

FORM B – BUILDING

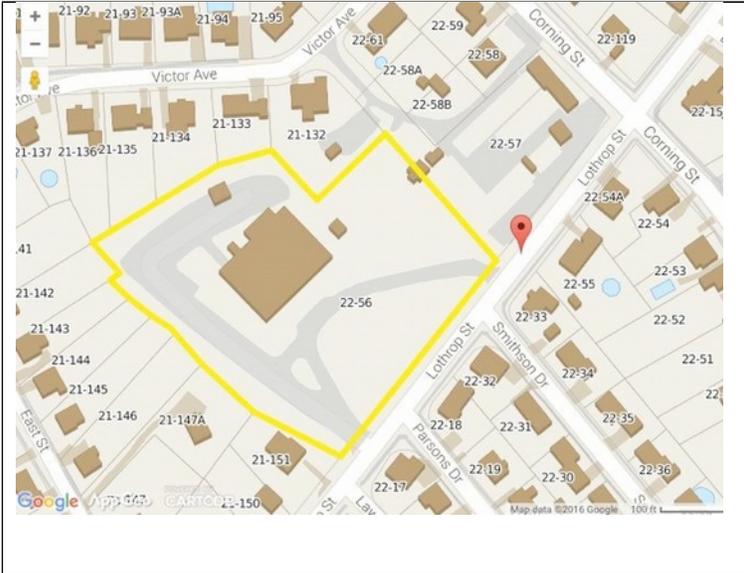
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Southwest and southeast (façade) elevations

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero and Pamela Hartford

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date (month / year): September 2016

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

22-56

Marble-
head N

BEV.1118

Town/City: Beverly

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Beverly Cove

Address: 200 East Lothrop Street

Historic Name: Temple B'nai Abraham

Uses: Present: synagogue

Original: synagogue

Date of Construction: 1961-62

Source: building permit, AJHS archives

Style/Form: International Style

Architect/Builder: Salsberg & LeBlanc, architects;
Walsh Construction Co., contractor

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete?

Wall/Trim: concrete and glass

Roof: tar and gravel

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Structural repairs to precast concrete T-beams (1989)

Condition: good to excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 3.6 acres

Setting: Located on a main road in a mostly residential neighborhood, with buildings typically dating from the mid through late 20th century.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Temple B'nai Abraham occupies a generous parcel of land facing southeast onto East Lothrop Street. The large-scaled building is positioned well back from the street, in the western quadrant of its generally flat lot. A paved, semicircular drive extends across the front yard. A straight driveway, which also accommodates parking, extends down the southwestern edge of the site and leads to a large paved parking area at the rear of the building. Unpaved portions of the lot are maintained chiefly in lawn, with ornamental trees and shrubs scattered throughout and an evergreen hedge adjacent to the building on its southeast and southwest sides. The northeast portion of the property contains a small wooded area with medium sized trees and large shrubs.

Measuring 118 feet wide by 96 feet deep, the roughly rectangular building rises two stories to a flat, deeply overhanging roof, which shelters a variety of recesses, projections, and building envelope treatments. The building is constructed of concrete piers and beams and enclosed by a diverse array of masonry and-or parged panels and glazing. Deep roof beams and smaller-scale purlins are exposed on the southwest and northeast sides of the building, while two-story projections with a cylindrical outer end extend from the southeast and northwest elevations. Fenestration typically consists of narrow strip windows, oriented both vertically and horizontally, and feature both clear and stained glass panes. Each elevation has a distinct architectural character.

The façade (southeast) elevation is divided into two equal parts by three two-story, free-standing piers that support the cantilevered roof edge. The building enclosure is recessed behind the southern portion of the façade, which contains a large, two-story, metal-and-glass entrance bay with double-leaf wood doors and a two-story cylindrical tower element that presents a solid wall toward the street. Broad concrete and brick steps access the entrance. The northern portion of the facade is dominated by a large, horizontal masonry panel that projects forward slightly and is lined by narrow bands of stained glass around its sides and top.

The southwest elevation is the most regular and repetitive, with a horizontal band of windows at each floor framed by concrete piers and masonry spandrel panels. The four window bays each contain three vertical fixed panes, flanked by a narrow casement window on each side, and a slender stained glass panel abutting each side of the structural piers. The fifth bay, at the south corner of the building, is open, with a concrete walkway and steps leading to an offset door in the side wall of the cylindrical façade projection, where it meets the building enclosure, and a vertical window opening above in the second story.

The northeast elevation of the synagogue contains two asymmetrically-set, rectangular towers at the outer bays, which frame a recessed center section. The tower walls are chiefly solid, with arrays of small slit windows at the base and top of their outer walls, and two-story-high slit windows with stained glass on their outer and-or side walls. The center section has glazed window walls at the ground floor level (accessing a brick patio) and narrow vertical window openings offset above. The utilitarian rear (northwest) elevation is mostly blank. It features a two-story cylindrical projection, with a service entrance facing the side, near the center of the building, and a one-story appendage with double-leaf service doors at the northern end.

Well-preserved and maintained, Temple B'nai Abraham is a bold, well developed example of the International Style in Beverly. Its design is notable for its exposed structural framework, three-dimensional richness, and the variety and complexity of its exterior wall treatments and fenestration. The monumental scale of the building is complemented by its large flat site with an expanse of open lawn.

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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 Sons of Abraham Synagogue was incorporated in 1908 with approximately 35 founding members under the leadership of Rabbi Sakes. After first gathering in private homes, the congregation began meeting in the Wood Block on Rantoul Street in 1908. In 1912 it merged with Beverly's Sons of Israel Synagogue to become the Sons of Abraham and Isaac Synagogue, acquired property on Bow Street, and built a new synagogue on the site. Sons of Abraham and Isaac occupied 39 Bow Street until 1962, when the congregation moved to the new and much larger building at 200 East Lothrop Street; the name Temple B'nai Abraham was adopted at this time. Rabbi Irvin K. Botwinick was the congregation's religious leader from at least 1960 through 1965.

The land on Lothrop Street was purchased in 1960 (it was previously undeveloped land occupied by M. S. Ward, florist), groundbreaking occurred in 1961, and the new synagogue was dedicated in 1962. The building permit indicates that the estimated cost of the building was \$215,000, and the contractor was Walsh Construction Co. of Salem.

The architect for Temple B'nai Abraham was Salsberg & LeBlanc. As noted in an MHC survey form for one of their residential buildings in Brookline:

"Irving Salsberg (1919-2005) was born in western Russia (the spelling of the name, Zalzburg, was later changed) and emigrated to the United States with his family at the age of three, settling in Chelsea. He graduated from Chelsea High School in 1936, and attended Boston University and the Boston Architectural Center before earning a degree in architecture in 1944 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he was a recipient of the Rotch traveling scholarship. Salsberg formed a partnership with Ralph LeBlanc by 1953. In addition to the Finn House and the Boylston Street office buildings, Salsberg & LeBlanc's commissions include 22 Princeton Road (1958) and 74 Yarmouth Road (1958) in Brookline; and at least two houses on Baldpate Hill Road in Newton: 85 Baldpate Hill Road (1957) and 215 Baldpate Hill Road (1961). In the postwar era, Salsberg also designed Temple Beth Am, Randolph, and the North Shore Music Theater, Beverly (1955). Later working independently under the firm name of Irving Salsberg Associates, Inc., the architect designed the Colonnade Hotel, 120 Huntington Avenue, Boston (1971); Beacon Park Association Building, 1371 Beacon Street, Brookline (1972, see form); Beacon Towers, 1501 Beacon Street, Brookline (1974, see form); and the Back Bay Hilton, Belvidere and Dalton Streets, Boston (1982). Salsberg served as president and chairman of the board of directors of the Boston Architectural Center, as well as chairman of the Urban Design Committee of the Boston Society of Architects, where he was involved in the 1970s proposal to replace Boston's elevated highway (known as the Central Artery) with a highway underground." (Broomer, MHC Form B, BKL.3084)

Born in Boston, Robert L. LeBlanc (1920-2011) received a certificate in architecture from the Boston Architectural Center in 1942 and studied architecture at MIT from 1943-48. He was in partnership with Irving Salsberg from 1951 to 1967. As described in LeBlanc's obituary,

"His career as an architect in Boston spanned half a century, during which time he worked in several partnerships and also in his own office... His work, based primarily in the Greater Boston area, included original construction and renovation of private homes, hospitals, and public buildings, including the design of the original theater in [the] round for the North Shore Music Theatre in 1955. Other works include the original design for the Hilton Hotel at Logan Airport, the Belkin House at the Faulkner Hospital, the renovation of a public school building to create the Athens Condominiums in Weymouth, the branding design for Garber Travel, and the extensive rehabilitation and renovation project of historic Queechee Village in Vermont" (*Boston Globe* obituary).

MACRIS contains 12 properties, all in the Boston area, associated with Salsberg and LeBlanc. All but one are dated between 1955 and 1961. Most are houses; two are office buildings. Additional properties are associated individually with Salsberg and LeBlanc.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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Beverly city directories, 1910 – 1965.

Beverly Evening Times, 11 Feb 1908. "Hebrew Society to Incorporate."

The Boston Globe, 6 Mar 2011. Obituary for Ralph Louis LeBlanc.

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Hepler, Margaret. Beverly; Historic Cultural Resources Survey, 1992-93; Final Report. June 1993.

Historic maps and atlases: 1897 and 1907 (George H. Walker), 1919 (Yeager-Klinge), 1907-50 (Sanborn)

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_____. *Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Beverly*. 1986.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Detail of southeast (façade) elevation



Southwest elevation



Northwest and southwest elevations



Northeast elevation

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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 Wendy Frontiero

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

Temple B'nai Abraham is one of two surviving synagogue buildings in Beverly, both associated with different periods in the development of one congregation. The property reflects the new diversity of Beverly's population in the 20th century and the increasing growth, prosperity, and cultural sophistication of the Jewish community in that period. Designed in the International Style, Temple B'nai Abraham is a large and handsome example of a rare architectural style in Beverly, especially in an institutional building. The design is notable for its exposed structural framework, sculptural volumes, the variety and complexity of its exterior wall treatments and fenestration, and the park-like setting that complements its monumental scale. Retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, Temple B'nai Abraham is recommended for listing in the National Register with significance at the local level under Criteria A and C.