



Neighborhood Conservation Districts ~ NCD's
"Giving Neighborhoods a Voice"

The following material comes from the Standish Road NCD Study Committee's work preparing its report.

Did you know?

Our neighborhood, the Standish Road area, represents one of the largest collections of houses designed by world-renowned architect Royal Barry Wills in Massachusetts. There are twenty-one houses where Wills is listed as the architect on the building permit. Another twenty-five houses may be attributed directly to him, but the building permits no longer exist or are incomplete. Fifteen other houses are derivative, designed by architects who admired his work and who deliberately adapted significant design elements from it.

Wills, who graduated from MIT, began his architectural practice in 1925. At that time, most architect-designed buildings were corporate, municipal or large residences specifically created for wealthy individuals. The style of these buildings had European roots: classical Greek and Roman, French chateau, Italianate, and Queen Anne Victorian. Ordinary houses simply were built, not designed. Wills returned to the origin of American architecture – the Cape Cod style – and began to adapt it for vernacular construction. And although Wills is thought of as the father of the Cape Cod style, even his early work includes more elegant Colonials, elegant because of their restraint and proportions. Almost singlehandedly, Wills transformed residential architecture in the first half of the 20th Century, making well-designed homes available for everyone. His efforts popularized the Colonial Revival movement throughout America, but he started building in Massachusetts.

In fact, a 1946 article in *Life Magazine* featured some of Wills' houses, including a photograph of 9 Standish Road. 1 Standish Road was profiled in Wills' book, *Houses For Good Living*, and the floor plans for 36 Standish Road and 68 Standish Road, among others, appear in several of Wills' books.

Notes about Neighborhood Character

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