

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

29-129	Boston North	AT	BLM.229
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Town/City: Belmont

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

Address: 936-1000 Pleasant Street

Historic Name: Pleasant Street Garage

Uses: Present: commercial

Original: auto service and repair

Date of Construction: 1912-1949

Source: building permits

Style/Form: Moderne

Architect/Builder: Charles Bagnaschi, arch. (1945);
Albert Wilson, arch. (1949)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: yellow brick, concrete block

Roof: tar & gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

2010 – renovations for new uses/tenants

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

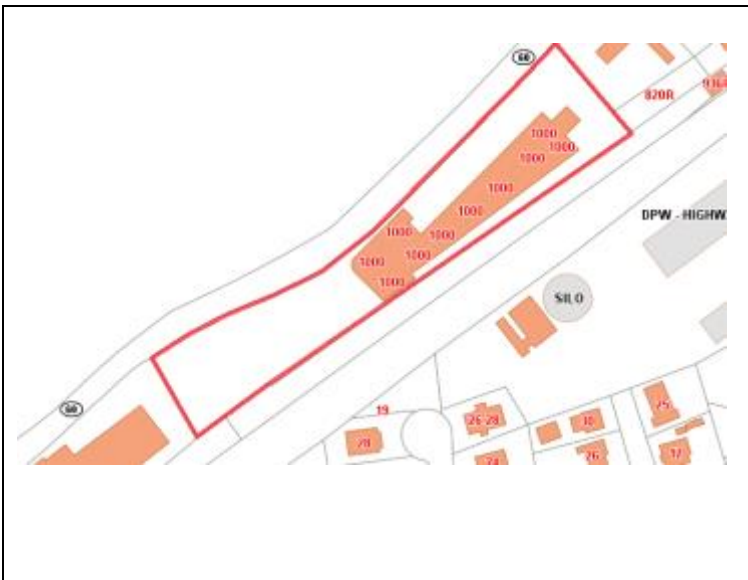
Acreage: 103,620 SF

Setting: busy road, opposite McLean Hospital property

Photograph



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): May 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

936-1000 PLEASANT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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 former Pleasant Street Garage was constructed as an automobile sales and service facility in multiple stages between 1912 and 1949. The complex includes an automotive showroom at its west end and a long narrow section extending to the northeast formerly used for service and storage. The entire façade is faced in orange brick with details in yellow brick including lintels, quoining around the windows, beltcourses and signage bands. At the west end of the building the former showroom incorporates a distinctive curved corner of display windows; a less dramatic curved corner is located to the east which originally housed the parts department and accessories. The garage section to the east of this is capped by a simple pediment with angled panels projecting above the roofline. At the east end there are a mix of garage openings and display windows. New garage doors were installed in 2011.

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 Pleasant Street Garage was initially operated by Cheney J. Holton and George Williams about 1912. The garage consisted of a small building and offered supplies, accessories and storage with all makes of cars bought, sold and exchanged. Holton sold his share of the business to Williams and in 1928 George Williams sold to Amedio (Joseph) DeMelia (Book 5304, Page 389).

Amedio Joseph DeMelia (1897-1986) was born in Verona, Italy, and upon arriving in the U.S. settled initially in New York City before arriving in Belmont. Under his ownership, the Pleasant Street Garage was continually expanded over the next fifty years and became one of the largest Dodge dealerships in New England. Building Department records document the evolution of the complex. In 1932 a repair shop/lubritorium was constructed to the side of the original building and in 1936 a 15' x 25' x 33' concrete block paint shop was added to the public garage according to plans by local architect H. Thaxter Underwood. The paint shop was later demolished in 1945 (see below).

The 60' x 45' commercial show room with a distinctive rounded corner was added in 1945 according to designs by Charles Bagnaschi of Quincy. The builder was Edmund Tocci of Watertown. Bagnaschi (1907-1990) was a native of Barre, Vermont and was educated at the Boston Architectural Club from 1927 to 1931. No other works by Bagnaschi have been found (MACRIS database, AIA Historical Directory, 1970).

In 1946, a small, utilitarian addition was constructed for the Bodyworks Department. In 1949 architect Albert Wilson of Cambridge designed a 110' x 60' thirty car, brick and block addition. Again, no further information was found concerning Wilson.

The Pleasant Street Garage was a complete auto sales and service center providing Plymouth and DeSoto (and later Dodge) sales and service, a body shop, Bear Wheel Alignment Service, Norwalk (later Goodyear) Tires and Tubes, Socony (later Mobil) Gasoline and Oils and Delco Batteries. In the 1980s the building was used by Peter Fuller Dodge. A small loading dock was added at the north end of the building in 1983.

The complex was sold by Joseph DeMelia's daughters, Claire and Lorraine DeMelia, in 2010 to Paul Tocci (Book 55949, Page 279). It now houses a series of small businesses. In 2013 Paul and Adam were given an award by the Belmont Historical Society for the adaptive use of the building.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Belmont: The Architecture and Development of the Town of Homes. Prepared for the Belmont Historic District Commission, 1984.
 Betts, Richard B. *The Streets of Belmont and How they Were Named (2nd edition)*. Belmont: Belmont Historical Society, 2012.
Boston Globe, Nov. 12, 1986 [obituary of Joseph DeMelia]
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 Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1915, 1922, 1931, 1949.
 Stadley, George W. *Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington*. 1898.
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 Williams, Judy. Inventory form for 936-1000 Pleasant Street, 1982.

BRAKE LIGHT STATION 145

PLEASANT STREET GARAGE

A. JOSEPH DE MILIA, Prop.



Willard

NATIONAL

BATTERIES



Dodge and Plymouth Sales and Service

GENERAL REPAIRING

NATIONAL AND WILLARD BATTERIES

STEWART WARNER REFRIGERATORS

24 HOUR TOWING SERVICE

GOODYEAR TIRES AND TUBES

MOBILGAS SOCONY GASOLINE AND OILS

Bear Wheel Alignment Service Stops Shimmy, Hard Steering, Tire Wear

AUTO ACCESSORIES

1000 PLEASANT STREET, WAVERLEY, MASS.

PHONE BELMONT 1108 — 3370

Advertisement in 1937 and 1944 Directories

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