

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

48-38

Boston
North

BA

BLM.807

Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Belmont Hill

Address: 48 Prentiss Lane

Historic Name: Dr. Zachary Mollica House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1931

Source: building permit

Style/Form: Colonial Revival/French Provincial

Architect/Builder: James MacNaughton, arch.;
Harry Demone, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: brick

Roof: slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1996 – new front door

2011 – new windows

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 13,738 SF

Setting: neighborhood of architect designed early 20th
century houses on well landscaped lots

Photograph



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

48 PRENTISS LANE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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 48 Prentiss Lane is a ca.1930 century interpretation mixing French Provincial and Colonial Revival styles. The two-story, 3 x 2-bay brick dwelling is constructed of veneer brick with details including brick corner quoins, a frieze of soldier brick, brick window sills and small rectangular areas of perforated brick screen on either side of the segmentally arched center entrance. The entire center bay on the façade is faced with concrete from the ground to the roof and includes rusticated quoin details, a keystone and entablature highlighting the front door. Above the entrance there is a segmentally arched opening containing a 6/6 window. The remaining façade openings are rectangular with 12/12 sash on the first floor and 8/8 windows upstairs. Other windows on the lesser elevations contain casement units. The house is capped by a steeply pitched hip roof which is clad in slate and has small arched dormers on all but the front slope. A large brick chimney rises from the flat top.

In front of the house there is a semicircular gravel drive with a rough fieldstone wall along the road and granite posts marking the driveway.

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 was part of the Belmont Hill Company's second development area. In April 1925 George Prentiss and Arthur Fletcher, Trustees of the Company, applied to subdivide land that had been owned by J. Varnum Fletcher, George Prentiss and George Lawrence. The subdivision laid out what is now Fletcher Road, Prentiss Lane and Tyler Road. This property constitutes Lot 10 on the plan of Prentiss Lane (Plan 3404) filed in 1931 by Charles Trenholm and the Belmont Hill Associates. The land was originally owned by George Prentiss. A building permit was issued in March 1931 to Charles Trenholm. James MacNaughton was the architect and Harry Demone was the builder.

The first owners appear to have been Dr. and Mrs. Zachary Mollica who are listed as the occupants in the 1932 directory. Dr. Mollica was born in New York City in 1888 and died in Belmont in 1938. The house was later occupied by Henry A. Fonda (1887-1958) and his wife Marjorie. Later occupants included Harvard President Derek Bok and his wife Sissela Ann and Judith Gardner. The house was sold by Gardner's estate in 1996 to the present owners, Barton and Jane Henderson.

The architect of the house, James H. MacNaughton (1883-1961), was born in New Brunswick, Canada in 1886 and moved to the United States in 1903. He was a 1909 graduate of the Williston Northhampton School in Easthampton, Massachusetts. He studied architecture at Syracuse University and after graduating in 1913 worked for the noted architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge in Boston, living in Watertown. In the late 1910s he entered a partnership with architect George Ernest Robinson that lasted at least into the mid 1920s. During the 1930s he established his own general architectural practice and executed a number of residential commissions including the Potter House at 99 Seaver Street in Brookline (1936, BKL.2093).

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