

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

45-37	Boston North		BLM.802
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Photograph



Address: 300 Pleasant Street

Historic Name: Evangel Baptist Church

Uses: Present: church

Original: church

Date of Construction: 1949

Source: *Belmont Citizen*, March 4, 1949

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Harold A. Palmborg, engineer
Arthur Nilsson, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete blocks

Wall/Trim: concrete blocks, stucco, wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

rectory (1953)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1962 – addition to rear and front vestibule addition

1977 – fiberglass steeple

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 27,782 SF

Setting: on major thoroughfare in densely settled mixed-use area near Rt. 2

Locus Map



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): October 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

300 PLEASANT STREET

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.

Located near Rt. 2, the Evangel Baptist Church was built over a number of years beginning with the construction of a concrete block basement in 1949 by male members of the congregation. The main portion of the building consists of a single-story concrete block structure with stuccoed finish, oriented with its gable end facing Pleasant Street. Colonial Revival-inspired features include corner quoins, a two-part frieze and arched, multi-light windows lighting the sanctuary with raised keystones and impost blocks. The front gable is sheathed in boards and a two-stage square tower projects from the front with corner quoins and a stick balustrade. The fiberglass steeple on top was installed in 1977.

The original building is fronted by a later (1962?) vestibule addition that is also stuccoed and outlined by fluted cornerboards. Centered on the front is a double-doored entrance with fluted pilasters and transom. An oval window is located in the boarded pediment above and rectangular double-hung windows punctuate the side walls. Extending to the southwest is a two-story ell added in 1962 with rectangular 12/12 windows on the first floor and 8/8 windows in the basement.

The church is set close to Pleasant Street on a level open lot measuring approximately a half acre. There is a small area of lawn in front of the building and to the east while a large parking lot extends to the rear. To the southeast of the church is a single-story, gable-roofed rectory constructed in 1953.

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 Evangel Baptist Church was constructed in 1949 on land that was historically owned by the Frost family and later by George Tobey who had married Gertrude Frost, the daughter of Sylvester Frost, in 1900. Tobey operated a florist business (G.E. Tobey and Son Florists) on twenty acres of land along Lake Street between Pleasant and Cross Streets with eight greenhouses, four of which were for carnations. The land on which the church stands was later owned by Armstrong Knitting Mills. Building department records indicate that burnt materials were removed from the site in January 1946.

The Evangel Baptist Church was formerly known as the First Swedish Congregational Church of Cambridge which was incorporated on July 31, 1896. In 1946 the congregation sold its Cambridge property and established itself in Belmont, home of many members of its congregation. Initially the church held services in the Masonic Building at Belmont Center. The cornerstone for the church was laid in November 1948. Much of the construction was accomplished by men of the church under the supervision of their pastor, Rev. Harry Aronson, who was a contractor prior to entering the ministry. According to building permits, the building was designed by Harold Palmborg, a draftsman/registered engineer from Needham. The builder was Arthur Nilsson of Dedham.

The initial building permit given to the congregation in 1948 was to construct the basement of a future church with concrete block walls. The basement portion of the building was dedicated in March 1949. According to a brief article in the *Belmont Citizen*, "though the present building is of but one story, a gabled front and small spire give it the appearance of added height" (*Belmont Citizen*, March 4, 1949). An illustration of the initial building being constructed was included (see next page). The Dec. 1949 shows the outline of a rectangular structure. In the years that followed various additions were made to the building including a front vestibule, addition to the north (1962) and a new fiberglass steeple (1977). The church is presently known as the Open Door Baptist Church.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

"Evangel Baptist Church to Dedicate New Home Sunday", *Belmont Citizen*, March 4, 1949

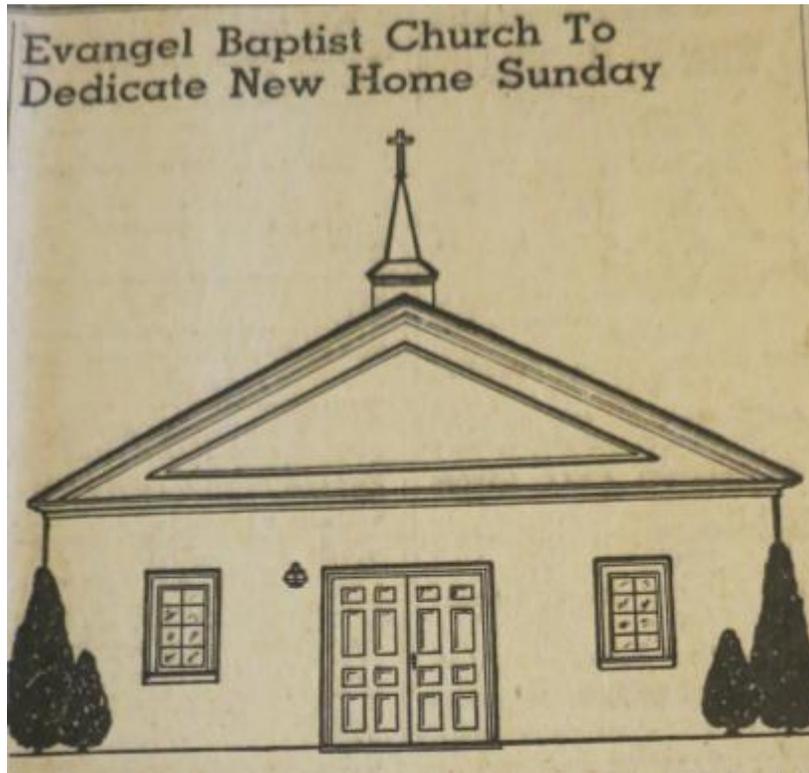
Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named (2nd edition)*. Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1931, 1949.

State of Massachusetts Building Inspection Department.

Town of Belmont, Building Department files.



Belmont Citizen, March 4, 1949