

FORM B – BUILDING

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

53-78	Boston North	BC	BLM.836
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: Belmont

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

Address: 59 Village Hill Road

Historic Name: Jordan Marsh Model House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1935

Source: building permit

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: John T. Lee, architect

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: brick

Roof: asphalt shingles, tar & gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
2005- addition

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 10,000 SF

Setting: corner lot in early 20th century residential subdivision

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

59 VILLAGE HILL ROAD

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 59 Village Hill Road has seen several large additions in recent years but is of interest historically as a unique example of an early 20th century Colonial "model" house erected by a major Boston retailer. The original portion of the house is the two-story, brick section to the north, consisting of a front section two bays wide and an offset wing to the northeast that has a single bay facing west. The single-story section projecting at the northwest corner was originally a single-car garage. Ornament on the brick Colonial was minimal, confined to brick exterior chimneys and brick trim along the cornice. Windows contain 6/6 sash with blinds. The front porch is a later addition as is the balustrade on the former garage and the matching single-story brick wing on the south side. A large addition (2005) at the southeast corner of the original house repeats the massing and roofline of the original house but is clad in weatherboard siding. A two-car garage on the lower level of the addition faces south.

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.

The house at 59 Village Hill Road is of interest as a rare and unusual example of an early 20th century model home. According to an article appearing in the *Belmont Citizen*, this house was one of seven model homes erected by Jordan Marsh Co. in suburban communities in 1935. The land was owned by Jordan Marsh and was located within the Belmont Hill Village subdivision developed by August Johnson Associates between 1935 and 1939, just after the Concord Turnpike was built in 1934. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held simultaneously in the seven communities on Saturday morning, June 15, 1935. The Belmont ceremony was preceded by an automobile parade which started at Belmont Center square. Selectman George McLaughlin turned over the first sod with a silver spade presented to him by Carroll Robinson of the Jordan Marsh Co. Also speaking was D. George Sullivan of the Federal Housing Administration. There were also police motorcycles headed by Chief John O'Brien and the Waverley Post V.F.W. Band. (*Belmont Citizen*, June 14 & 21, 1935).

The identities of the six other communities where model homes were built are not known nor is the reason for the construction of the model homes specified. It appears likely that Jordan Marsh was trying to compete with other companies publishing house plans such as Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. According to the 1935 building permit, John T. Lee of Jordan Marsh Home Development Plan, Inc. was the architect and the cost of the dwelling was \$10,000. The following year *The Jordan Marsh Company Home Development Plan* was published. The only known copy of the 22-page oversized book is in the collection of MIT's Rotch library as of this writing (2014). Several years later Jordan Marsh decorated and furnished a house in Brookline, designed by Royal Barry Wills and built by Homer T. Brown. The house was one of several model homes built throughout the country, sponsored by Life Magazine (*Boston Globe*, June 11, 1939).

Deed records indicate that in 1936 the Home Development Inc. sold the property to Irving S. and Dorothy B. Hill (MCRD Book 6056, Page 181). The couple had married in September 1919 in Cambridge. Dorothy Hildreth Black was a Wellesley College graduate and worked in publishing while Irving Sylvester Hill was an insurance agent. The 1940 Census shows them living at 59 Village Hill Road with their daughter Marjorie (18) and son Walter (15). In 1957 Dorothy Black Hill published her book, *Abraham: His Heritage and Ours*, and the couple apparently moved to Warner, New Hampshire. They sold the house in 1957 to James and Lillian Snow who sold it two years later to Andrew and Eleanor Quin (MCRD Book 9393, Page 85). The property was sold by Andrew Quin's estate in 1992. Kerim Munir sold the house to Domenic and Alison Dicienzo in 2005. They continue to own it today.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Belmont Citizen, June 14 & 21, 1935.

Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named* (2nd edition). Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.

Cambridge Chronicle, September 20, 1919 [marriage of Dorothy Black and Irving Hill].

Flynn, Kay. Area form for Belmont Hill Village, Belmont, Area BLM.BC, 1982.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA

"Model Cape Colonial Opened for Inspection in Brookline", *Boston Globe*, June 11, 1939.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915, 1922, 1931, 1949.

Town of Belmont, Building Department files.



Assessors Photo – Prior to 2005 addition