

The Restoration of 23 Church Street



1895



1936

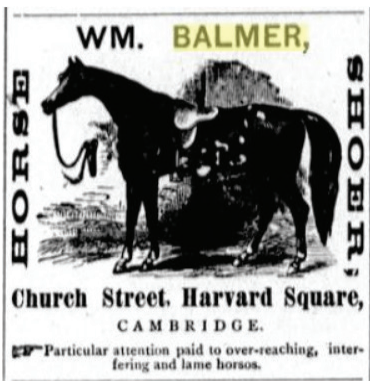


2022

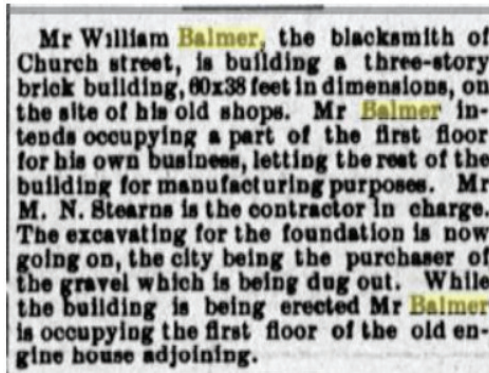


2025

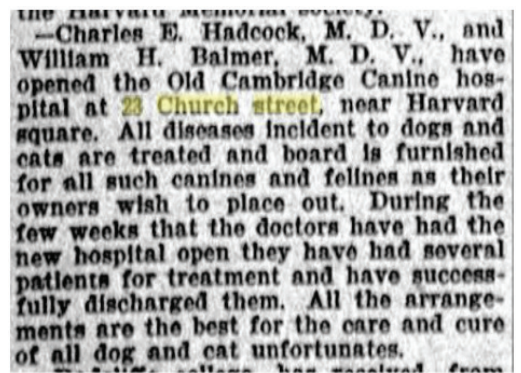
History of 23 Church Street



1876 William Balmer's blacksmith and farrier business occupies his one-story building.



1894 Balmer builds a three-story building on the site of his old shop.



1897 One story added. William H. Balmer, MDV (son?) opens a veterinarian practice.



1897-1930 The building houses a variety of businesses, including an interior decorator, a stained glass artist, a carpenter, a metal shop, an electrician, and a sign maker.

J. LEO McDONALD,
23 CHURCH STREET,
Painting, Graining,
Paper Hanging, Glazing,
Interior Decorating.

CC Nov. 20, 1897

JOHN WAUGH & Co.,
Carpenters and Builders.
 CABINET WORK of All Descriptions
 Made to Order.
 JOBBING Promptly Attended To.
23 Church Street, Harvard Square,
 TELEPHONE CONNECTION. CAMBRIDGE.

CC Oct. 14, 1899

Clark & Mills Move.
 Clark & Mills, electricians, have given up their shop at 1400 Massachusetts avenue (Lyceum building), and are now located in much larger and more convenient quarters at **23 Church street**, where they occupy the entire second floor. Here they have a room 35 by 20 feet for a shop, and another room for the storing of stock, and a third room for an office. By this move, Clark & Mills have about four times as much space as formerly. They are planning to install more machinery, and will, at the new location, be better equipped than ever to do all kinds of electrical work, including machine work and electrical instruments. They will soon be prepared to do electro-plating, and they are also to carry a line of electric light fixtures and portable lamps. Clark & Mills began business in 1895, and have steadily advanced in their standing as electricians, and in the volume of business they have done. The new location bids fair to bring them a larger increase than ever. They will retain their Boston office at 543 Boylston street.

CT March 1, 1902

Maker of Stained Glass Windows.
 Mr. Harry Eldredge Goodhue has lately opened, at **23 Church street**, an establishment that is altogether unique in Cambridge, if not in the entire metropolitan district. It is his shop, attractively arranged and finished, where he is busily engaged from day to day in the manufacture of stained and leaded glass windows. Mr. Goodhue had ten years' practical experience in this work with Horace J. Phipps & Co., and also made extensive studies of old windows abroad, all of which fits him for the making of ecclesiastical windows and decorations; while at the same time he executes domestic work, having carefully followed the arts and crafts movement in England and America.
 Mr. Goodhue is now engaged in making a large and strikingly designed glass window for the Brown Memorial Emmanuel Church at Newport, R. I., of which structure Messrs. Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson were the architects. Later he will produce a small memorial window to be placed in St. James's Church near the pew occupied for many years by the late Mrs. Mary Longfellow Greenleaf. This window is to be the gift of the Ladies' Missionary Society of the church. Mr. Goodhue has been a Cambridge resident for the past ten years. He resides in Buckingham place.

J. LEO McDONALD,
HOUSE PAINTING, GRAINING, PAPER
HANGING, GLAZING, INTERIOR DECORATING.
Shop, 22 Church Street.
 Telephone, Cambridge 1682.

CT June 5, 1909

EXPERIMENTAL WORK
Light Machine and Instrumental Work
Both—Electrical and Mechanical
Also REPAIRS
NELSON & ROUNDURG
23 Church Street Harvard Sq.
Telephone Camb. 1368-R

CT Feb. 19, 1921

MR. BUSINESS MAN!! Don't You Need Signs Now?
 Send Us Your Order—Telephone University 4581-J
23 Church Street UNIVERSITY SIGN CO. Harvard Square
 Prices Right—Prompt and Satisfactory Work

CT Feb. 28, 1922

HENRY I. JENKINS
 PRINTER OF
 PHOTOGRAVURES, ENGRAVINGS, ETCHINGS,
 DIPLOMAS and BOOKPLATES
23 Church Street, Harvard Square Cambridge, Mass

CT Feb 23, 1924

EDWARD D. GHEE
TIN AND SHEET
METAL SHOP
AT
23 CHURCH STREET
HARVARD SQUARE
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
FURNACE WORK
A SPECIALTY—JOBGING
TELEPHONE PORTER 5334

CT Nov. 22, 1930

April 1936 The four-story building is torn down and a new building is under construction.

Old Blacksmith Shop Goes Electric
 Construction of a new retail store for the Cambridge Electric Light Company will begin shortly on the lot at **23 Church street**, where a four-story brick building, originally erected by William Balmer, now stands.
 The new store building, which will be one story in height and of modern design, is expected to be ready for occupancy by September 1, at which time the company will move from its present store quarters at 23 Brattle street.

A feature of the new building, which has been designed by William Lawrence Galvin, Harvard Square architect, will be a luminous front with strips of light which will focus public attention on the front entrance.
 The interior, which will provide more floor space than the present quarters, will have a high ceiling with some novel lighting effects. The store will be gas-heated and air-conditioned. The chief purpose of the design has been to provide agreeable surroundings for customers who come in to shop for electrical appliances or to pay for their gas and electric bills.

In the rear, the store looks out on the old burying ground where seven presidents of Harvard University are buried. The store site was occupied many years ago by an old frame building in which Mr. Balmer had his blacksmith shop. Later, Mr. Balmer erected a three-story brick building on the site with his blacksmith shop on the first floor, and subsequently added the present fourth story. Razing of this a fourth story. Razing of this structure will start early in May.

Negotiations for the leasing of this building were consummated through the real estate office of Ellis & Andrews of Harvard square.

CC April 9, 1936

CT Sept. 25, 1936

CT Jan. 13, 1937

CS Oct. 10, 1936

CT Jan. 13, 1937

The new Harvard Square showroom and office of the Cambridge Gas and Electric Light Company of 23 Church street which officially opened to the public October 1-2-3.

One of the most beautiful buildings in all of Cambridge is the new showroom and office of the Cambridge Gas and Electric Light Co., at 23 Church street, to supplant the old building at 23 Brattle street.

With an ultra modern interior and a delightfully beautiful exterior, the Cambridge Gas and Electric Light Company has gone to no end of expense to make the building a fixture in beauty and construction.

Conveniently located for the benefit of the patrons of this section, the new building caused much comment on its opening last week.

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Keeps food safer, fresher, longer! SEE THE PROOF!
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CAMBRIDGE ELECTRIC LIGHT CO.
23 CHURCH STREET
KIRKLAND A63

719 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE.
THROWDURE 3140

CC Sept. 4, 1941

1947 First Church of Christ, Scientist, Cambridge, purchases the building for use as a Christian Science Reading Room. Over the next 70-plus years, the church will lease out one side of the building to various businesses, including women's clothing, fine leather goods, beads, Raven Used Books, and the current tenant, Rodney's Bookstore.

Christian Science Church Rounds Out Fifty Years Of Service In Cambridge

Rounding out fifty years of service to Cambridge, First Church of Christ, Scientist, holds religious services in its building facing the Common, and maintains a Reading Room at 23 Church Street.

The first meeting for the public was held in Brattle Hall on January 22, 1899, and the permanent organization was formed on February 22.

The decision to start a Christian Science church in this city was made by Mary Baker Eddy herself, and was due to the overcrowding in the Original Mother Church in Boston.

On January 3, 1899, Miss Emma Gould Easton, a Christian Science practitioner living at 175 Mt. Auburn street, was summoned to Boston with two others from Chelsea and Roxbury. They were told of plans to organize three new churches, and asked to bring four others from each place for a further conference. Those from Cambridge were Miss Eaton (now Mrs. Rolf Newman of Los Angeles), Mrs. Margaret E. Easton, Mrs. Ella Nazro, Frank Colburn and W. P. Cole.

Following this conference, notices were sent out, and on January 13 a temporary organization was set up. It was then announced that Mrs. Eddy selected as Readers for the church Willis Gross and Miss Easton, but a little later word came that Mr. Gross was to serve at Roxbury, and that William P. McKenzie would be the Reader for Cambridge.

Since Christian Science branch Churches are required to be democratic, the newly organized church elected a board of directors, consisting of the two

Readers, Mrs. Nazro, clerk, Mr. Cole, treasurer, Mr. Colburn and James Simonds. Four charter members are at present affiliated with the Cambridge church: Wilfred G. G. Cole, Miss Mary A. Daggett, Miss Louise V. Marsh and James Otis Simonds. Four or five others are members of other branch churches.

Erect Church Edifice

In 1923 ground was broken for the church building at Waterhouse street and Massachusetts avenue, and in 1937 the half-million dollar structure was paid for, and dedicated.

During these fifty years Cambridge has gained 21% in population; the number of registered Christian Science practitioners has grown from ten to twenty, with many more in surrounding towns.

Two years ago an attractive ground-floor location was purchased for the public Reading Room of the church. Here there is opportunity for study of the weekly Bible Lessons of this denomination, and for reading the textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy, as well as other authorized books and periodicals on Christian Science.

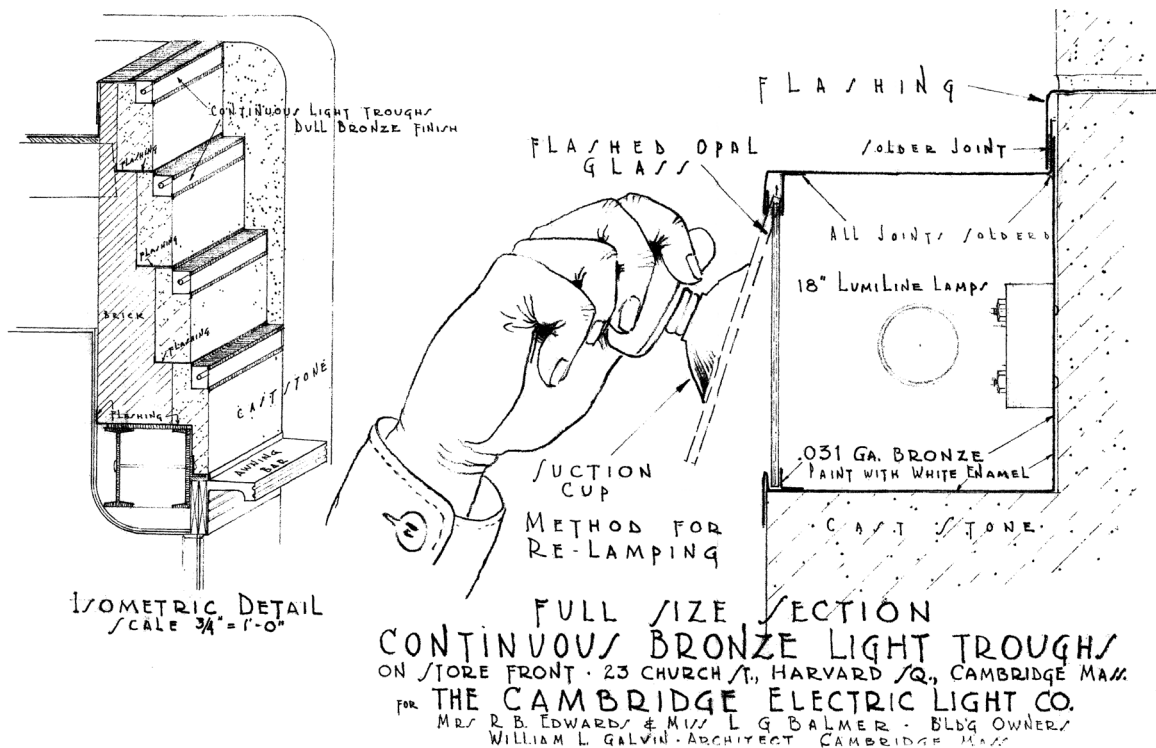
Visitors are welcome to the services and Reading Room. The Sunday School for pupils under twenty years is held at the same time as the church

2015 The church learns from Charles Sullivan, the Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, that there used to be lights outlining the details of the building's Art Deco facade. They start to explore the idea of restoring the lights.

2022 The building needs general maintenance of the roof and facade; the Cambridge Historical Commission awards the church a grant to help restore the outside of the building, including the lights.



The Cambridge Historical Commission provides original blueprints that show exactly how the lights were constructed.



2022-2023 Finding someone to replicate the 1936 design and fabricate the lights proves difficult and takes almost two years of searching. The church talks to many companies that simply don't understand or aren't interested in being involved. Finally, the church discovers Poyant Signs, a local expert in sign design and building. The representative from Poyant immediately sees that this is an opportunity to be part of something special and help re-create a piece of art. Their precise application of their craft results in a building identical in appearance to the original, yet utilizing modern technology. The LEDs they install will last for years and use very little electricity, as opposed to the original Lumiline Lamps, which lasted hundreds of hours and consumed lots of energy.

2025 This project has taken more than three years from the awarding of the grant to the finishing of the lights. It has involved many talented people: Charles Sullivan at the Cambridge Historical Commission, who sparked the whole idea and has been an enormous support along the way, Marcos Almada at Almada Restoration, who restored the facade, Rodrigo Almeida at RB Farina Roofing, who repaired the roof, Jason Fredette and the skilled designers and craftspeople at Poyant Signs, who designed, fabricated and installed the lighting, and Tom Kuik at Kuik Electrical, the master electrician who designed and constructed the circuitry that powers the lights. We hope that passersby will enjoy the beauty and light of this unique piece of Cambridge architectural history for many years to come!

