill for members of the same family. Emory Chaffee, a Somerville druggist who was also active in real estate, built the house at 24 Cedar Road in 1913. The well-preserved house is a rare local example of the Prairie Style. Two years later, Wigglesworth designed the English cottage at 20 Highland Road for Chaffee's son, also Emory Chaffee, who was a physicist.



24 Cedar Road



20 Highland Road

The house at 41 Cedar Road is a Craftsman variation on the Dutch Colonial style, with a stuccoed façade and typical gambrel roof. It was constructed about 1915 for Dr. Roger Taft, a dentist. It was designed by Boston architect Louis Grandgent and photos and plans of the house were published in three national publications – *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Forum* and *Architectural Record*. According to the architects, “the design of the house reflects the challenge of designing a small, compact yet attractive house of moderate cost”.



41 Cedar Road, Architectural Record, 1920



41 Cedar Road today

Not all of the houses in Walnut Hill were designed by professional architects. The stuccoed bungalow at 89 Hillcrest Road was reportedly designed by its original owner, Herbert Magoun, who built the house in 1922 with two carpenters and his two sons at the age of 66. Dr. Magoun was an author and educator who specialized in Greek and Latin studies.



89 Hillcrest Road

After 1920 construction continued to occur on scattered lots throughout Walnut Hill. These houses tended to be less architecturally distinguished, representing variations on several historical revival styles. These include large Colonial Revival dwellings such as 66 Hillcrest Road, a Spanish Colonial at 33 Hillcrest Road and numerous Dutch Colonials on Fairmont Street.

Walnut Hill at Belmont



An old Colonial property, with deeds vested in one family for many generations, is now offered for sale in lots suitable for single family houses of a high class.

This land is on a hillside of gradual ascent, with fine old trees, and commands a wide and beautiful outlook for many miles over the surrounding country. A portion of this estate was known as King's Common before The Restoration, and some lovers of old nomenclature still apply the ancient name.

Churches of several denominations are within the immediate vicinity, Belmont schools of all grades are near, and all well known for their excellence. The Oakley Country Club is within easy walking distance, and The Belmont Spring Country Club may be reached by auto in a few minutes.

Some of these lots are but seven minutes' walk from the Railway Station, and trolley cars leaving Belmont every fifteen minutes for the Subway trains make the trip to Park Street about twenty-eight minutes.

Every part of the property has facilities for electric light, gas, and town water.

It is the intention of the owner of this property to distribute lots carefully to desirable purchasers, to maintain the character of the neighborhood already established.

Belmont is a growing town of the best traditions, but hitherto an extreme conservatism has kept much of the best building land out of the market. But opportunity is now given for investment in choice sites on this and other estates for those seeking an attractive home for themselves and their children in a town well known for excellent local government, refined society, and solid educational advantages. Belmont is so near to Cambridge that the students studying at Harvard often prefer to live at home.

Suitable, but not burdensome, restrictions are placed upon these lots.

Address, for further particulars, Charles S. Scott, Real Estate Agent, Waverley, or Charles E. Trenholm, Real Estate Agent, Belmont.

"Fly toward Belmont."
Merchant of Venice.

Ca. 1910 Real Estate Brochure for Walnut Hill