

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

5-108	Boston North	B	BLM.843
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**Town/City:** Belmont

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 52 Willow Street

**Historic Name:** John A. L. Odde House

**Uses:** Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** 1905

**Source:** *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 29, 1905

**Style/Form:** Shingle Style

**Architect/Builder:** Charles R. Greco, architect

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: fieldstone

Wall/Trim: wood shingle, wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

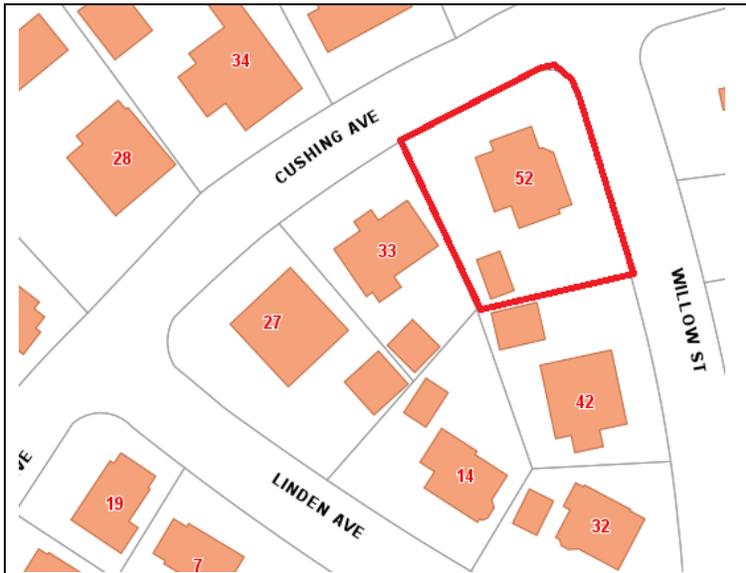
### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

garage (1932)

### Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1991, 2011 – rear additions

## Locus Map (north at top)



**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 10,553 SF

**Setting:** neighborhood of early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings on small, informally landscaped lots

**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Belmont Historic District Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): July 2014

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

52 WILLOW STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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 52 Willow Street is a variation on the Shingle Style which was popular in many of Belmont's late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century subdivisions. The two-story dwelling is capped by a hip roof with flared, overhanging eaves with bold modillions. The wood shingles cover the building like a skin, flaring slightly above the first floor and even wrapping around the front porch posts and the brackets supporting the porch gable. Emphasizing the asymmetry of the façade is an off-center two-story projection with conical roof adjacent to the front porch. There are oriel windows on each end and an enclosed porch on the rear elevation.

The house is set on a level, informally landscaped corner lot. To the southwest of the house is a wood shingled garage with hip roof and exposed rafter tails, constructed in 1932. It is accessed by a driveway extending to the west of the house from Cushing Avenue.

## 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 located within the Payson Park subdivision which occupies land that was originally part of J.P. Cushing's estate, "Bellmont". After Cushing's death in 1862, the estate was purchased by Samuel Payson who sold the property to the Payson Park Land Company in 1886. The former estate was developed in three stages between 1886 and 1920 by the trustees who included Costello Converse of Malden, William Faxon, Jr. of Cohasset and Andrew Reed of Belmont. Willow Street was laid out in 1889 and the houses on the street date from 1902 to 1928, fueled in large part by the arrival of the nearby streetcar line in 1898.

This was Lot 222 of the Payson Park Land Company plan. The lot had not yet been sold at the time of the 1898 Payson Park Plan. On April 29, 1905 the *Cambridge Chronicle* reported that John L. Odde had broken ground on his lot at the corner of Cushing Avenue and Willow Street. The Town of Belmont granted a building permit to Edna Odde, wife of John. On May 27, 1905, the *Cambridge Chronicle* reported that "the contractor putting in the cellar...has purchased the wall on Common Street and is using the stone for that purpose". The architect of the house was Charles R. Greco of Cambridge. John A.L. Odde, Jr. is listed in the 1907 directory as living at 52 Willow Street. Odde lived here with his wife Edna and his mother-in-law, Emma Soule. He is listed as a real estate broker in early directories and by 1918 he was a lawyer.

By 1927 the house was serving as the parsonage for the Payson Park Church. Rev. David Beach, lived here in the early 1930s with his wife Marguerite, four daughters and one son. In the 1940s and 1950s it was occupied by Rev. and Mrs. Richard Bennett. In 1953 the house was sold by the Congregational Church to Donald and Ruth Griffin. Later owners included Richard and Mary Blue (1967-1972), William and Margaret Weiler (1972-1991) and Edward and Madeleine Gromada (1991-2001). The present owners, Benjamin Bauer and Susan Gonzalez, purchased the house in 2001.

The house at 52 Willow Street was designed by Cambridge architect Charles R. Greco (1873-1963). Greco graduated from English High School in 1892 and took engineering courses at Harvard. He worked for the firms of Waite & Cutter and Peabody & Stearns before forming his own practice in 1908. He designed a large number of buildings in the Boston area, primarily schools and municipal buildings. In Belmont, he was also the architect for the commercial building at 185 Belmont Street (BLM.535) in 1912.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).* Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.
- Cambridge Chronicle*, April 29, 1905; May 27, 1905.
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- Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915, 1922, 1931, 1949.
- Stadley, George W. *Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington.* 1898.
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- U.S. Census, various dates.