

**MAKE
HISTORY.**

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Historic Resources Branch Report

Beaconsfield United Church

Beaconsfield, Manitoba
(544.B.1)



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A. Style

The style used for the Beaconsfield United Church is a modified form of the common pioneer-type building of the west: a rectangular, pitch or high gabled building, with the gables at the short ends of the plan, windows along the sides, and with an enclosed entrance porch at the centre of one of the ends. This was one of the simplest and most efficient styles available; it may be seen, however, as a derivation of Scottish vernacular architecture. For a church, the style was modified by increasing the pitch of the roof, using painted sash windows (instead of rectangular sash windows) and perhaps adding a spire at the front - the Beaconsfield church has no spire. These extra church motifs are allusions to the Gothic style which was considered as the only proper church architecture.

B. Construction

Like many pioneer buildings, this church was probably built cooperatively by hired local skilled craftsmen and volunteer workers from the congregation. Little is otherwise known about this small structure, which was originally 22' x 36' in size with a small furnace beneath. This suggests that the present full basement was once merely partial in nature.

C. Design

The Methodist Church of Beaconsfield was built in 1904. Similar to many pioneer-public or ecclesiastical buildings, this church has a pitched roof over a rectangular structure, an enclosed entrance porch and windows along the side. It stands atop a basement, which was probably a later addition - it is made of poured concrete.

The windows, three along each side, have pointed Gothic arches and there is also a pointed transom window over the door into the church.

There is a chimney at the back roof - for the stove, and also appears to be a later addition.

To the left of the entrance porch is an attached shed, for the stairway to the basement. Because of the awkward manner in which it has been integrated into the design of the building, it is an obvious addition.

Apart from the 'shed', the church is a very simple, very nicely proportioned, attractive and neat looking building.

D. Interior

The interior components of this structure are as simple as the exterior. Tongue and groove wainscotting runs halfway up the walls. Above this, the walls are plastered, and this

plastering includes the window casings, which at first appearance look like milled lumber, but actually are in imitation of the cut stonework found in such larger buildings as Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Such a small church was not without a bit of ostentation! The ceiling, which is a barrel-vault in shape, is also covered in the same tongue and groove boarding as the wainscots. Much of the interior furnishing here is fairly old and may be assumed to be original.

E. Integrity

- i) Presumably, the church occupies, roughly, its original site. It has moved to a foundation-basement. According to *Memories of Lorne*, the church was built c. 1901 near a previously existing Presbyterian Church, which was later moved to Somerset. But there is no mention of this, the then Methodist church ever being moved.
- ii) The small porch shed to the left of the entrance porch, access to the basement, is a later addition.
- iii) The poured concrete basement is non-original, and was probably built to get the building off the ground. By its appearance, it was probably built in the 1940s or 1950s, and is not reinforced as there is some structural cracking within the foundation walls which can only be associated with a lack of interior steel rods.

F. Streetscape

Beaconsfield is a name applied to a district. The church is located in a field, and is freestanding.

G. Architect/Contractor

Architect unknown at the present time, builder was Louis LeBeau, Somerset.

H. Person/Institution

"About 1901, new settlers, the Comstocks, Anslips, Smiths, Lanes, Morphys and Dunfields formed a Methodist congregation and built a larger church near the Presbyterian church."

There is no information available on any of these families, but it is probably not too presumptuous to suppose that they were Methodists from Western Ontario.

I. Event

The building is of some local significance, having been one of the major religious groups in the area.

J. Context

The building of the church near their homes, situated on a farm, illustrates the importance of religion to the settlers of that time. It was a common pioneer practice to place their most important buildings, schools and churches, as close to themselves as possible. It is also a reminder of the vastly inferior means of transportation available to the citizens of the province at that time.

K. Landmark

This is an attractive church whose character is accentuated by its isolated setting. The isolation renders it an instant landmark to passers-by.

Bibliography

Memories of Lorne, 1880-1980, A History of the Municipality of Lorne, published by The Municipality of Lorne, Somerset, 1980.