

FORM B – BUILDING

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

50-39	Boston North	AZ	BLM.145
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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

Address: 32 Rockmont Road

Historic Name: James Connelly House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: 1929

Source: building permit

Style/Form: Spanish Eclectic

Architect/Builder: Hugh MacDonald, bldr.

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: stucco

Roof: tile

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 30,448 SF

Setting: neighborhood of early 20th century dwellings on generous level lots

Photograph



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): July 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

32 ROCKMONT 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 32 Rockmont Road is a two-story stuccoed dwelling with a cross hip plan. As is typical the roof is covered in a red tile and the brick chimneys also have tile-roofed tops. The main entrance contains an arched wooden door with large iron hinges and a quoined surround. The single-story entrance vestibule has a flat roof with curved parapet. There is a mix of rectangular and arched casement windows glazed with multiple panes of rectangular glass. At the east end of the house is an enclosed sunporch with a two-car garage underneath.

The large informally landscaped lot has a flagstone front walk, large pine trees and rhododendrons in the front yard and many planting beds.

The house is one of the few early 20th century Spanish Eclectic dwellings in Belmont. See also 171 School Street and 225 School Street (BLM.391). According to building permits, 225 School Street was constructed by the same builder.

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 32 Rockmont Road is located within the first phase of development of the Belmont Hill Company. In 1918 Henry O. Underwood formed the Company with other prominent local residents. They bought land on Belmont Hill with a goal of developing it slowly, in the way they thought was in the best interest of the town. The houses were built between 1920 and 1932 on lots ranging from .75 acre to three acres, laid out by Loring Underwood, landscape architect. Almost all of the 39 houses were built in the English Revival or Colonial Revival styles of architecture.

Hugh MacDonald, a local carpenter/builder was given a building permit for the construction of 32 Rockmont in December 1928; the house had an estimated value of \$12,000. This was lot 24 on the 1921 plan and measured 30,449 SF. MacDonald was born in Canada about 1875 and came to this country about 1895. He lived in a modest house at 15 Essex Road in Belmont in the late 1920s but had moved by 1932. It is likely that he got the Spanish Revival design for 32 Rockmont Road from a book of building plans, a common source of the period. MacDonald worked in a variety of styles. Belmont Building Department records indicate that he was also the builder for a Dutch Colonial residence at 21 Pequossette, a Colonial Revival dwelling at 44 Clairemont and another Spanish Revival house at 225 School Street (BLM.391).

In October 1929 Hugh MacDonald sold the stuccoed dwelling with attached garage to Arthur W. Wood, an Arlington investment banker (Book 5404, Page 119). There is no indication that Wood ever occupied the house; in 1936 he gave Rose Connelly a quit claim deed. The property was owned by James and Rose Connelly until 1960.

James Connelly was born about 1898 and worked as the manager of a loan company. In 1940 he was living here with his wife, daughter Joan and a maid. In 1960 the Connelys sold the property to Frank and Luise Cahill who owned it until 1979. It was owned by Medea Herman and the MEDA Trust from 1979 to 1999. James Charnesky purchased the property in 1999 (Book 30755, Page 399). It is still owned by James Charnesky and Hana Maria Laznickova today.

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