

PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: First Evangelical Church and Education Building

OWNER: First Evangelical Church

APPLICANT: Same as Owner

LOCATION: 1311 Holman Road (aka 3410 Austin Street)

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: II

HPO FILE NO: 07PL47

DATE ACCEPTED: Sept-9-2007

HAHC HEARING: Sept-26-2007

PC HEARING: Oct-11-2007

SITE INFORMATION

All of Lots 5-10, and the West 50 feet of Lots 3 and 4, Block 1, Holman Outlot #40, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The block, bounded by Holman, Austin, Francis and Caroline Streets, includes four historic buildings: the church, a religious education building, a two-story parsonage, and a detached garage with custodian quarters. Only the church and religious education building are included in this protected landmark designation. The two-story parsonage and the parsonage's detached garage with custodian quarters, located on the East 50 feet of Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4, are excluded.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation for church sanctuary and attached religious education building.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The First Evangelical Church, founded in 1851 as the First German Evangelical Lutheran Church, is one of the oldest congregations in Houston. Previously housed in two other sanctuaries, the congregation purchased the land for the current buildings in 1926. They retained architect Joseph W. Northrop, Jr., who had moved to Houston to oversee construction of the Rice Institute (now Rice University), to design the structures extant today. General contractor James West, along with subcontractors J. C. Nolan and the Star Electric and Engineering Company, constructed the campus. Northrop's North Italian Romanesque styling features terra cotta roof tiles on the sanctuary, education building, and parsonage, as well as a campanile (bell tower). The buildings were constructed of interlocking concrete tiles covered with buff-face brick and white sandstone trim. The campanile's bell was forged in 1880 and has rung at each of the congregation's places of worship. The tower connects the sanctuary to the seven-bay arched portals of the education building, which houses a stage, sports facilities, auditoriums, and classrooms. The sanctuary's details include pulpit and altar made by master woodcarvers from Oberammergau, Germany. Pews and chancel furnishings, designed by Northrop, are by the American Seating Company. The choir loft houses a 1903 Kilgen & Son pipe organ, and the stained glass windows are from the Browne Window Company.

The First Evangelical Church was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 2002, and the campus was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2006 under the criteria of Local Significance in Architecture. The First Evangelical Church and Education Building also meet Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 for Landmark and Protected Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Harsh economic conditions in Germany, and the promise of free land in the newly-opened Texas frontier, fueled a wave of German immigration that began in the 1820s, became heavy by the 1840s, and continued throughout the second half of the 19th century. As a result, numerous German settlements were established in Texas. In response to reports of “the orphaned condition of German Protestants,” C. F. Spittler, the director of the Pilger Mission von St. Chrischona in Basel, Switzerland, sent a total of eight ordained Lutheran ministers from his missionary school to Texas in 1850 and 1851. These men, led by the Reverend Caspar Messon Braun, organized the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas in Houston in November 1851.¹

Braun was born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, on March 16, 1822. He received his missionary training at St. Chrischona in 1847 and immigrated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the same year to serve that city’s German immigrant population. Braun became the first pastor of the Beaver mission, in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, and was ordained in 1850. He organized St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in New Castle, Pennsylvania, and did missionary work in that area before moving to Texas, where St. Chrischona had decided to concentrate its missionary efforts. Braun arrived by boat in Galveston in 1850 or 1851 and then came to Houston.²

On July 1, 1851, Braun founded the “Erste Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche” (First German Evangelical Lutheran Church) in Houston.³ The first communion service was held on July 13, 1851, with 34 people in attendance.⁴ The church was officially issued a charter by the State of Texas on September 1, 1851.⁵ The following day, the first trustees were elected: Rev. Braun (chairman), Carl Huebner (secretary), F. Burkhardt and J. Kruegel.⁶

The first services were conducted in a schoolhouse located near the Protestant Episcopal Church on Texas Avenue.⁷ In 1854, the congregation purchased a lot and raised their first church, a white wooden Gothic/Classical Revival structure “located on the south side of Texas Avenue facing west on Milam Street later the site of the Inter-urban Train Terminal and now the location of the Chase Bank Building”.⁸ A schoolhouse behind the church (toward Travis Street) was used for a Christian Day School.⁹

According to a November 1979 *Houston Chronicle* article, which quoted First Evangelical pastor Rev. Richard Campbell, the church had been formed by German immigrants, “some ... of the Evangelical tradition and some ... from Lutheran backgrounds. That marriage was one of convenience, born of mutual ancestry ... Once the German population grew in size in Houston, there were enough people to form separate Evangelical and Lutheran churches.” Internal dissension led to 24 members of the First German Evangelical Lutheran Church leaving the original congregation to form their own church, now known as Trinity Lutheran Church, which is located at 800 Houston Avenue in the Sixth Ward.

¹ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “LUTHERAN CHURCH,” <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/LL/ill1.html> (accessed August 16, 2007).

² Herbert W. H. Meyer, “Some Western Pennsylvania Lutheran Baptisms, 1847-1851,” *Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Winter 1986, 35.

³ Norman Speck, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark

⁴ *Souvenir History of First Evangelical Lutheran Church*, also referred to as “Sesqicentennial History of the Church,” 1976 (reprint of 1927 Dedication Booklet),. 22.

⁵ Speck.

⁶ *Souvenir*, 22.

⁷ *Souvenir*. 21.

⁸ Speck.

⁹ *Souvenir*. 22.

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Rev. Braun passed away suddenly in October 1881, and was succeeded by Reverend Joseph A. Becker and then Reverend Richard Wasser, each of whom served only a short time. Reverend F. Werning, from Missouri, was installed as pastor on May 18, 1883, and served until 1887. He was succeeded by Rev. W. Hackmann, from 1887-1895, who established a parochial school. In April 1890, the church building and tower were struck by lightning and severely damaged, leading to talk of building a new church or remodeling the existing building. During the short tenure of Rev. W. Suessmuth in 1896, a building committee was appointed and funds began to be raised for a new building.¹⁰

In August 1896, Rev. William L. Blasberg became pastor. Property was purchased in the Merkel Addition (Second Ward) in May 1897 “for mission purposes,” and a building committee was appointed in January 1899: W. Reichardt, C. W. Doering, H. Herrmann, and J. Rimmel. Under their guidance, property for a new building on the corner of Texas Avenue and Caroline Street was purchased for \$8,000. The building, “a fine impressive red brick structure with white sandstone trimming” in the Gothic style, was constructed for approximately \$20,000.¹¹

On October 15, 1901, the cornerstone was laid for the new church. The old building and site were sold for \$8,000, and while the new church was under construction, the congregation met in the old Shearn Methodist Church, across the street from the old church building. The new church building was dedicated on July 6, 1902. A Kilgen & Son pipe organ was installed in 1903, at a cost of \$2000.¹²

A parish house was built in 1907 at a cost of \$6000; the building committee in charge of construction was comprised of J. Rimmel, T. Werner, H. Puls Sr., and W. Warnecke. L. Wiedekind was the builder. The parish house contained apartments upstairs for the pastor and meeting rooms downstairs for the Sunday School and other activities. The debt for these buildings was settled in 1921, in part thanks to a gift from Mr. and Mrs. W. Warnecke. In 1922, the interior of the church was remodeled and the pipe organ was modernized at a cost of about \$10,000. Although the congregation had no intention of moving to a new site, particularly after having expended such a large amount of money on their existing building, “repeated efforts on the part of business interests to purchase the church site” resulted in the congregation finally accepting an offer.¹³

In January 1926, the property was sold to former Governor Ross Sterling for \$300,000 and the building was subsequently demolished. (The site is currently a surface parking lot.) The proceeds from this sale enabled the congregation to build their third and present house of worship.¹⁴

In April 1926, under the direction of the congregation’s seventh pastor, Rev. Detlev Baltzer, a full city block – bounded by Holman, Austin, Francis, and Caroline Streets – was purchased for \$80,000 from U. S. Congressman Joe Henry Eagle, who had owned the property since 1920. The land purchased by the church included a three-story wood frame house built in 1903 for Edward R. Richardson, a cotton and grain broker. The Richardson House was sold to Archer MacDonald and moved across the street to 3307 Austin. It is now part of Brennen Park and is used by Magnificat Houses, Inc., a Catholic non-profit organization, as a rehabilitation center; the charity refers to the building as “St. Joseph House.”¹⁵

In September 1926, a building committee (T. Werner, A. L. Scharck, A. J. Weiss, W. F. Puls, L. F. Schweikart, and G. H. Winkler) had approved building plans and issued contracts totaling

¹⁰ Souvenir, 22-24.

¹¹ Souvenir, 24-25.

¹² Souvenir, 25-26.

¹³ Souvenir, 27.

¹⁴ Speck.

¹⁵ Speck.

approximately \$170,000. However, before the old church was sold and demolished, the original stained glass windows were salvaged, and they were utilized in the plan for the new church building when constructed.

Ground-breaking ceremonies were held on October 13, 1926, and construction began, under the direction of general contractor James M. L. West. The heating and plumbing contract was awarded to J. C. Nolan, and Star Electric and Engineering Company (owned by Ed Dupree and Ed Greber) handled the electrical work. The cornerstone for the complex was set on January 30, 1927.¹⁶ “Immediately after Easter, the pastor’s family moved into the new residence and on the 17th of July services were conducted for the first time in the new Religious Education Building which was then ready for occupancy. A large congregation had gathered in the old building to observe proper farewell services on Texas Avenue on the Sunday of July 10th. From that time until the dedication of the new church building proper on October 16 [1927], regular services were held in the Religious Education Building.”¹⁷ On January 9, 1928, the congregation changed its name to ‘First Evangelical Church.’

The church faces south toward the entrance of Houston Community College’s central campus (originally South End Junior High School and then San Jacinto High School). The college’s Erwin R. Heinen Theater (originally Temple Beth Israel and then the High School for the Performing Arts) is located diagonally across the street from the church campus.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The campus of the First Evangelical church comprises the entire block on which it sits, bounded by Holman Avenue on its southwest side, Austin Street on the southeast, Francis Street on the northeast, and Caroline Street on the northwest. The campus is comprised of four structures arranged generally in an L-shape on the site. Only the church and attached religious education building are to be included in this designation. The parsonage and the detached garage with second-floor apartment, both located on the Austin Street side of the campus, are excluded from the protected landmark designation in accordance with the wishes of the church, but are an original part of the historic church campus and their architectural description is therefore included in this report.

The buildings were designed by architect Joseph W. Northrop, Jr. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1886, Northrop earned his B. S. in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1910. He went to work for the Boston architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, which in 1911 sent him to Houston to oversee the construction of the original buildings at Rice Institute (now Rice University). Northrop opened his own architecture office in 1914. He is best known for his residential work, particularly in the South End neighborhoods of Houston, and he was one of four architects commissioned by the Hogg family to design model homes for the exclusive River Oaks subdivision. From the 1920s through the 1950s, Northrop designed a number of public buildings in Houston, including a series of buildings for Jesse Jones, the First Congregational Church (1927, now St. Matthew Lutheran), Trinity Episcopal Church (1926-27), the San Jacinto Trust Company Building (1927-28), and the Houston Title Guaranty Building (1952). His designs for First Evangelical Church won an honorable mention in a 1930 nationwide competition sponsored by the *Christian Herald*.¹⁸ On completion of the building in October 1927, architect Northrop engaged Houston photographers J. D. and J. E. Litterst to

¹⁶ Speck.

¹⁷ Souvenir, 27.

¹⁸ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “NORTHROP, JOSEPH WALTER, JR.,” <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/NN/fno17.html> (accessed August 16, 2007).

take detailed photographs of the church. These photographs and a description of the project were eventually published in *The Architect*, September 1928.

The Church building measures 59' x 100'; its main entrance is located on the southwestern corner of the block, near the corner of Holman and Caroline. The front façade faces Holman and is set well back from that street. The building extends along Caroline with a shallow setback from the street. Behind the building, the corner of the lot at Caroline and Francis, is filled by a small asphalt parking lot.

According to the Dedication Booklet published by the church in 1927 and reprinted in 1976, the church building is constructed of interlocking hollow concrete tile back-up, faced with rough buff-face brick laid in Flemish bond and trimmed with white sandstone. The structure is built upon massive concrete footings and topped with a red Italian tile roof. (The tiles were manufactured by the Ludowici Company of Chicago, Illinois.) Exterior side walls are three feet thick and are reinforced on each side with four rectangular pier buttresses capped with white sandstone.

The church's front façade contains the main entryway, which is recessed and approached on foot via a wide curving sidewalk leading to a set of five wide brick steps. Black wrought iron railings on either side and in the center of the steps are complemented by ornate octagonal light fixtures made of black cast iron, which are set on white stone blocks flanking the steps. Two large, rectangular, raised-panel oak doors are set into a semi-circular (Roman) archivolt. The doors are immediately framed by the *intrados* (inner curve) of the arch, which is constructed with stacked white stone blocks on either side and a white stone lintel above; the lintel bears an inscription from Psalm 100, verse 4. The space within the intrados directly above the lintel is filled with white stone, with a border carved around the perimeter of the arch so that a half-round shape projects slightly in bas relief. The archivolt is made up of three successive arches: two single courses of stretcher brick, with the inner course slightly more recessed than the outer, and finally, an outermost curve constructed of 11 fluted white sandstone blocks, decorated with a grape-leaf motif. This arch is supported by two un-fluted white marble Corinthian columns on either side of the entryway.

The front brick masonry façade is pierced on either side of the columns by a single narrow arched opening bordered by stretcher bricks set flush with the wall. This wall terminates just above the archivolt in a decorative frieze: a faux colonnade of white sandstone contains 26 short pilasters with Ionic capitals, which are joined at the top by a series of Roman arches and below the bases of the pilasters by a narrow strip of white sandstone. Immediately above the faux colonnade, a pitched, shallow, red-tile roof completes the frieze. The wall above this roof is set back several feet from the wall below. In this wall, directly above the frieze are three Roman-arched windows with brick surrounds and stained glass; the center window is several feet taller than the other two. Directly above and centered in the gable wall is a white sandstone Celtic cross carved in deep relief. The gable, which extends slightly above the tile roof, terminates in a short section of flat roof on either side, which corresponds to the wide buttresses flanking the front façade. These buttresses are rectangular and, rather than tapering gradually, are terraced at three points: at the base of the three stained-glass windows, and at approximately the center points and tops of the smaller two windows. Each horizontal section of masonry in the buttresses is capped with white sandstone. The decorative frieze mentioned above spans between the buttresses on the front façade. A Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker is affixed to the buttress on the left of the main entrance. Below this is the cornerstone of the church, into which is carved "FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH ERECTED A.D. 1927" in a decorative script.

All windows in the church building are constructed of an opaque, nearly-monochrome stained glass, with no picture or pattern; the color of the glass varies slightly from pale amber to pale rose. All windows are arched, except where noted. Small rectangular panes make the greater part of the windows,

with a half-round area at the top of each window made up of three curved rows of increasingly larger *voussoir* panes. The very center of these half-round sections is either a single half-round shape (in the smallest windows), two quarter-rounds (in mid-sized windows), or a tiny segmental curve of glass at the point of seven small truncated wedges (in the largest windows). A wide horizontal framing member separates the half-round section from the rectangular in each window; additional horizontal and/or vertical framing pieces are found, depending on the size, shape, and location of a particular window. Nearly all windows contain one or more casements; these may be side-hung casements that make up the entire rectangular section, or top-hung casements found within a rectangular section of window in which sections of fixed panes are also present. The casements are secured by sash locks. The windows were purchased from the Browne Window Company and were manufactured by Richy Browne & Donald, Inc., of Maspeth, New York, which had patented the middle hinged opening on October 13, 1916.

On either side of the front façade is a small, one-room wing: the room to the right of the main entrance contains a chapel; to the left, the space contains a stairway to the choir loft. Each wing has a tall, narrow, rectangular window opening facing Holman Avenue and is roofed with red tile. The gable for each wing is perpendicular to the front façade of the building and terminates in a wall that mimics the front façade, in that the wall follows the shape of the roof about halfway down and then extends horizontally to either side. These wing facades, like the main façade, extend slightly above their tile roofs; the extensions are both capped and backed up with white sandstone.

The northwest and southeast elevations of the church building are nearly identical. A second story window above each of the one-story wings provides illumination into the rear choir loft. The top of this window on each side of the building aligns with the tops of longer second story windows – four on the southeast side, five on the northwest side – each of which contains two top-hung casements. Centered below each of these windows on the first floor is a shorter, wider window with double side-hung casements. A single row of slightly protruding bricks forms a hood above each arched window. The exterior window sills are made of white sandstone, slanted toward the ground. Also aligned with the tops of the second-story windows are the tops of two-story brick buttresses, with white sandstone caps, spaced equidistantly between each pair of upper and lower windows. Buttresses in the same size and design are located above each of the one-story wings near the front of the building, providing symmetry across each long elevation.

Across the very top of the northwest and southeast facades, just below the eaves, a corbel consists of a single row of bricks above a single row of dentils (evenly spaced solids and voids). Below the dentils, the vertical plane of brick masonry terminates in a series of Roman arches with corbelled “columns”, all in brick, which reach nearly to the tops of the second-story windows and buttresses.

Inside the church building, the main entrance leads into the narthex, which features a multicolored cobblestone floor and is paneled with Zenitherm, a simulated masonry product molded and colored to resemble stone. Zenitherm was manufactured between 1922 and 1935, first by the Zenitherm Company of Trenton, New Jersey, and then by the Structural Gypsum Company of New York.¹⁹ Advertised as having the look of stone but as easy to work as wood, Zenitherm was manufactured in the form of floor tiles, wall panels, and architectural ornaments. It seems to have been used in a wide variety of applications and building types, including many churches.²⁰

¹⁹ Jester, T. C. “Documenting, Evaluating, and Preserving Twentieth-Century Building Materials,” in *Standards for Preservation and Rehabilitation*: STP 1258, Stephen J. Kelley, ed., (West Conshohocken, PA: ASTM International), 1996, 359.

²⁰ Advertisements and literature published by The Zenitherm Company, Inc., 1926-1930.

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The narthex is separated from the nave by a richly carved, paneled oak wall with a ribbon of inset frosted leaded-glass panels at eye level. The aforementioned chapel (a simple, unadorned room) is located to the right of the narthex. A balcony, seating 75, is located above the narthex and is accessed from the left by the aforementioned staircase. The narthex also contains a framed copy of the Church's 1851 state charter and two bronze plaques. One plaque lists church members who gave their lives during World War II; it features a rope border and two crossed stalks of wheat, and reads "IN REVERENT MEMORY OF THOSE FROM FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DURING WORLD WAR II". Seven congregants are listed: Lee Joseph Shudde, Lawrence Werner Bruderer, Malcolm Dewees, Ralph Owen Huebner, Elwood Henry Herrmann, Richard Maurice Ringer, and Roy William Matlage. The text concludes with "PRESENTED BY THE ELLWOOD FAMILY 1946".

The other plaque commemorates the life accomplishments of Reverend Detlev Baltzer. It reads:

IN REVERENT MEMORY OF REV. DETLEY BALTZER, D.D.
JULY 29, 1889 – AUGUST 2, 1962

PASTOR OF FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH
HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY 9, 1919 – JUNE 15, 1959

PASTOR EMERITUS
JUNE 16, 1959 – AUGUST 2, 1962

PRESIDENT, TEXAS SYNOD 1925-1931
MEMBER, BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS
GENERAL SYNOD, 1933 – 1953
MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS – EDEN
HOME FOR THE AGED 1958-1961

FOR FORTY YEARS HE SERVED
FAITHFULLY THE MANY NEEDS OF
THE CONGREGATION AS A PASTOR,
TEACHER, AND COUNSELOR. "I AM
THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE:
NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER
BUT BY ME." JOHN 14:6

PRESENTED BY
FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH MAY 10, 1964

Beyond the narthex, the nave rises 48 feet to an open timber-truss roof. The roof trusses support ten large strap iron and cast brass light fixtures finished in rust-colored iron and gold leaf, fabricated by Jacobe Brothers of Houston. The nave contains 22 rows of oak pews, separated by a central aisle, which comfortably seat 700 people. The pine floor beneath the pews is bare, with the exception of the aisles, where it is covered by red carpet. A 10-foot-high Zenitherm dado surrounds the nave walls, which are finished above with plaster.

The walls of the sanctuary are clad on three sides by Zenitherm with plaster above. Above and behind the chancel, the choir loft houses the two-manual George Kilgen & Son pipe organ (Opus No. 3751), originally purchased in 1903 for the congregation's second sanctuary. (A "two-manual" organ is one with two manual keyboards played with the hands, in addition to a pedal keyboard played with the feet.)

The George Kilgen & Son Organ Company of St. Louis, Missouri, manufactured pipe organs between 1851 and 1939. The firm also provided the organ for the Majestic Theater in Houston and the Gallery and Chancel Organs (1930) in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. The organ was relocated to the current building, during its construction, by the Hinners Organ Company. A decorative metal grille opposite the organ, on the southeast side of the choir loft, screens the organ pipes.

The floor of the choir loft is terraced to provide visibility for the choir, for whom seating is provided via wooden bowback Windsor side chairs, finished to match the rest of the chancel furniture and the wood flooring. The rear choir loft is identically constructed, with matching Windsor chairs and a terraced floor.

The oak pews and chancel furniture in this building were designed by Northrop and crafted by The American Seating Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which maintained a production facility in Houston. Their master woodcarvers, Alois and Anton Lang, are credited with crafting, respectively, the pulpit and the carving of Da Vinci's "The Last Supper" decorating the front of the altar.

The space below the choir loft contains restrooms, storage, mechanicals, and a space for preparation of the communion. Single-entry doors on the northeast side of each transept open to staircases that lead down to the abovementioned spaces and then up to the choir loft. About halfway up the more easterly set of stairs, a small door in the wall conceals a ladder of sorts, which can be climbed to reach an otherwise inaccessible full-sized door, ostensibly providing access to the workings of the pipe organ for cleaning and maintenance.

Massive masonry Roman arches, covered in plaster, separate the nave from the sanctuary and the transepts. The central (and largest) arch measures 22 feet wide and 35 feet high. Set on either side of this arch is a 35-inch-diameter circular polychrome boss tile seal. The right boss depicts the Evangelical Synod Seal and the left boss contains the Evangelical Union Seal. Transept arches on either side of the nave measure 18 feet wide and 30 feet high. Beyond the arches, the ceilings of the sanctuary and transepts are of the same design as the ceiling above the nave.

The roof above the nave terminates at a wall located at the junction of transept and sanctuary. This wall, like the front façade, extends above the red tile roof and is capped and backed up by white sandstone. The roof of the sanctuary is slightly lower than that of the nave but is otherwise identical to it. The rear wall of the sanctuary, above the choir loft, contains three stained glass windows similar in size and shape to those opposite them in the front façade, but of a different design. Each window above the sanctuary contains a blue field bordered in red and gold; circular designs are set in the upper halves of each window and in the lower halves of the two outer windows. The lower half of the center window contains a portrait of Christ, clad in a white robe and red cloak, holding a staff and surrounded by greenery. These windows were commissioned from Texas Art Glass, gifted by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stansbury, and dedicated on Jan 1, 1981.

Toward the rear of the church building, the transepts extend perpendicular to the nave to create a cruciform plan. The northwest transept contains ten arched windows: the gable wall includes three upper windows similar in design, size, and shape to those in the front façade, and three windows below similar to those on the first floor of the nave, but with a narrower shape. The other transept walls each contain a single set of upper and lower windows. The exterior facade of this transept is similar in form to the front façade in shape and extends above the red tile roof. On the short sides of the transept, at the eaves are three continuous rows of corbelling. Behind the northwest transept, a small one-story room off the sanctuary, accessed both through the nave and the door leading below the choir loft, contains a single-entry exterior door and three descending brick steps, all covered by a metal awning with scalloped

edges. This space is covered by a pitched red tile roof, and its rear façade includes a narrow arched window. This wall is shaped like the other façades, with the exception that it connects to the main building at the peak of the gable and therefore is only “half” of the other façades. Above this space’s tile roof is corbelling like that previously described on the transept, but farther below the eaves.

In the southeast transept, most of the windows are absent because the transept is at that wall connected to the bell tower. Directly behind the southeast transept is a two-story space topped by a flat roof. Inside are the rooms previously mentioned and an entrance from the rear parking lot. A small space is formed between the church building, bell tower, and Religious Education Building; this space is covered with a pent roof, above which a small arched window with brick hood pierces the northeast wall of the bell tower. This space also provides access to the front of the Religious Education Building.

The rear façade of the church building includes the three decorative stained glass windows previously described, as well as three narrow rectangular windows directly below them; to the left of these windows, in the stairwell, an identical rectangular window is placed at the mid-story level; continuing to the left of that are two one-over-one wood sash windows with security bars. Utility meters are also located on this façade.

The 100-foot-tall, 19-foot-square brick masonry bell tower contains the original church bell purchased in commemoration of the church’s 30th anniversary. The bell was forged in 1880 at the Buckeye Bell Foundry (a subsidiary of the Vanduzen and Tift Company, later Vanduzen Bell Co.) of Cincinnati, Ohio. This bell has rung over all three of the church buildings that the congregation has occupied throughout its history. Inside the bell tower, at the base of its southern wall, is laid the gray granite cornerstone from the second church building, which is inscribed in German.

The bell tower is not free-standing; it joins the rear of the church building to the Religious Education Building. The bell tower repeats several architectural details found on the church building, including the arched corbelling and decorative faux-colonnade, and is made with the same buff brick masonry walls, white sandstone accents, and red tile roof. At the base of the tower, as on the church building, a cementitious water table extends upward for several feet. On the southwest side of the tower, at the first-floor level, a single arched window opening is deeply recessed, with an angled stone sill and brick hood matching the windows on the church building. Above the first floor on all sides, the wall is slightly recessed, creating a panel effect. The lower edge of this frame is trimmed with an angled white sandstone sill; the sides are framed with two levels of bricks; and the upper edge is bounded by the aforementioned arched corbelling. Within this panel are two openings: at the bottom of the panel, a double-arched window with double hood; the center column supporting the junction of the two arches is comprised of a white stone column with Corinthian capital. Near the top of the panel, a long, narrow rectangular slot pierces the brick masonry. Above the panel, a white stone sill supports a base constructed of large blocks of white stone. Atop this base are corner blocks of brick, mimicking the shape of the front façade, with a long, narrow, blind arch centered below each stone-trimmed gable. These are connected by a faux colonnade with 10 unfluted columns with plain capitals, otherwise identical in design to the frieze on the front façade of the church building. The corner blocks and colonnades on all four sides give the illusion of a balustrade; set within this is a final story of brick. Each elevation of this upper block contains a triple-arched opening with unfluted columns and plain capitals of white stone. These openings are screened behind the columns by horizontal strips of material, painted dark red. The brick in this upper block is laid in a basket weave design, punctuated by six light blue header bricks spaced evenly above the arches and seven light blue header bricks in a descending zig-zag pattern on either side of the opening. Instead of hoods above the arches, protruding bricks form

a border completely around the opening, recalling the archivolt of the main façade. The pyramidal red tile roof is topped with a copper finial.

Connected to the bell tower on the northeast and southeast sides is the Religious Education Building. The education building's floor plan was innovative for its time as it provided for a departmental church school, with four large assembly auditoriums – two on each floor at opposite ends of the building, each surrounded by adjacent smaller classrooms. The facility is equipped with an indoor basketball court, dressing rooms, a stage, and two kitchens (one on each floor). It also has an attic and a basement.

The two-story, 115' x 70 building is organized in a U shape; two gabled wings parallel to the church building are connected by a hipped main section of the building. One of the wings is directly behind the bell tower and therefore is not visible from the front. The front façade of the Religious Education Building's main section consists of a buff brick Roman arcade and red tile roof covering a red brick walkway. The seven columns of the arcade are massive and square, with a single course of protruding brick forming a belt just below each semi-circular arch. The arches spring from this belt and are constructed of a wide band of bricks (alternating single-soldier and stacked rowlock/headers) and a narrow single course of headers. In the space between each pair of arches, a circle of rowlock bricks is filled with white stone. The exterior wall behind the arcade contains a pair of one-over-one windows (12 lights per sash) behind each column. A wooden double-entry door is located at one end of the arcade. Red brick steps with black wrought-iron railings lead down to the ground on either end of the arcade. Above the arcade, similar pairs of windows are located above those on the first floor. A single belt course of brick adorns this wall just below the eave.

The façade of the southeastern gabled wing projects slightly beyond the arcade, toward Holman Avenue. It is of the same shape as the gable-end facades of the church building and contains three large arched windows on the second floor (the center window being taller than those on either side of it), with three pairs of smaller windows below. A rosette of white stone at the peak of the gable is set into a brick border; the stone is decorated with six holes, set equally around a center hole of the same size, all within a plain circular border. The southeast elevation of the building resembles the long elevations of the church building, with alternating buttresses and windows, although both are smaller than those in the church building to reflect the smaller scale of the Religious Education Building. Upper windows are set into an arched opening, with a single course of projecting brick forming a hood over each window. The window openings are filled with a rectangular wood-sash window with sixteen lights in each sash, topped by a fixed half-round light. A pair of rectangular first-floor windows is located beneath each second story window. At the northeasterly end of this elevation, exterior entry doors are located one above the other, the upper being set into an arched opening with a fixed half-round light at the top; a single flight of metal stairs leads to the ground. The first-floor doorway is accessed via a set of four concrete steps and a stoop. Between the doors and the end of the building are a final buttress and a set of matching, single, rectangular upper and lower windows over which rowlock bricks form a lintel.

The rear façade of this wing also has a rosette centered in the gable. Below this on the second floor are five one-over-one decorative stained glass windows; the center three are set slightly higher in the wall than the two flanking them. On the first floor, six wood-sash windows are set in a row, with single windows toward the sides and two pairs of windows in the center. The space between the pairs of windows is considerably smaller than the space between each pair and the single window to its side. These windows have sixteen lights in each sash, and each is framed by a rowlock-brick lintel and an angled white stone sill.

The northern gable wing connects on the Holman side to the bell tower. Its northeastern façade is similar to that of the southern wing, containing stained glass windows on the second floor. In this case, four

rectangular leaded glass picture windows are arranged with a pair at the center of the wall and a single window to either side; these were moved from the congregation's second location. A donation from the Warnecke family, they date from 1901 and depict Jacob's Well as described in John 4:6-19. Below these are four similarly arranged rectangular windows. Extending over the rosette at the gable peak of this façade is a rounded metal hood; below the rosette is a contemporary spotlight to illuminate the ground below. The northwestern façade of this wing contains four second-story and three first-story windows with a first-story door; this door is sheltered by a pent roof, clad in red tile and supported by solid, shaped wooden brackets.

The space between these wings is completely filled. As viewed from Francis Street, to the left a large flat-roofed attic dormer projects from just below the roof ridge of the center section of the building. This dormer has a window on either side of a tall exterior chimneystack. Forward of the dormer (that is, toward Francis Street) and equal in width to it, flat-roofed volume extends to approximately 2/3 of the height of the southeastern wing to which it is attached. The northeastern façade of this volume contains two pairs of eight-over-eight wood sash windows above two pairs of 12-over-12 wood sash windows. The façade continues at the one-story level to meet the northwestern gable; a rooftop terrace above this section is accessed through two doors: one at the center of the two-story volume, and one directly behind that on the second-story rear façade of the center building section. Both doorways are shaded by copper awnings. Additional views to the terrace are provided by rectangular windows in all walls facing the terrace: one to the right of the first door; two directly opposite this on the northwestern wing; and seven on the rear wall of the center building section. The first-story façade below the terrace contains three pairs of rectangular wood-sash windows, and on the far left side of this part of the façade, a single-entry door accessed via two brick steps. The doorway and sidewalk to the street are covered by a low-pitched, hipped, red tile roof supported by eight square posts.

Throughout the campus, water is diverted by copper gutters on gabled roofs, interior gutters on flat roofs, and copper downspouts with plain rectangular heads. The lower sections of many of these gutters have been stolen for scrap and replaced with aluminum.

The remaining two buildings, the parsonage and detached garage, are sited on the east end of the block, beside the southeastern wing of the Religious Education Building, near the corner of Austin and Francis. The two-story, 60' x 26' Italianate Parsonage is constructed of buff brick and red tile to match the rest of the campus buildings, although it has very little white stone trim. The Parsonage is comprised of a main center section to which are attached a large two-story wing to the left, a small one-story space on the opposite side, and a one-story section at the rear of the building,

Both the main section and the two-story wing are covered with hipped roofs of red tile. Tall brick chimney stacks with elaborate corbelling and caps pierce the roof at either end of the main section; the stack between that part of the building and the two-story wing is completely enclosed by those spaces, whereas its opposite is placed on the exterior of the main building and is visible above the one-story space. The first floor contains a cobblestone entry hall, pastor's study, living room with fireplace, dining room, kitchen, and half bath. A spiral staircase provides access to an upstairs hall; off this hall are four bedrooms and two full bathrooms.

The front façade of the Parsonage can be divided into three bays of approximately equal size. The center bay contains the entryway, a single-entry French door with twenty rectangular lights, flanked by five-pane sidelights on either side, and topped by a semi-circular window similar in design to those found above stained glass windows in the church building. This half-round window is directly above the door, and a wide brick arch springs from the sidelights on either side. To the left and right of the sidelights, white stone pilasters are set upon square bases; their plain capitals are designed and function as brackets

to support an elaborate hood mold that essentially functions as a pent roof above the door. The hood is designed as a segmental arch which springs from horizontal members on either side, somewhat resembling an abstract version of the Greek letter *omega* (Ω) as well as recalling the gable-wall design found on the church and Religious Education Building. Small wall sconces are placed well to either side of the pilasters.

Above the doorway, three windows are set into arched openings in the brick wall. The center arch is slightly taller and wider than the other two. All three arched openings are filled with a rectangular four-over-four or six-over-six window with a plain, solid semi-circle of wood above. The arched window openings feature brick rowlock sills and are separated by “columns” of brickwork (undistinguished from the rest of the wall). Although these columns have no recognizable bases, white stone capitals are located at the tops of the window sashes. Two-course brick arches, with the upper course projecting slightly, spring from the capitals, and since the two capitals flanking the larger window each “support” two arches, these are twice as large as the capitals on the left and right, respectively, of the smaller windows.

A gable intersects with the hipped roof at the top of this bay, and the hipped eaves on either side project both below and in front of it. Centered in the peak of the gable is a round opening, circled by a single header course of bricks and filled with horizontal louvers.

The left and right bays on this elevation are identical to one another, with a joined pair of six-over-six rectangular wood sash windows on the second floor on each side, and a pair of arched windows (both identical in size and shape to the center window in the center bay) on either side of the first floor. The brickwork surrounding these windows is identical to those found in the center bay, with a large capital in the middle and smaller capitals on the sides. Finally, a downspout is located on each side of this façade, halfway between the outermost window and the corner of the wall; these are tied in to exterior gutters along the eaves.

A one-story section with a hipped roof and joined pairs of six-over-six wood sash windows is attached to the opposite side of the building.

As previously described, the main section of the Parsonage has a hipped roof with a gable over the entryway. On the left side of the building, as one faces the front façade, the roof ridge running from the center ridge to the left rear eave is truncated by the center ridge of the two-story wing. This wing shares a continuous eave with the main section on the rear of the building, but the wing is set back about 5-6 feet from the front of the main façade, and so the wing and the main section have separate eaves at the front of the building. Facing the southeast façade of the building, therefore, walls of both the wing and the main section are visible; the wing covers about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the main section’s elevation. The other $\frac{1}{4}$ contains two six-over-six wood sash windows, one on each floor, with brick soldier lintels and rowlock sills angled toward the ground. The front (southeast) side of the wing contains a joined pair of the same windows on each floor, and the southwest side contains sets of four joined windows on each floor, again with brick lintels and sills. These four-window sets make up nearly the entire façade.

On the opposite side of the building, a single one-story room is attached to the rear half of the northeastern façade of the main section of the Parsonage. The front half of the façade (to the left of the attached room) includes a single six-over-six window on the second floor, aligned at the left side of its frame with the left side of a joined pair of fixed, single sash, three-over-three windows on the first floor. At the very center of the façade, the left edge of the chimney stack aligns with the left edge of the one-story room. The room appears to have originally had a flat cement roof, which was converted to a shed

roof with composition shingles at some later date. Two air conditioning units are located on the ground next to the one-room section, with an electrical box mounted on the wall nearby.

The one-room section is accessed through a single-entry door via a set of four concrete steps with a contemporary black metal railing on either side. The solid exterior door is now covered with a black metal storm door. The door is covered with a small, hipped, pent roof clad in red tile and supported by two open triangular wooden brackets. To the right of the door, a six-over-six window is set so that its sill and the door sill are in line. A rectangular copper downspout head diverts water from an interior gutter; the original downspout has been replaced with painted metal. The sides of this section have a small four-over-four wood sash window set high in each wall.

A 22' x 18' detached two-car garage with upstairs custodian apartment is the final structure on the property. It is situated to the northeast of the Parsonage. The roof of this building is hipped, with small gables centered on the front and rear eaves. The front façade of this building is, like the Parsonage, divided into three bays. A single, wide, six-over-six wood sash window is located on the second floor in each bay. A fourth identical window is set in the left bay on the first floor. Slightly left of center in the center and right bays are two single-car garage door openings. The center door is a functioning garage door, while the opening to the right has been covered with a solid sheet of metal with vertical corrugation. Both garage-door openings are covered with a single rounded metal hood. At the top of the center bay, a rectangular louvered vent is located at the very peak of the gable. Additional windows are located on the second story above the garage. The eaves of the garage and the Parsonage are wide and bracketed, with half-round exterior metal gutters and downspouts on all four sides of the roof.

In 2002, when the nomination for Recorded Texas Historical Landmark was completed, the applicants noted that “during the 75 year history of this building it has virtually undergone no significant architectural change” and supplied photographs to support their statement.

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The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Steph McDougal, summer intern, under the supervision of Randy Pace, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION

The HAHC shall review each application for designation of a protected landmark that is included in an application for designation of a landmark at the same time and in the same manner as it reviews and considers the application for a landmark. The HAHC and the Planning Commission, in making recommendations with respect to a protected landmark designation, and the City Council, in making a

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designation, shall consider whether the building, structure, site, or area meets at least three of the criteria in Section 33-224, or one of the criteria in Section 33-229, as follows:

S **NA**

S - satisfies **NA - not applicable**

Meets at least three of the following (Sec. 33-229(a)(1):

- (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation (Sec. 33-224(a)(1);
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event (Sec. 33-224(a)(2);
- (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation (Sec. 33-224(a)(3);
- (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city (Sec. 33-224(a)(4);
- (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood (Sec. 33-224(a)(5);
- (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation (Sec. 33-224(a)(6);
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present (Sec. 33-224(a)(7);
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride (Sec. 33-224(a)(8).

AND

- (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b).

OR

- The property was constructed before 1905 (Sec. 33-229(a)(2);

OR

- The property is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as a “contributing structure” in an historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Sec. 33-229(a)(3);

OR

- The property is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark (Sec. 33-229(a)(4).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Staff recommends that the Houston Planning Commission accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommend to City Council the Landmark and Protected Landmark Designation of the First Evangelical Church and Education Building at 1311 Holman Road.

SITE LOCATION MAP
FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH AND EDUCATION BUILDING
1311 HOLMAN ROAD
NOT TO SCALE

