

# Brookline Preservation Commission Demolition Application Report

Address: 492 Clinton Road

Petitioner: Chin Hur and Hye-Chun Hur

Building type: Partial demolition - removal of roof of house

National Register Listing (if Applicable): n/a



## Historical/Architectural Significance:

This wood frame, brick Colonial revival-style veneer house was built in 1956 by J.D. Builders, Inc., of Newton and designed by architect Walter Greymont, whose studio was on Bowers Street in Newtonville. Among its character-defining features are the running bond brickwork with quoins on the front corners and the hip roof. The facade consists of three bays; fenestration includes a prominent centered entryway with a decorative surround, picture windows on the first story and paired four-over-four sash on the second story, where the lintels blend into the roof cornice.

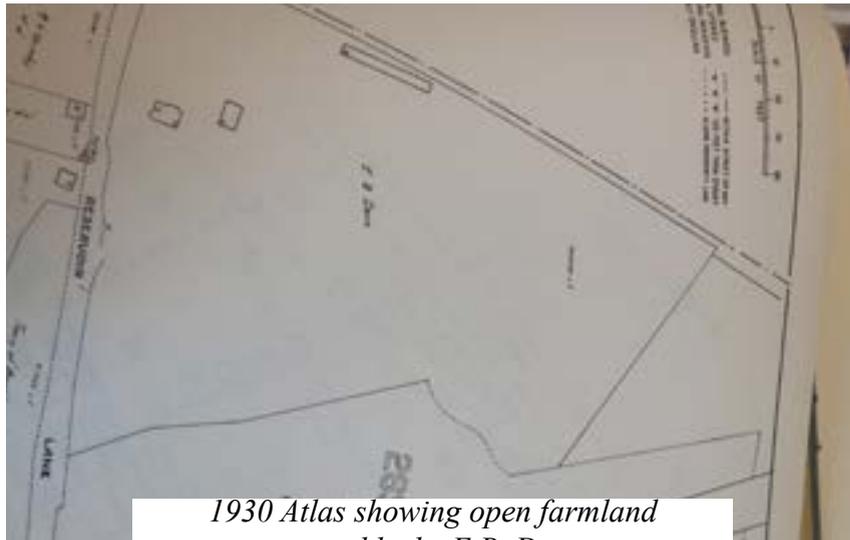
The Turner family lived in the house in the 1950s and 60s. This section of Clinton Road west of Eliot Street, which ends in a cul-de-sac near Reservoir Lane, was laid out in the mid-1950s. Lots were built upon or sold in quick succession by J.D. Builders, Inc. between 1956 and 1960. Walter Greymont designed at least thirteen of the twenty-four houses. The majority of the houses are ranches, raised ranches and split levels with low profiles and eave-fronts. True to the convention of mid-20th century subdivision layouts, the longer elevations of nearly all the houses face the street.



*535, 529, 536, 521, 515, 503, 520, 497, 506, 500, 492, 485, 486,  
Houses designed by Walter Greymont and constructed by J.D. Builders, Inc. on Clinton Road*



This house was the first to be designed and built on this section of Clinton Road, perhaps accounting for its anomalous style, form and height among the less traditional, long and low ranches and split-levels that make up the majority of houses. Its low-pitched roof, however, contributes to sense of openness along the streetscape.



*1930 Atlas showing open farmland  
owned by E.B. Dane*



*1956 Atlas of Clinton Rd - no. 220*

Walter Greymont (c.1905-1980) trained as an architect at MIT and received his degree in 1930. He designed a number of Colonial revival houses in the 1930s and 40s in Brookline, for example on Ogden, Risley, and Arlington Road and on South Street, and in other towns in the metro area. After the war he partnered with architect Bela Szikla for a few years. Many of his post-war houses were less traditional ranches and split levels. In the 1950s Greymont was involved, perhaps as a financial partner, in at least two speculative land developments: this one on Clinton Road and an earlier one in the in Newton. There partnered with builder Joseph Selwyn to design and build housed close to the Oak Hill neighborhood.

From *An Overview of Post-World War II Housing and its Significance in Newton, Massachusetts*, by Neil Larson

“Oak Hill Park has already been recognized by the Newton Historical Commission as a distinctive component of the architectural and social history of the city. This 412-unit housing development ranks with the likes of Levittown as a textbook example of the design and planning of a Post-WWII housing project for returning veterans. Unlike Levittown, it is little known outside of the city (cont.)



“This house type is characterized by the small-scaled, simply designed, and economically constructed dwellings that were approved for FHA-insured mortgages in the 1940’s and 1950’s. The predominant house styles were capes and ranches, with the latter emerging as epitomizing the type. While one documented veterans’ housing project took place in Newton in 1948, there are a number of other, smaller groupings and individual houses in the city where it is apparent that some FHA-approved model was utilized.

A different type of veterans’ housing project was undertaken in Brookline, Massachusetts, where a large number of attached, townhouse units were built. Undoubtedly, other housing projects developed in the Boston area as well as in New England in the period following the war, but until a systematic survey is done, the extent of this phenomenon will not be known. This eventual knowledge will only enhance the significance of Oak Hill Park...

from *Other Developments of Veterans' Housing*:

Two additional developments utilize house types that suggest that they were planned FHA-backed projects. There are a few Ranch Houses on Edward Road in West Newton that appear to be identical to those erected in Oak Hill Park, although a number of lots on that street now contain new houses that apparently replaced more of them. While larger than those in Oak Hill Park, the Ranch houses built on Selwyn Road between Newton Upper Falls and Oak Hill also appear to have been part of an affordable housing project in the era. Moreover, the identical brick Capes on Sylvester and Russell Roads in West Newton are of a scale and design that infers some form of government-supported project. Further research into the history of these developments, as well as dozens of others, is necessary to place them in historical contexts and evaluate their significance.”

More research on Walter Greymont may reveal more about his career and body of work.



*Houses by Greymont along Selwyn Road in Newton*

August 2014

The house at 492 Clinton Road meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the Town or Commonwealth; and

d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The house retains its integrity in terms of its location setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. It forms part of the group of houses along this section of Clinton Road built between 1956 and 1960, the majority of them designed by Walter Greymont and constructed by J.D. Builders, Inc.



*Other houses by Greymont along Clinton Road*

