

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

6-138	Boston North	D	BLM.739
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**Town/City:** Belmont

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 45 Chester Road

**Historic Name:** Desnoyers Two Family

**Uses:** Present: two family dwelling

Original: two family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** 1917

**Source:** building permit

**Style/Form:** Craftsman Colonial

**Architect/Builder:** August Johnson, builder

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: asbestos shingles, wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**  
garage (1917)

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

**Condition:** good

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

**Acreage:** 5,028 SF

**Setting:** block of early 20<sup>th</sup> century one and two-family dwellings

## Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Belmont Historic District Commission

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

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

45 CHESTER ROAD

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.*

Set amongst a block of similar but varied one and two-story dwellings, 45 Chester Road is a good example of a Craftsman Colonial style duplex dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house rests on a concrete-faced foundation and is clad in asbestos shingles. The two-family dwelling is arranged with one unit over the other, sharing a common sidehall entrance. Characteristic of the style, the house is capped by a hip roof with projecting eaves and exposed rafter tails and there are hipped dormers of the same design. The house originally had a slate roof; it is not known when the slate was replaced with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney punctuates the eaves on the west wall. A two-story, two bay porch spans the façade, supported by paired posts. On the first floor the posts rest on a shingled wall and have a gridded arched trellis panel between the posts. Upstairs there are smaller gridded panels between the posts with a stick balustrade. The fenestration is the same from floor to floor and includes a tripartite set of 6/1 windows on each level of the façade and west elevation. Other windows contain 6/1 or 4/1 sash. An enclosed, two-story porch spans the rear elevation.

The small (5,028 SF) lot has a small area of plantings between the house and the sidewalk. A paved driveway extends along the west side of the house, terminating at a flat roofed, concrete block two-car garage (1917).

## 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.*

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century William H. Poole, a piano manufacturer who lived at 386 Common Street, owned land in Belmont south of Washington Street and east of Common Street. In 1904 he purchased an 8.5 acre piece in the Chester Road area from the Whitney Estate. In 1910 he bought an additional 12.5 acre section from Mrs. Mercy Woodin, giving him 21 acres between Washington Street and Payson Park. Poole died in 1915 and in 1916 the land was sold to Francis H. Benson who subdivided it. The tract was quickly developed into modest suburban one and two family homes, many of which were built on speculation. Development was fueled by proximity to the streetcar line and the success of the nearby Payson Park Land Company's ventures.

This particular lot (Lot 12 on the 1916 plan) was one of several sold by Francis Benson to painting contractor and builder August Johnson of Somerville in 1916 (Book 4067, Page 83). Johnson also purchased lots 44 and 45 and 13-16. Johnson was born in Sweden in 1885 and came to this country in 1901. He began his career as a house painter and by the 1930s was a respected contractor of homes with developments in Brookline (Laurel and Woodland Roads) and Belmont (Belmont Hill Village). According to the January 1917 building permit, Fred Meyers of Allston built the house for August Johnson.

In 1917 August Johnson sold the completed duplex including a concrete block garage to Emma Florence Desnoyers, wife of Hector Desnoyers (Book 4158, Page 74). The sale was subject to a \$5,000 mortgage. Hector Desnoyers was born in Canada and immigrated to this country in 1896. He worked as a real estate broker in Boston. His wife was born in Massachusetts. The couple occupied one unit while renting out the other apartment to a variety of professional tenants. In 1959 Belmont Building Department records indicate that the building required repairs after an explosion. The property was sold by Emma Desnoyers' estate in 1961 to Albert Hesselschwerdt (Book 9834, Page 157). He sold the property in 1972 to Margaretta Doty. David Mancini purchased the house in 1988 (Book 19298, Page 531).

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