

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

3-147	Boston North	C	BLM.22
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Town/City: Belmont

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

Address: 351 Belmont Street

Historic Name: Payson Park Congregational Church

Uses: Present: church

Original: church

Date of Construction: 1915

Source: building permits, church history

Style/Form: Gothic Revival

Architect/Builder: Newhall & Blevins, arch. (1915)
W.H. McLean, parish house arch. (1929)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: granite

Wall/Trim: stone

Roof: slate, rubber

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1929 – construction of parish house to west of original church

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 29,928 SF

Setting: well-landscaped lot on heavily travelled road at edge of residential district

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

351 BELMONT STREET

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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.

Located at the corner of Payson Road and Belmont Street, the Payson Park Congregational Church is an early 20th century church in the Gothic Revival style constructed of seam-faced granite and dominated by a square four-story front tower with crenellated top and window openings that are rectangular with diamond panes except for a pointed arch over the entrance filled with lobed tracery. The tower is fronted by a single-story stone vestibule with a label mold and inscription "Love Never Fails" in the stones over the Tudor archway containing double doors. Two-story, flat-roofed stone wings without crenelation flank either side of the tower with gabled entries flanked by decorative stone buttresses. To the rear the sanctuary is capped by a gable roof sheathed in slate shingles with pointed arch window openings.

Attached to the west of the original 1915 church structure is a large parish house addition constructed in a complementary style in 1929. The two-story building is capped by a slate roof and presents a nearly symmetrical façade to Belmont Street with a central gabled entry flanked by two-story gables that project slightly. Fenestration on the parish house includes rectangular openings with multi-paned casements and double-hung units arranged in groups of two and three. Two-story sections extend behind the façade but are not visible from the street.

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 Payson Park Congregational Church was the third Congregational Church established in the town of Belmont – after the First Congregational Church of Waverley in 1865 and the Plymouth Congregational Church in 1899. It was established to serve the rapidly developing Payson Park section of town. Local resident Francis Loring of 7 Oak Avenue began discussions with neighborhood residents in the fall of 1912 and on Easter Sunday March 23, 1913 160 people gathered in the small stone Benton chapel to participate in the first service. Formal recognition of the new congregation was received on June 3, 1913 and there were seventy-two charter members made up of 31 men and 41 women, including many from other denominations.

The cornerstone of the church was laid on July 12, 1915. The architects of the church were Newhall & Blevins - Louis Chappell Newhall (1869-1925) and Albert Blevins (1874-1946) who had started their large and successful practice about 1900. The contractors for the church were Allen & Loomer, builders. Alonzo Allen was a member of the church. The auditorium had a seating capacity of about 280 and by opening the doors of the adjacent Sunday School room, it was increased to 500. The first floor of the Sunday school room had seven classrooms and the balcony the same number. Three large classrooms located in the tower would accommodate 150; two of the classrooms had fireplaces. Windows in chancel were designed/executed by Joseph G. Reynolds (1886-1972), a leader of the Boston Neo-Gothic stained glass movement.

The cornerstone for the parish house was laid on June 9, 1929. The parish house addition was designed by Boston architect William H. McLean (1870-1942). In 1943 a worship center for children was built in the Parish House. It is known as Mabry Chapel.

The original church architects Newhall & Blevins designed schools, churches, hotels and private residences throughout the Boston area and were considered one of the leading architectural offices in the city for more than twenty years. Newhall graduated from MIT and Blevins was a Harvard graduate. Among their ecclesiastical designs were the Faulkner Methodist Church (fieldstone, stucco and half timbering) in Malden (1907); the Lynn Second Congregational Church and Chapel (1909) and the Third Congregational Church in Cambridge, also of granite (1911).

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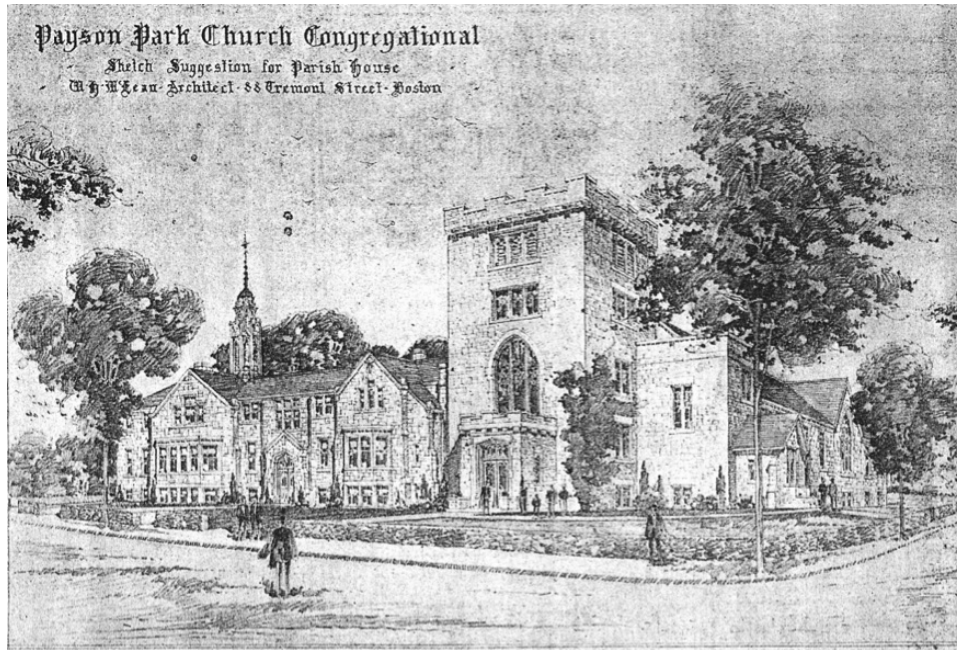
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Sketch for Parish House by W.H. McLean, Architect
Source: Belmont Historical Society



Parish House Addition, 1928

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Original 1915 church

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by Lisa Mausolf
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Payson Park Congregational Church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C and Criterion Consideration A as an excellent example of an early 20th century Gothic Revival church building, designed in 1915 by prominent Cambridge architects Newhall & Blevins with a parish house addition added in 1929, designed by Boston architect William H. McLean. The restrained stone building is typical of the early 20th century phase of the style and incorporates a four-story tower as well as other typical details including crenellation, diamond-paned windows, label molds, buttresses and arched openings. The Church is also eligible under Criterion A for its associations with the growth of the Payson Park neighborhood. The area was developed in three stages between 1886 and 1920 by the Payson Park Land Company and reflects the impact of the accessibility generated by the streetcar and automobile. This was the earliest of the three churches that developed in the Payson Park/Cushing Square neighborhood - the others were Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church (1926; no longer extant) and the Belmont United Methodist Church (1939).