

INSIDE: Adapting Capital Projects for Hard Times — Good News, Creative Solutions

COMMON BOND

Vol. 23, No. 1 and 2 Special 2009 Edition

The Unsung Synagogues of New York City

THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY

The New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program offers congregations throughout New York State financial and technical assistance to maintain, repair, and restore their buildings. In addition to providing hundreds of thousands of dollars in matching grants each year, the Conservancy offers technical help, workshops for building caretakers, and publications.

Common Bond is the technical journal of the Sacred Sites Program. It is funded by grants from State Senator Liz Krueger/New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; and contributions from friends and readers.

Editor: Ann-Isabel Friedman
Managing Editor and Designer: Eirik J. Omlie

One-year subscriptions are available for \$15.
Back issues are available in print and online at
http://www.nylandmarks.org/publications/common_bond/

For additional information about the Sacred Sites Program or *Common Bond*, please contact:

The New York Landmarks Conservancy
One Whitehall Street
New York, NY 10004

212.995.5260
nylandmarks.org

The New York Landmarks Conservancy

Peg Breen, President
Ann-Isabel Friedman, Sacred Sites Program Director
Colleen Heemeyer, Manager of Grants and Technical Services

Sacred Sites Committee

Justin Abelow, chair
Oscar K. Anderson III
The Reverend Canon George W. Brandt Jr.
Stuart P. Feld
Robert C. Graham Jr.
The Reverend John A. Kamas
John J. Kerr Jr., Esq.
Malcolm MacKay
The Reverend Dr. Thomas F. Pike
Peter Quinn
Eric D. Rosenfeld
Marc P. Schappell
Joanne M. Stern

Common Bond Vol. 23, No. 1 and 2 Special 2009 Edition

Contents

A Shul Grows in Brooklyn (and Queens)	3
Synagogues Change Shape in the Bronx	12
Synagogues of Staten Island	15
Persevere and Preserve	16
Good News in Tough Times	18
Sacred Sites News	22

Contributors

Jane Cowan is a historic preservation consultant whose work includes research, writing, and built-environment education.

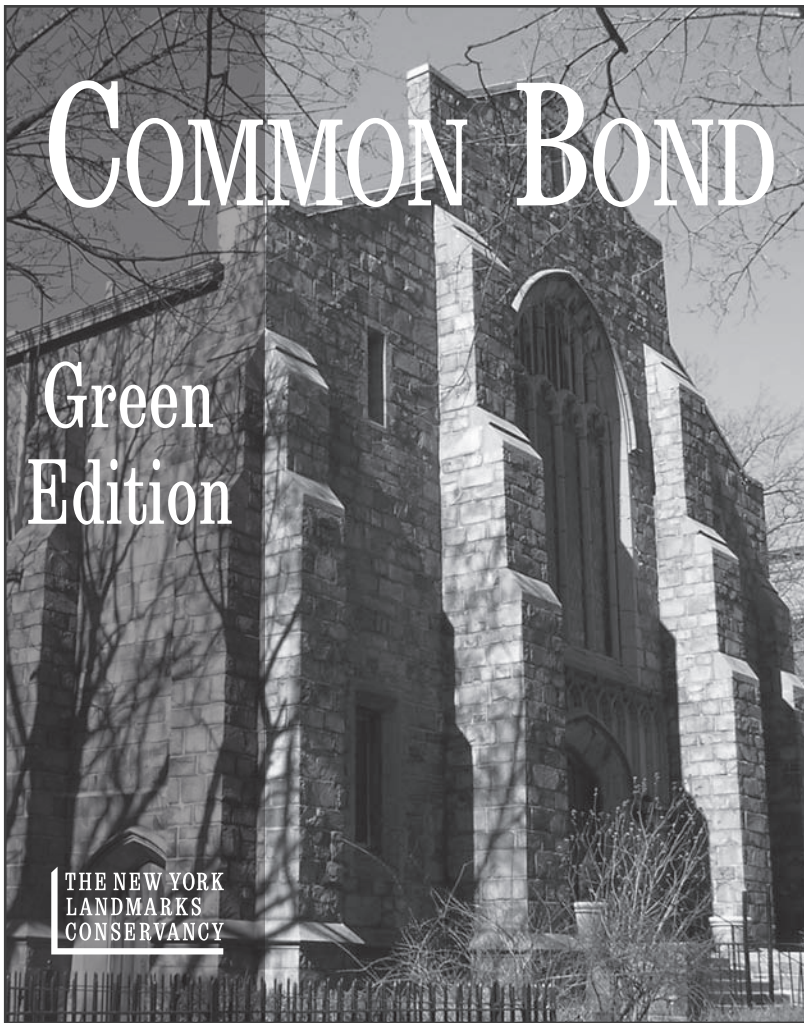
Ian Dull is a 2009 graduate of Yale and a Conservancy staff intern.

Anthony W. Robins is a writer and historian whose work over 25 years has focused both on historic preservation and on interpreting New York history and architecture for a wide, general audience. His articles have appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Forward*, as well as *Gourmet*, *Connoisseur*, *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *New York Magazine*. He has taught at Williams College and New York University, and leads a popular annual seminar at the Municipal Art Society teaching New Yorkers how to research the city's buildings.

Photography

All photos by Conservancy staff except: Temple Beth-El of Borough Park (Cover and page 4), Shaari Zedek Synagogue (page 5), Kol Israel (page 5), Young Israel of Flatbush (page 7), The Free Synagogue of Flushing top photo (page 7), The Free Synagogue of Flushing (page 8), Astoria Center of Israel (page 8), Ocean Parkway Jewish Center (page 9), The Jewish Center of Kings Highway (page 10), The Rego Park Jewish Center window and exterior close-up (page 10), Kingsway Jewish Center (page 11) by Anthony W. Robins. Temple Emmanu-El (page 15) by Barnett Shepherd. German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul (pages 16-17) photos and illustrations by Kaitsen Woo Architect, PC.

COMMON BOND SPECIAL 'GREEN' EDITION



The Conservancy's Sacred Sites program is pleased to announce that it will be launching an exclusive online-only Spring 2010 *Common Bond*. Subscribers will be able to view and download the special edition, which will feature an in-depth look at the latest trends in greening sacred sites and historic religious institutions. To ensure you receive a copy please send your email address to eirikomlie@nylandmarks.org

COMING SPRING 2010

Help Us Publish *Common Bond*

Every year *Common Bond* reaches a nationwide audience of more than 6,000 readers with articles inspired by your questions, challenges and success stories. It remains the only journal in America focused on giving you vital information about the maintenance and restoration of historic religious properties, providing a forum on architectural solutions, project administration, fundraising, building elements, conservation techniques, and technical maintenance. This year we lost long-time support when a foundation folded and as the cost of printing and mailing continues to increase, your contributions to help defray the costs are more important than ever.

***Common Bond* depends on support from you.** We cannot afford to publish and print two issues of *Common Bond* each year without financial help from readers like you.

For just \$15, you can underwrite the cost of your own subscription.

For fast and easy subscription renewal, visit:
http://www.nylandmarks.org/publications/common_bond/



A Shul Grows

in Brooklyn (and Queens)

By Anthony W. Robins

The New York Landmarks Conservancy began an unprecedented City-wide synagogue survey in 2007 to identify buildings of great architectural and historical interest and to reach out to congregations with technical assistance and grants. This survey is the basis for the newly launched Historic Synagogue Fund.

The following pages highlight the survey results.



Above left: The former Shaari Zedek Synagogue, now St. Leonard's Church, was designed by Eugene Schoen. Above right: Kol Israel features a grand entrance with layers of spiral colonnettes. Opposite page: The similarly decorated, monumental entrance at Temple Beth-El of Borough Park.

New York is one of the world's great Jewish cities – for much of the 20th century, no other city had so large a Jewish population, some two million people. Consequently New York is home to an enormous number of current and former synagogues.

Some have always been well-known in the wider world – Fifth Avenue's Temple Emanu-El (Hebrew for God is With Us), for instance, the city's largest – while others have gained fame through major, well-publicized restoration campaigns, most notably the extraordinary rescue of the Eldridge Street Synagogue on the Lower East Side.

But New York's Jewish world extends well beyond the shores of Manhattan. Brooklyn and Queens both have Jewish populations that over time have numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Those communities are younger than Manhattan's, which was founded in the mid-17th century. Brooklyn's Jewish population and earliest synagogues date to just before the Civil War, while those of Queens developed in the early to mid-20th century. But both boroughs have been home to hundreds of synagogues, and the Conservancy's survey has uncovered dozens of such buildings of great architectural and historical interest.

Through the Conservancy's ongoing efforts, and with funding from the Preserve New York Grant Program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts, ten such synagogues are now newly listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built during a 50-year period – 1909 for the earliest, 1951-57 for the latest – they were all designed by Jewish architects, some of whom specialized in synagogue design, others of whom generally worked on different building types. These synagogues vary in size and shape, and reflect differing populations and differing ideas – not just about the appropriate architectural style for a synagogue but also about the appropriate function of such buildings. Together, they offer

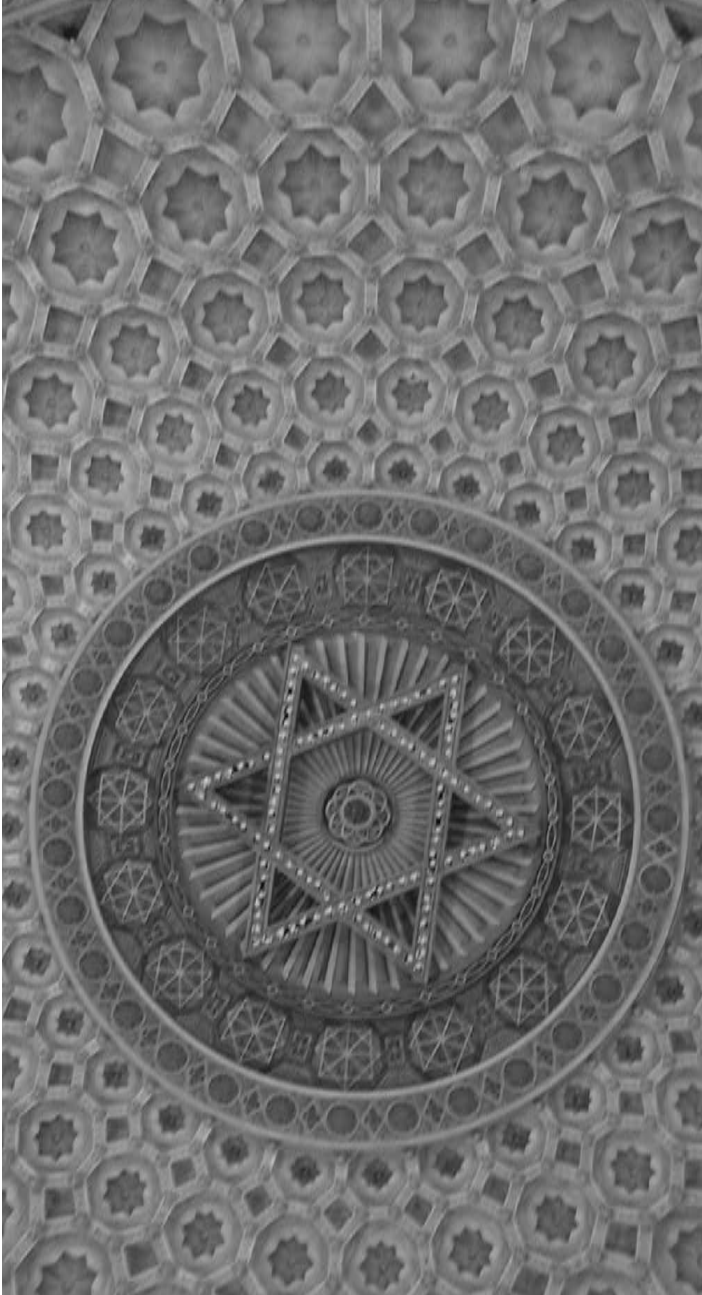
an overview of Jewish life in New York City during the first half of the 20th century.

Shaari Zedek (765 Putnam Street, Brooklyn)

The earliest of the ten is the Shaari Zedek Synagogue (Eugene Schoen, 1909-10), later known as Achavat Achim (Hebrew for Brotherly Love), and today as St. Leonard's Church. It dates from a period when Bedford-Stuyvesant had a significant Jewish population. The congregation considered itself "Conservative," eschewing the traditional gender-separate seating, with services including an organ and choir, and English-language sermons.

Eugene Schoen – though today better known as a furniture designer – was a prominent early-20th-century architect interested in progressive design trends. At the beginning of his career he traveled to Vienna to meet such modern architectural luminaries as Otto Wagner and Josef Hoffmann, the latter a founder of the Vienna Sezession. One of Schoen's earliest works, Shaari Zedek (Hebrew for Gates of Righteousness) combines classical vocabulary with a modern flavor. The building's façade is faced in brick with cast-stone ornament, with a prominent dentilled cornice (partly removed); its ornament, while based on classical forms, includes geometrically patterned brickwork that suggests the influence of the modern work that Schoen would have seen in Vienna.

The congregation grew rapidly, and moved to larger quarters in the early 1920s (its new home in Crown Heights, now the First Church of God in Christ, see page 13, was inaugurated in a ceremony that included the participation, from the capital, of President Coolidge). Shaari Zedek sold the building to another, older Brooklyn congregation,



Temple Beth-El of Borough Park's 81-foot-diameter octagonal Guastavino ceiling dome with intricate Moorish style plaster work.

Achavat Achim. By 1944, however, the Jewish population of Bedford-Stuyvesant had shrunk significantly, and the building was purchased by St. Leonard's Church, part of a new Afro-American Orthodox denomination with Caribbean roots. After 65 years, St. Leonard's has maintained the building twice as long as the two synagogue congregations combined.

Kol Israel (603 St. Johns Place, Brooklyn)

The smallest of the ten is Congregation Kol Israel (Tobias Goldstone, 1928) in Crown Heights. A so-called "tenement synagogue," it occupies a long, narrow tenement-sized building lot of the kind common to many older small synagogues on the Lower East Side. Built for a group of Eastern European immigrants striving to preserve traditional Jewish practice, Kol Israel (Hebrew for All Israel) was an Orthodox synagogue in a sea of modern Reform congregations. Its architectural style is simple – this was a congregation of modest means – but the plain stone-faced building includes a grand entrance with layers of spiral colonnettes in ornate patterns, supporting a series of round arches.



Louis Allen Abramson designed Young Israel of Flatbush in 1923. Abramson's Moorish-inspired design includes ogival arches, horseshoe arches, slender minarets, and polychromatic tiles.

That design reflects the 1920s phenomenon of the so-called "Semitic" style, combining Moorish ornament with Judaic motifs, a phenomenon that can be traced back to mid-19th century Europe and a belief that the Moorish represented a more "Eastern," and therefore more culturally appropriate style for Jewish buildings, as opposed to styles based on church architecture.

Temple Beth-El of Borough Park (4802 15th Avenue, Brooklyn)

A grander example of the "Semitic" style is Temple Beth-El of Borough Park (now Young Israel-Beth El; Shampan & Shampan, 1920-23). Its Orthodox congregation – Central and Eastern European immigrants who had become prosperous bankers, merchants and professionals – commissioned a synagogue that the *New York Times* described as "a new house of worship of unusual beauty."

Shampan & Shampan were well known for their apartment houses and garment-district loft buildings, but they also designed several synagogues. Beth-El's (Hebrew for House of God) principal façade includes a grander version of the colonnettes-and-arch entrance at Kol Israel. The two main colonnettes are decorated with an ornate diaper (diamond shaped) pattern often seen in Moorish design. The triple entrance within the arch is framed in cast-stone adorned with Arabesque designs, into which are mixed Judaic symbols, notably a shield with a ceremonial *menorah* (candelabra) in the triangular pediment above the central doorway.

The building's glory, however, is its sumptuously ornamental sanctu-



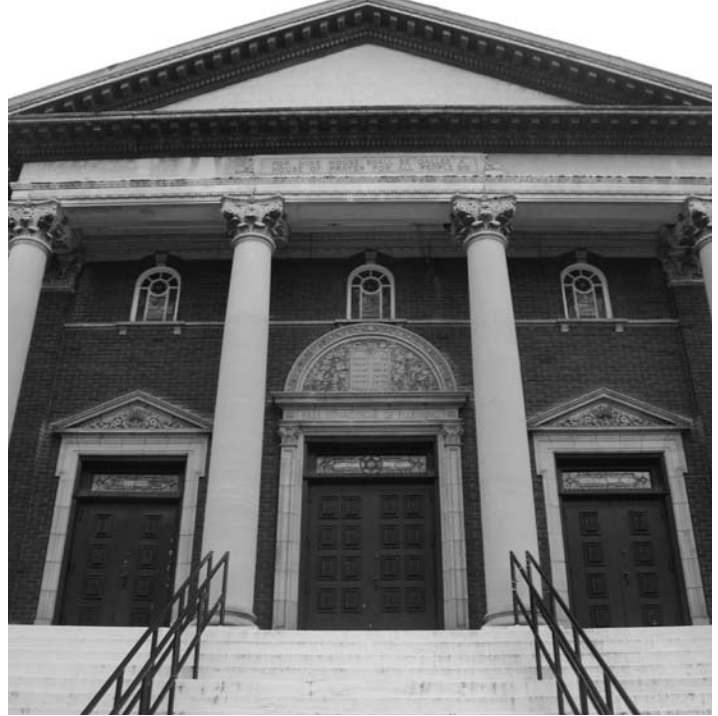
The ark in the sanctuary of Young Israel of Flatbush is a classically-inspired design with twin columns supporting an arch. Above the ark is a representation of the two Tablets of the Law.

ary, including an enormous, 81-foot-diameter octagonal Guastavino ceiling dome – said to be the third largest such dome in the country at the time of its construction. The sanctuary is covered in arabesques, with Judaic symbols mixed in. The coffered ceiling is dripping with *muqarnas* – stalactite forms borrowed from the most famous Moorish monument in Spain, the Alhambra. This sanctuary provided a fitting backdrop for the world-renowned cantors who helped win the synagogue fame as “Brooklyn’s Carnegie Hall.”

Young Israel of Flatbush (1012 Avenue I, Brooklyn)

Yet another take on the Moorish-influenced “Semitic” style can be found at Young Israel of Flatbush (Louis Allen Abramson, 1923). Abramson’s design includes such typically Moorish features as ogival (pointed) arches, horseshoe arches, slender minarets, and polychromatic tiles in an intricate Moorish-inspired design. The Avenue I façade is faced in polychromatic patterned brick – purple red and brown – laid in irregular geometrical patterns, and focuses on three enormous ogival arches with stained glass windows, the arches defined by a combination of patterned brickwork and tiles. The synagogue’s main entrance is set within a typically Moorish horseshoe arch supported on slender octagonal stone columns with ornamental columns. The various tiles are set in abstract and floral patterns, but also with six-sided forms suggesting a *magen david* (shield or “star” of David). A band of tile and patterned brick above the arch includes a frieze with a Hebrew inscription set between two *magen david* forms: “B’neureinu v’zekeineinu neileikh” – “With our young and our old we shall go” – words spoken by Moses to Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus.

Inside, the sanctuary continues the building’s Moorish design, nota-



Above: The Free Synagogue of Flushing has a grand, neo-Georgian temple front, approached by a sweeping flight of stone steps. The building is also adorned with ornamental Judaic motifs, notably a seven-branched *menorah* in the pediment above each of the side doors, and the two Tablets of the Law, inscribed with Hebrew letters representing each of the Ten Commandments.

bly in the polychromatic tiling that frames sections of the walls and surrounds each window opening. Throughout the sanctuary, typically Moorish ornament intermingles with such Judaic symbols as a *magen david*. At the front, the ark is more of a classically-inspired design, with twin columns supporting an arch; above the ark itself is a representation of the two Tablets of the Law. The sanctuary is lit by enormous windows of polychromatic leaded glass, for the most part adorned with geometric patterns, but also including symbols inscribed with the names of the Twelve Tribes.

Free Synagogue of Flushing (136-23 Sanford Avenue, Queens)

The mid-1920s alternative to the Moorish was one of several variants of the neo-Classical – including the neo-Renaissance and the neo-Georgian. The Free Synagogue of Flushing (Maurice Courland, 1927),



Above: The Free Synagogue of Flushing’s sanctuary is lit by enormous leaded-glass windows of Jewish themes while the crowning shallow dome rises to a leaded-glass skylight with a *magen david* in its center.

one of the earliest synagogues surviving in Queens, was built to house an offshoot of the Free Synagogue movement founded in Manhattan by the Reform rabbi Stephen Wise. Architect Courland – born in Palestine and trained at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts – came to New York after first working in Buenos Aires, and became a specialist in synagogue design. He designed the Flushing synagogue with a grand, neo-Georgian temple front, approached by a sweeping flight of stone steps. The building is adorned with ornamental Judaic motifs, notably a seven-branched *menorah* – a reference to the seven-branched light that burned in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem – in the pediment above each of the side doors, and the two Tablets of the Law, inscribed with Hebrew letters representing each of the Ten Commandments, in the lunette above the main entrance, as well as a *magen david* in the leaded glass transom above the main entrance.

Inside, the sanctuary is a single large domed space, with no separate gallery to serve as a women’s section – an arrangement reflecting the egalitarian theological position of the Reform movement. The sanctuary’s detailing continues the melding of classical ornament and Jewish themes in, for instance, the ark – the receptacle for the Torah scrolls – which is set between two classical columns supporting a broken pediment, within which is another representation of the Tablets of the Law, while metal grilles in the walls above the ark combine classical swags with the menorah. The sanctuary is lit by enormous leaded-glass windows on Jewish themes – among its most impressive features – while the crowning shallow dome rises to a leaded-glass skylight with a *magen david* in its center.

**Astoria Center of Israel
(27-35 Crescent Street, Queens)**

At the other end of Queens, the Astoria Center of Israel – another of the borough’s few surviving early-20th-century synagogues – was built 1925-26 to designs by the same Louis Allen Abramson who had used Moorish to great effect at Young Israel of Flatbush. Abramson deeply admired the work of McKim, Mead & White, ascribing his taste for Italian Renaissance designs directly to “Stanford White’s

Right: The Astoria Center façade and interior Louis Pierre Rigal mural. The French artist added the mural a few years after the synagogue’s construction.





The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center in Brooklyn.

Italian.” The synagogue’s two-story tall, five-bay wide façade, in brick with cast-stone trim, is defined by double-height Ionic piers, flanking round-arched windows, supporting an entablature and topped by a balustrade. Its round-arched entrance is topped with a cartouche (shield-like ornament, with inscription or sculptural decoration, usually surrounded with carved ornamental scrollwork) – a classical detail – within which is inscribed a *magen david*. Renaissance-inspired details in the main sanctuary include double-height round-arched windows set between fluted pilasters, and the faux marble ark of piers supporting an architrave (classically decorated beam) topped by an elaborate broken pediment with a representation of the Tablets of the Law.

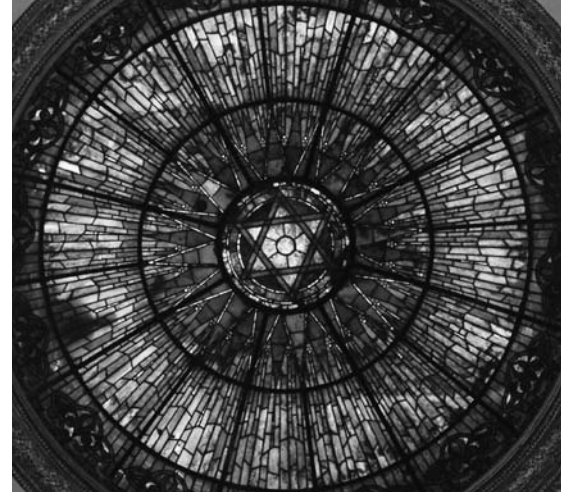
The Astoria Center is particularly interesting for a set of murals, added a few years after its construction, by French artist Louis Pierre Rigal (1889-1985). Rigal studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and later in Rome, and in 1925 exhibited at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes – the famed exposition that eventually gave rise to the name “Art Deco.” In New York, Rigal designed work at the Waldorf-Astoria – and also at the Astoria Center.

Figurative painting in synagogues is relatively rare – because a common reading of the second of the Ten Commandments suggests that it forbids such representation – but it is not unknown. Rigal’s subject matter was selected by the congregation’s rabbi, who chose one Biblical source and one Talmudic source: The dove and the olive branch from the Noah story in Genesis, and a well-known aphorism from the Talmud’s tractate *Pirkei Avot* (“Chapters of the Fathers”), a collection of sayings and moral instruction from the early rabbis: “Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion, to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven.”

Ocean Parkway Jewish Center (550 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn)

The name “Astoria Center” refers to a new, and particularly American, synagogue innovation: the Jewish Center – which served not only as a place of worship, but also as a center of community life. Besides a sanctuary, a Jewish center would include classrooms and social halls and, in larger synagogues, even gymnasiums and swimming pools (giving rise to the expression “*shul* [synagogue] with a pool”). Louis Allen Abramson designed the very first official Jewish Center in Manhattan, as well as many others of the type. Abramson’s work at Young Israel of Flatbush was also of the Jewish Center type – even without that phrase in its name – including classrooms and a gymnasium.

A young architect in Abramson’s office, Samuel Malkind, went into independent practice and, together with his partner Martyn Weinstein, designed the Ocean Parkway Jewish Center (1924-26) in Brooklyn’s Kensington neighborhood. At five stories tall, the Center is quite as large as the flanking apartment houses – and at the time of its construction it towered over what were then neighboring two-story houses. A typical *shul* with a pool, the Center followed Abramson’s example combining neo-Classical ornament with Judaic symbols. For the principal façade, an elegant double staircase and porch lead to a triple arcade level that serves as a basement to the double-height temple front rising above. In the pediment at the top – where the Parthenon, for instance, had sculpted Greek deities – there are two sculpted lions supporting the two Tablets of the Law, complete with the Hebrew inscriptions traditionally included in such representations. The Renaissance inspiration shows up in the neo-Georgian entrance rotunda, described in the press as having “an ornamental plaster-



Above: The Jewish Center of Kings Highway was designed in 1928-30 by Maurice Courland, and features stained glass similar to that at Courland's 1927 Free Synagogue of Flushing.

coffered ceiling and walls of Italian travertine stone and Botticino marble." Throughout the sanctuary, such typically classical ornament as wreaths and swags intermingle with such Judaic symbols as a *magen david* or a *menorah*. Among its most impressive architectural features is its glass work: ten stained-glass arched windows, 18 feet tall, with Biblical imagery, and a remarkable stained-glass skylight dome in the center of the sanctuary's ceiling. What marks this synagogue as a true Jewish Center, however, are all the other spaces: class rooms, social halls, library, club rooms, gymnasium, and swimming pool.

**Jewish Center of Kings Highway
(1202-1218 Avenue P, Brooklyn)**

Yet another Jewish Center in Brooklyn, the Jewish Center of Kings Highway, was designed 1928-30 by Maurice Courland, architect of the Free Synagogue of Flushing. The Kings Highway synagogue originally complemented the congregation's first home, which was then converted to use as classrooms, gymnasium and the other community functions, so that the two buildings together constituted a true Jewish Center.

Courland's design for Kings Highway is a smaller version of his earlier work in Flushing – a temple front adorned with Judaic motifs mixed in with classical ornament. The sanctuary is a single space with a large coved ceiling rising to a small dome – there is no separate gallery to serve as a women's section. The detailing continues the neo-Georgian classicism of the exterior, with a similar cross between classical ornament and Jewish themes. Leaded-glass windows on Jewish themes light the space – organized in the same arrangement as at Flushing. The remarkable, wide central windows on either side of the sanctuary each include an image of two lions holding a Torah scroll, and a *magen*

david at the top of the arch. Other windows include roundels with specific Jewish images: one shows a *menorah*; another shows a pair of hands making the priestly blessing (*birkat hakohanim*); still another appears to represent the bush that burnt but was not consumed, in which God first appeared to Moses. As at Flushing, the ceiling rises to a leaded-glass skylight with a *magen david* in its center.

**Rego Park Jewish Center
(97-30 Queens Boulevard, Queens)**

The last two synagogues in the group – both built in the decade following World War II – are also Jewish Centers, enormous complexes designed in the newly fashionable modernism of the day. The Rego Park Jewish Center (Frank Grad, 1948) appears to be modeled on Bauhaus-influenced European synagogues of the 1930s, in particular the Oberstrasse synagogue built for a Reform congregation in Hamburg in 1931, with which it shares a severe stone façade relieved only by a central blind roundel – the Hamburg example inscribed with a *menorah*, the Rego Park façade with a *magen david*. The Jewish Center's main sanctuary is a spare Modern design, with modest geometric patterning.

In contrast to the severity of the architectural design is the remarkable ornamental treatment by the Hungarian-born A. Raymond Katz, perhaps the most prominent artist associated with 20th-century synagogue design in the United States. Katz became known for his adaptation of Hebrew calligraphy into a semi-abstract decorative medium acceptable to traditional congregations wary of representative art. On the Center's façade, just above the entrances, Katz designed a long mosaic, using color and geometric patterning in a Modern approach, but incorporating Jewish religious objects including a Torah scroll, the tablets of the Ten



Commandments, and the ritual symbols of several Jewish holidays. In the center is one of Katz's characteristic elaborations of a Hebrew letter, in this case the letter "shin" (often used as an abbreviation for the Hebrew word "shaddai," a Biblical name for God) sitting atop a menorah and including within its lines the bread, wine and candles of a traditional Sabbath evening meal. Inside the main sanctuary, Katz designed six tall windows, three of which include his use of calligraphy. Named for the three daily prayer services (and the Biblical patriarchs with which each service is traditionally associated), they each have a complex design interwoven with letters, symbols and abstract shapes and colors.

Kingsway Jewish Center (1485 East 29th Street, Brooklyn)

The latest of the synagogues – the Kingsway Jewish Center in Brooklyn (Martyn Weston and Herman Sohn, 1951-57) – bears some resemblance to the Rego Park Jewish Center, showing the influence of that same Hamburg model. A modernist building which can be imagined either as late Moderne or early Modern, with blocky massing and narrow vertically-oriented windows, it is a huge complex of a Jewish Center, complete with school building, gymnasium, swimming pool, and catering hall. Its main sanctuary is a modern version of a traditional Orthodox synagogue design, with a handsome ark at the east end, and a reader's platform facing it in the center closer to the west end. Instead of pews facing the ark, it has rows of seats on the north and south sides, facing each other, as well as a small balcony on the west end, all in blond wood. The entire space is lit by sunlight pouring in through tall glass windows on either side, and smaller windows above and behind the ark. The modernism of Kingsway Jewish Center seems light years away from the neo-Georgian classicism of, say, the Ocean Parkway Jewish Center – but the two buildings have an architect in common: Martyn Weinstein (Ocean Parkway) and Martyn Weston (Kingsway) are one and the same person – a charter member and later president of the Brooklyn Society of Architects (and still later, president of the Brooklyn chapter of the AIA).

The tall glass windows in the sanctuary may be Kingsway's most extraordinary feature. They were commissioned by the synagogue in 1955 from one of the 20th century's major exponents of Abstract Expressionism, Adolph Gottlieb, known for his own particular contribution to that movement, the "pictograph." In 1954, Gottlieb

Above and left: The tall glass windows in the Kingsway Jewish Center sanctuary were commissioned by the synagogue in 1955 from Adolph Gottlieb.

Opposite page: Rego Park Jewish Center was designed by Frank Grad in 1948, with windows and mosaic by A. Raymond Katz.



designed the Milton Steinberg House, a five-story extension to the Park Avenue synagogue in Manhattan, with a façade consisting entirely of 91 stained-glass windows. Extensive press coverage brought the Steinberg House to the attention of Kingsway, which commissioned ten major windows representing ten Jewish holidays, and eight smaller windows with simple geometric designs. With the disassembly of the Steinberg House in 1980, the Kingsway windows are now the only surviving intact architectural stained-glass work by Gottlieb anywhere in the world.

Ten synagogues represent a small fraction of the total built in New York over the past couple of centuries. But this group of ten in Brooklyn and Queens – from a tiny *shul* to enormous Jewish Centers, from Sezession to Georgian to Moorish to Modern, from the calligraphy of A. Raymond Katz to the murals of Pierre Rigal to windows by Adolph Gottlieb – captures something of the historic and architectural range of the Jewish experience in New York.

Further reading

For the history of Jewish Brooklyn, there is the 1937 classic, *History of Brooklyn Jewry*, by Samuel P. Abelow, and the more recent *Jews of Brooklyn* by Ilana Abramovitch and Seán Galvin (2001).

The classic work on American synagogue architecture is Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States* (1955). A more recent survey, with beautiful photos, is *Synagogue Architecture In America* by Henry Stolzman (2006). Sam Gruber's scholarly *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community* (2003), also beautifully illustrated, focuses on American synagogues of the 20th century.

Oscar Israelowitz has published many guides to the synagogues of New York – among them, *Synagogues of New York City: A Pictorial Survey in 123 Photographs*.

The indispensable work on the Jewish Center phenomenon is David Kaufman's *Shul with a Pool: The "Synagogue-Center" in American Jewish History*.

Finally, the National Register nominations of each of the ten newly-listed synagogues will eventually be posted online at the New York SHPO Web site <http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/>.



Synagogues Change Shape in the Bronx

By Ian Dull

Every synagogue and former synagogue of the Bronx is a surprise to enter. Green Pastures Baptist Church, formerly the home of Chevra Linas Hazedek in Bronxwood, a neighborhood of tenements and public housing projects in the East Bronx, reveals a modest buff and red brick façade to Ward Avenue. Its 1928 design incorporates a *mélange* of revival style tropes – wreathed columns, blind arcades, and pointed arches – but avoids ostentation. It quietly occupies its niche, nestled between a tenement building from the same era and the rowhouses that line its narrow street; its siting is appropriate for Brooklyn architect, Paul Lubroth, who designed a number of mostly vernacular (with some Neo-Renaissance details) tenement buildings in the Bronx, as well as in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

But where Green Pastures' exterior is unobtrusive and showing signs of age – cracks in its cast-stone and rot in its wooden sashes – its interior is opulent, covered from floor to ceiling in rich scagliola (highly polished and colored plaster imitating marble or granite – see *Common Bond* Volume 18, No. 1 and 2), Art Deco decorative painting, and theatrical, Jazz Age lighting. From the window border stencils and a handsome Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) with fierce, flanking lions painted above the altar; to the marquee-like rows of bulbs marching around the face of the balcony and circling a roundel window; and on to the fluted light fixtures, featuring both stylized tulips and *magen david* (shield of David or star of David) motifs – some of which dot the surfaces of the sanctuary unobtrusively, and others which hang on chandeliers in all of their Moderne glory – the interior of Green Pastures is a sight to behold. Opalescent stained glass windows throughout

Left: The oldest extant former synagogue building in the Bronx, and current home of the Morrisania Baptist Church, has undergone several adaptations to its ever-changing South Bronx neighborhood.



Left: A fluted Moderne chandelier from the former Chevra Linas Hazedek (Hebrew for Hostel for the Poor), now the Green Pastures Baptist Church.

the synagogue are intact from the original design, with symbols depicting Jewish holidays and events from the Torah – a design shared by the nearby Emanuel Pentecostal Church (Julius Bleich, 1925), formerly Congregation Emanuel (Hebrew for God is with Us), three blocks southeast, in Bronxdale. Only the stained glass dome crowning the sanctuary has lost some – or all – of its luster, having been covered since the late 1970s after an attempted

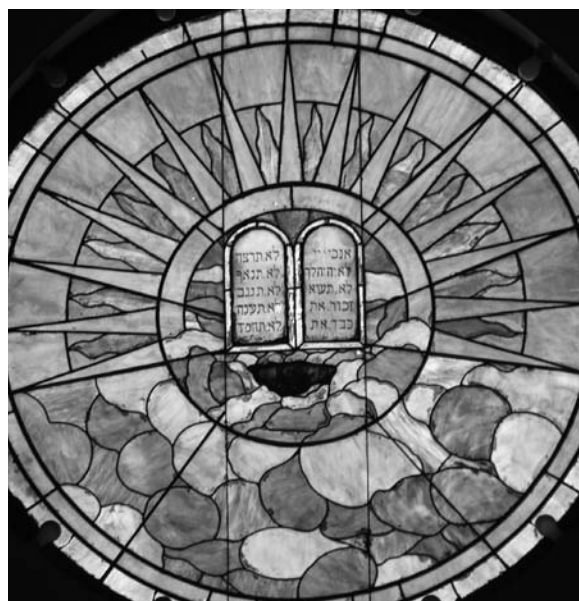
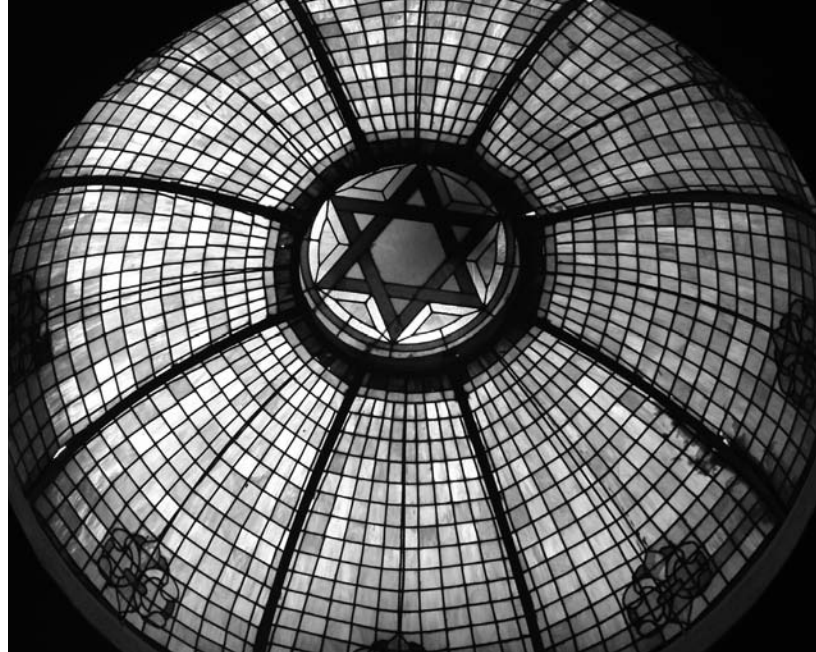
break-in destroyed some of its panels and left the congregation temporarily vulnerable to theft. The interior is an oasis for religion – and the Baptist congregation stumbled upon these greener pastures, purchasing the building in 1979 after Chevra Linas Hazedek abandoned it several years before.

The same story is true of most of the surviving pre-World War II Bronx synagogues, whose congregations left behind their original synagogues in the tumultuous 1960s and 70s. The Jewish population of the Bronx, which in the first half of the 20th century numbered a remarkable 585,000, operated 256 synagogues. The population quickly dwindled after the 1970s, and along with it went the number of synagogues in operation: today, only 32 synagogues hold services for a much reduced – though again growing – population of 50,000 Jews; the South Bronx, once the hub of Bronx Jewish life, is now home to only four congregations.

While a number of these synagogues have been demolished over time, including six in the past decade, new (and often very different) life has been breathed into the majority of the Bronx's former synagogues. Even in their new forms, some former synagogues still stand as pristine relics of their former congregations; Green Pastures Baptist Church, among others, embraces the Jewish iconography and history of their building. Other former synagogues changed hands or purposes enough that their historic character dissipated: many former synagogues have been all but demolished, their façades redesigned, their interiors remodeled, and their stained-glass windows removed to fulfill the new religious or secular missions of the current tenants. In an effort to document the unique histories and architectural heritage of Bronx synagogues, and to extend its survey of historic religious properties to the Bronx, the New York Landmarks Conservancy embarked this past summer on a survey of the Bronx's 120 extant synagogue buildings.

The monumental nature of some Bronx former synagogues (although it should be noted that many of the Bronx's Jewish congregations were housed in small, vernacular buildings – a reflection of the size and means of many Bronx congregations) has led them to many unique reuses in the rapidly changing demographics of some Bronx neighbor-





Top and center: Congregation Emanuel, replaced in 1978 by Emanuel Pentecostal Church. Bottom left: The former Concourse Center of Israel viewed from across the Bronx's bustling Grand Concourse. Bottom right: Jewish prayers and symbols on the exterior of Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale.

hoods. In Fordham, a once high-style synagogue has now been transformed into a discount supermarket, removing the building's historic character save a few sculptural details. The large interior spaces of one Neo-Renaissance synagogue off of the Moshulu Parkway have been adapted to house a Catholic Archdiocese Head Start pre-school. A beautiful Moorish Revival building from 1925 has become a University Heights public school with minimal changes to the historic character of its exterior. These uncommon adaptive reuses are representative of the many changes which Bronx neighborhoods have undergone over the past century; however, the most common future for synagogues in the Bronx was as a church, most often a Baptist or Pentecostal church.

As Anthony Robins has described in the preceding article, most pre-World War II synagogues around the United States, like contemporary churches, adopted revival styles in their architecture; the Bronx is no exception. A former synagogue like the Morrisania Baptist Church, a National Register-eligible find, recalls the architecture of Andalusia and the Near East, both historically homes of the Jews. But the revival style also conjures images of the great surviving Moorish revival

synagogues of Manhattan. Central Synagogue (1872), Eldridge Street Synagogue (1887) and Park East Synagogue (1889); these lavish Manhattan houses of worship surely influenced how Temple Adath Israel (Hebrew for Assembly of Israel) in Morrisania, now Morrisania Baptist Church, hoped to establish their synagogue in the Bronx at the turn of the century. Simeon B. Eisendrath & Bernard Horowitz's 1905 construction in stripes of iron-spotted and red brick has stood the test of time and is now the oldest extant (former) synagogue in the Bronx.

Skilled architects moved easily back and forth between revival styles. In addition to the modest Moorish Revival Adath Israel, Eisendrath & Horowitz also designed several larger, more high-style Classical Revival synagogues in Brooklyn: the 1924 former Shaare Zedek, later First Church of God in Christ, in Crown Heights, the 1908 Congregation Beth Elohim (Hebrew for House of the Lord) in Park Slope, the 1913 Temple Beth Emeth (Hebrew for House of Truth) Prospect Park South — handsome temple-fronted structures with elaborate carved limestone façades or trim. The former Adath Israel — whose interior brandishes a coffered tin ceiling hidden beneath its ceiling tiles — reveals an



Above and right: The Riverdale Temple features ornate modern fixtures designed by theater architect and synagogue member Simon B. Zelnik. The Temple was the one of the first Jewish congregations to break ground in the Bronx.



attempt to achieve a similar architectural goal within the means of smaller and less affluent congregations.

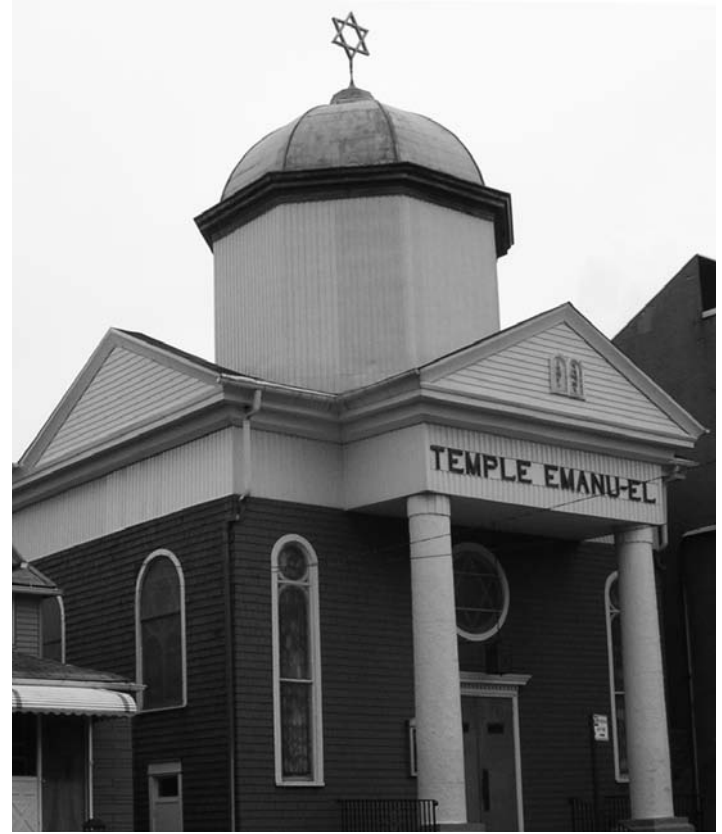
The aforementioned Green Pastures Baptist (Paul Lubroth, 1928-32) and Emanuel Pentecostal (Julius Bleich, 1925) churches likewise evidence this trend of revival styles in the early synagogue architecture of the Bronx. Emanuel Pentecostal is a red-brick Italianate Revival synagogue, decorated with tight blind arcades and a foliated cast-stone cornice with a copper *magen david* atop its gabled roof; although its exterior is quite different in style from Green Pastures Baptist, their interiors revive a similar Jazz Age vibe – completed in dark wood instead of flamboyant scagliola – and the work of what is likely the same stained-glass artist fills their windows.

Love Gospel Assembly, formerly the Concourse Center of Israel, is a monumental Classical Revival edifice on the fashionable Grand Concourse, constructed and attended by famous builder Sam Minskoff in 1921. The Grand Concourse, a southern portion of which comprises a National Register Historic District, was a major parkway designed in 1893 to connect Manhattan’s Central Park to recently-acquired parks in the rural North Bronx, and to provide a long speedway for the running of horses and carriages. Its broad boulevard spurred the development of the neighborhoods through which it passed, bringing in Manhattan architects like Emery Roth and Joseph Freedlander, and local Bronx architects like Jacob M. Felson, Horace Ginsbern, and Charles S. Clark (whose churches the Conservancy identified in its Bronx Roman Catholic church survey). Today many distinguished Neo-Renaissance and Art Deco buildings still beautify its thoroughfare. The former Concourse Center of Israel, now Love Gospel Assembly, was woven into the context of the grand boulevard of the Bronx’s high-style buildings when it was built in 1921. Its 3-story, fluted Corinthian columns add to the building’s monumental presence in the landscape, while thin Corinthian columns enframing the entrance lend human scale at street level. Although Love Gospel’s façade fenestration has been altered, the monumental nature of the structure and its richly detailed, gilded, and Classically inspired interior (with medallions adorning its double-high window bays and stylized pediments for door heads) make it a National Register-caliber property. These National Register-eligible finds are fine examples of their

respective styles, and evidence of the pride Bronx congregations – then peopled with new Americans – took in their neighborhoods. The Bronx has the distinction, too, of being home to new sensibilities toward building synagogues, a function of the relocation of an increasingly affluent Jewish population to the more suburban North Bronx beginning in the late 1940s. There, synagogue architecture made shifts toward high-modernism. The Riverdale Temple (Simon B. Zelnik, 1954) was the one of the first Jewish congregations to break ground in the area; the synagogue does so in high-style fashion, adopting a Mid-Century Modern design with sprawling picture windows and an open floor plan. The modern aesthetic encouraged multi-purpose rooms and a synagogue-center design, and the Riverdale Temple adapts that design beautifully, allowing the expansion of the sanctuary into a spacious social hall. Ornate modern fixtures and unique artwork by the architect – a member of the congregation – contribute to what is a lavish building, without the need for ornamentation per se.

A nearby neighbor in Riverdale, the Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale (Percival Goodman, 1959-62), dons a Brutalist shell of concrete and brick, and casts Jewish prayers and symbols directly into its concrete, the fabric of the synagogue. Goodman – who would become the most prolific American synagogue architect of all time (Samuel D. Gruber, *American Synagogues*, 93) – pioneered the use of modernist art and architecture in synagogues, as the neutral modern form could be freely adapted to Jewish symbolism and religious purposes. Earlier modernist designs, like the New Testament Church of God (originally the Jewish Center of Violet Park) in Allerton (1950), chose other methods of symbolic ornamentation – in this case a beautiful mosaic by A. Raymond Katz, whose work on the Rego Park Jewish Center played a large role in that synagogue-center’s recent listing on the National Register – to complement the rationalized modern aesthetic.

Our survey of surviving, architecturally significant Bronx synagogues benefited enormously from Dr. Seymour J. Perlin’s Bronx synagogue historical survey, *Remembrance of Synagogues Past: The Lost Civilization of the Jewish South Bronx*, available online at: <http://www.bronxsynagogues.org/>



SYNAGOGUES OF STATEN ISLAND

By Ian Dull

The Conservancy is now completing a synagogue survey of its fourth New York City borough, Staten Island. Highlights from the survey appear clockwise from the top left.

Mount Sinai United Christian Church (Former Congregation B'nai Jeshurun) (199 Victory Boulevard)

The oldest extant synagogue on Staten Island, the former B'nai Jeshurun (Hebrew for Sons of/Children of Israel) was built in 1891 for a congregation of German Jews who banded together in 1887. They occupied the synagogue until the late 1960s when the former New Brighton Jewish Congregation took over the space. The current Christian congregation purchased the building in the 1990s. Unfortunately the building, once adorned with its original clapboard siding, has seen many alterations over the years and its several congregations, and is now covered in a textured stucco which has altered the building from its historic aesthetic. Most early synagogues like this one, and the former Congregation Agudath Achim Anshe Chesed (Hebrew for Assembly or Brotherhood of People of Mercy) on nearby Jersey Street have undergone similar alterations.

Temple Emanu-El of Staten Island (984 Post Avenue)

This vernacular, Classical-Revival edifice has continuously housed Congregation Temple Emanu-El (Hebrew for God is With Us) of Staten



Island since it was designed in 1907 by Harold W. Pelcher. Whereas other early congregations on Staten Island relocated from their original synagogue buildings for several reasons (changing neighborhood demographics, need to expand, etc.), the congregation remained in Port Richmond since its inception, and has kept the original synagogue intact. The building was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the only Staten Island synagogue to have been listed so far.

The Temple Emanu-El National Register nomination is posted online at the New York SHPO Web site: http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/hp_view.asp?GroupView=102051 and accompanying photos: http://www.oprhp.state.ny.us/hpimaging/hp_view.asp?GroupView=102052

Temple Israel Reform Congregation (315 Forest Avenue)

The sanctuary at Temple Israel Reform Congregation is located in one of two "wings" of the synagogue's butterfly design. Percival Goodman, FAIA – America's most prolific synagogue architect – crafted the building for Temple Israel in 1964. Here, his proclivity toward the use of Modern architecture and Modern art to find a language for synagogue architecture is on display in high-style Mid-Century Modern. One can trace an abstract Jacob's Ladder motif from the tapestry-laden ark to the stained-glass rising above.

Persevere and Preserve

By Jane Cowan

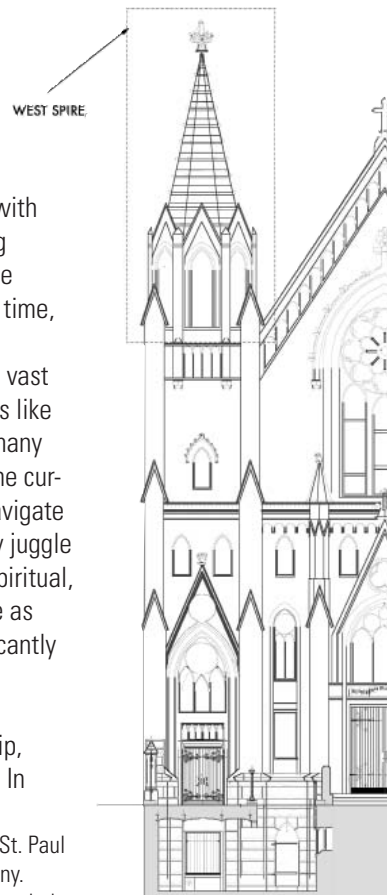
Architect's conservation-minded strategy lowers projected costs of historic church restoration

Throughout the grim economic climate of the past year, millions of Americans have had to adjust to new, painful realities. Lost jobs, businesses, homes, savings, and investments have up-ended lives across the country, from large urban centers to tiny rural communities. We have learned that in the age of globalization, all of our fortunes are connected; decisions and actions made in one locale can have an impact thousands of miles away.

Houses of worship have hardly been immune to the ill effects of the economic downturn. Like so many individuals, congregations have seen their endowments and returns virtually disappear. Congregants, faced with their own financial difficulties, are finding it harder to contribute. Grants and private funding are tougher to find. At the same time, many congregations have reported near-record attendance levels, in addition to a vast increase in the use of community services like food pantries and soup kitchens (which many religious institutions provide). Thus, in the current environment, congregations must navigate a new set of complex challenges, as they juggle decisions about how best to keep their spiritual, charitable, and community missions alive as they deal with the harsh reality of significantly diminished resources.

For stewards of historic houses of worship, the challenges are even more vexatious. In

Left: The German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul is affiliated with the Evangelical Church of Germany. With its two distinctive, limestone-clad and copper-clad spires the building is a prominent landmark in Chelsea.



addition to the usual costs associated with any building maintenance such as heat, electricity, etc., congregations that are housed in historically significant or landmark buildings face a special set of fiscal obligations. Discontinue the food pantry or fix the leaking roof? Repair the historic masonry or shut the pre-school? Restore the stained-glass windows or keep the building open only one day a week? No doubt, countless congregations have grappled with decisions just like these. Many congregations, though, have chosen to meet these challenges head on, with creativity, grit, and determination. They have decided that necessary preservation would not be jettisoned, and that it was equally as important as the institution's religious

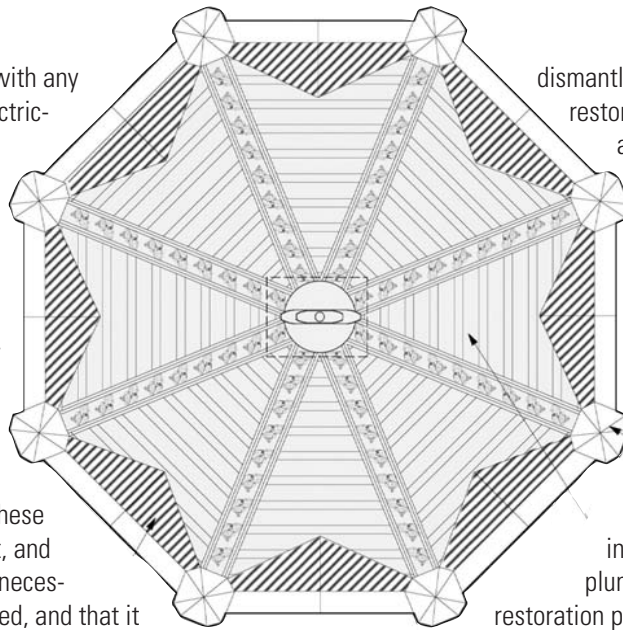
mission. How have they done it? *Common Bond* recently spoke with three congregations to find out.

German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul, New York City

Built in 1897, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul remains one of New York City's only German-speaking congregations. With its two distinctive, limestone and copper clad, stained-glass spires, the building is a prominent landmark in a predominantly low-rise part of Manhattan. While the spires are unique, they have proven problematic for the congregation for decades. As far back as the 1950s, congregants noticed irregular movement of the limestone cladding on the spires. Thus, it was not unknown to the congregation that the spires presented a problem that would not only compromise the historic integrity of the building, but, eventually, would create a safety issue. The culprit, according to a 2007 conditions survey completed by Kaitsen Woo Architect, PC, was the steel-frame "birdcage" inside the spires that was built with raw, un-waterproofed steel. Throughout the years, water penetrating the limestone masonry caused the steel birdcage to corrode and rust. Rusting steel expands considerably, thus placing stress on the outlying masonry.

After the 2007 conditions survey, the congregation asked Mr. Woo, principal of Kaitsen Woo Architect, PC, if the spires could be fixed. Yes, they could. Mr. Woo devised a solution that entailed

Drawings by Kaitsen Woo Architect, PC, detail the initial St. Paul tower stabilization plan that entailed dismantling the limestone and stained glass, restoring and treating the steel "birdcages," and reassembly.



dismantling the limestone and stained glass, restoring and treating the steel birdcages, and then reassembling. The estimated budget for this job was between \$1.5 and \$2 million dollars. In 2008, with the economy still roaring, the project seemed feasible. A grant from the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites fund provided \$30,000, and the congregation applied (unsuccessfully) to the state's Environmental Protection Fund for an additional grant. Since a big part of the congregation's income is from investments, there was a big hit in the fall of 2008 when the stock market plummeted. It was a new day. A \$2 million restoration project no longer seemed possible.

Yet the congregation knew it was necessary. They returned to Mr. Woo, and asked if he could devise a less expensive method of achieving the same goal. "I knew the most expensive component would be dismantling and reassembling the limestone and the stained glass," noted Mr. Woo. It is labor-intensive and requires careful documentation. The challenge was to figure out a way to treat the steel without taking down the cladding. Mr. Woo explained, "I had the idea of working in sections, much as you would with a small wooden-frame house." In addition to lowering the projected costs by as much as 75 percent, this approach is "actually more conservation-minded," according to Mr. Woo, because more original material is kept in place and there is less likelihood that historic fabric could get lost. Restorers will remove small sections of the limestone cladding in order to gain access to the steel birdcage. They will then treat, restore, or replace the steel, as is necessary, replace the limestone, and move on to the next section.

Now, the congregation has reapplied for a state grant, the Conservancy has rolled over its grant for another year, and work is expected to commence in the spring of 2010.

United Church of Cohoes

Known as the "Heart of the City," the United Church of Cohoes was built in 1865. It is a congregation that serves an inner-city population with, in addition to spiritual guidance, a social-justice center, tutoring center, six 12-step programs, GED center, and food pantry. Without a lot of expendable funds, it is no wonder that past repairs and maintenance were of the "spit and glue" variety, according to the Reverend Nicholas E. Tebordo, adding that, "We always tried to use local contractors as much as possible, but with some of the historic work, we knew that our local contractors didn't have the experience or expertise that the building required. We were spending money without a lasting benefit."

Congregant and grants coordinator Dennis Jordan told *Common Bond* that severe exterior cracking and loose masonry was presenting a dangerous situation. Additionally, a drainage problem caused plaster at an interior wall to fall. With a goal of raising \$25,000



Good News in Tough Times

By Jane Cowan

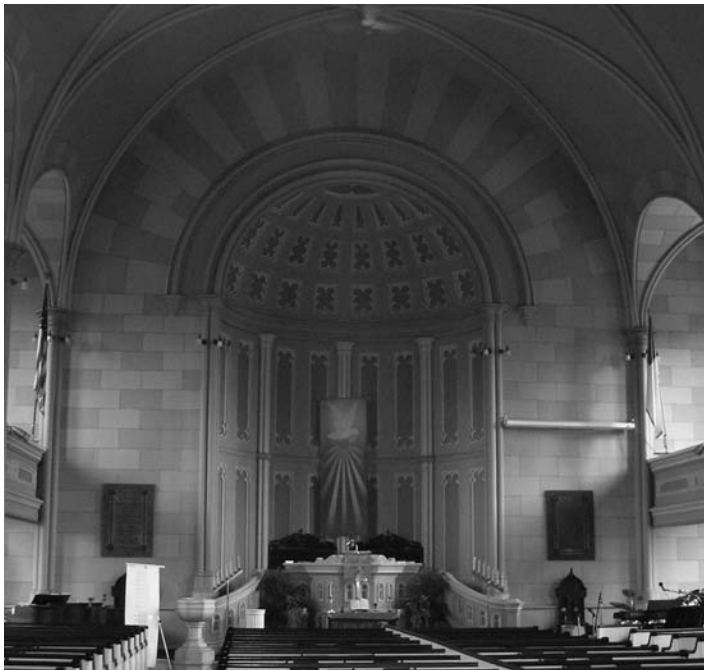
For congregations that have work underway or are in the bidding process, the economic downturn may actually be a blessing. It was for Our Lady of the Rosary and Shrine to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in New York City. The two-building complex consists of the parish church – a Georgian style building constructed in 1964 – and the former James J. Watson House. The house, a 1793 relic of lower Manhattan’s past as an elegant residential neighborhood, was designed by John McComb, Jr., the same architect who designed New York’s City Hall. Today, the Watson House, with its ship’s mast columns, serves as the parish’s rectory and shrine to Seton, the first American-born saint who lived on the site of the church in the early 19th century. By 1883, the Watson House had been converted into a mission serving the needs of immigrant girls from Ireland.

“Timing was everything on this project,” explained Lisa Easton of

Easton Architects, LLP. The cost of materials has come down, and contractors are willing to take the lowest possible profit margin. Ms. Easton described “really competitive bidding, and people needing the work,” as well as the fact that “this wasn’t a prevailing wage project,” as the factors that helped depress the costs. The work at the church and shrine, which includes pointing, brick restoration, window restoration and replacement, a new roof, column restoration, and a re-treated and re-coated stoop, was originally estimated at \$1.2 million. The actual cost? Approximately \$850,000, a significant savings. “Your dollars are going to go further at this time,” said Susan M. Auslander, president and founder of Carpe Diem Fundraising, who has been involved with the Watson House project for several years. She added, “If your congregation is courageous enough to go ahead right now, you’ll probably be rewarded with a lower cost, as well as the knowledge that you are creating jobs.” Both are certain that the price would have been higher before the economic downturn of late last year.

While it may seem counterintuitive to undertake a massive restoration project in the midst of a poor economic climate, for congregations that are able, now might be the ideal time after all.

from the congregation, plus \$25,000 from the New York Landmarks Conservancy’s Sacred Sites fund, and \$50,000 from the state’s Environmental Protection Fund in hand (part of a larger state matching grant which also helped fund stained glass window restoration), the congregation seemed well positioned to begin the needed repairs. The project was put out to bid. Sadly, all of the bids came back too high. “Finding a contractor to do the work at a price we can afford is not easy,” noted Mr. Jordan. Faced with this reality, the congregation collaborated with project architects, EYP Architects, and devised a new strategy, which dropped lower priority components (like the restoration of a fence), and divided the work into phases. Then, they put the project out to bid again. Miraculously, a new bid came in that was 50 percent less than previous bids. Astounded, Reverend Teborbo said, “If we had not received a satisfactory bid, God knows how we would’ve proceeded.” Luckily, they won’t have to find out.





Above and below: The 1853 Richard Upjohn-designed Christ Episcopal Church in Binghamton has had masonry problems for years; missing and delaminating stones characterized its façade. Opposite page: The United Church of Cohoes was built in 1865.

Christ Episcopal Church, Binghamton

The 1853 Richard Upjohn-designed church has had masonry problems for years; missing and delaminating stones characterized its façade. “The congregation started talking about restoring the masonry in 1985. I’ve been here for seven years, and it’s always been an issue,” said the Very Reverend John R. Martinichio. As with many congregations, the problem was the cost. According to Father Martinichio, in 1985, the cost estimate was \$185,000. By 2005, the vestry realized they really couldn’t wait any longer and decided to proceed, although the cost had ballooned to a whopping \$600,000. Even with support from the New York Landmarks Conservancy’s Sacred Sites program, the state’s Environmental Protection Fund, and the congregation’s own contributions, they still found themselves \$100,000 short. “We are all very committed and passionate about this church and want to preserve it for our community,” said Susan MacLennan, congregant and former warden. She continued, “We discussed doing only part of the restoration, but we decided that there was wisdom in doing the whole project at once.”

Thus, a resolution was made to return to the congregation and ask them to increase and extend their pledges for another year. The congregants agreed; nonetheless, there will still be something of a shortfall that will be made up through a loan or through the purchase of shares. Father Martinichio explains that the congregation is cur-



rently wrestling with the correct way to proceed.

Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2010 and last one season. While this project has clearly posed challenges to the Christ Episcopal Church, the fact that it has not been abandoned is testament to the power of a committed congregation, dedicated to solving a serious problem.

2009 Sacred Sites Grant Awards



The New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program is one of the oldest programs in the country dedicated to the preservation of historic religious properties. The program has made more than 1,000 grants totaling almost \$6.2 million to nearly 700 institutions since its inception in 1986. The Conservancy awards three kinds of grants: Sacred Sites Grants, Consulting Grants, and Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grants.

In addition to grants, the program has helped hundreds of landmark-quality religious institutions with hands-on technical assistance, referrals, and workshops on the maintenance and repair of historic religious properties and associated financial issues. For more information and an application form, please visit: http://www.nylandmarks.org/programs_services/grants/sacred_sites_program/

Sacred Sites and Consulting Grants

The New York Landmarks Conservancy awards Sacred Sites and Consulting Grants to congregations of all denominations that are planning or undertaking the restoration of historic religious properties. To be eligible, properties must be located in New York State, owned by a religious institution and actively used for worship, and listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places or designated pursuant to a local landmarks ordinance by New York State. Eligible properties include, but are not limited to, churches, synagogues, meetinghouses, mosques, and temples.

Albany

New Covenant Christian Fellowship, Albany
Replace Roof on Children's Sanctuary \$4,000

Presbyterian Church of Rensselaerville, Rensselaerville
Architectural, Engineering Fees for Steeple Restoration \$6,000

St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church, Albany
Conditions Survey \$1,000

Sweet Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, Inc., Albany
Repair Slate Roof and Gutters \$5,000

Bronx

Christ Church, Riverdale
Waterproofing of South-East Wall/Window restoration \$8,000

Delaware

Christ Church, Walton
Architectural Services for Tower Restoration \$2,500

Erie

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Buffalo
Plans & Specifications for Exterior Restoration \$6,500

Genesee

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Stafford
Roof Repairs \$5,000

Kings

Church of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn
Engineering Services for Floor Replacement/Repair \$1,500

Holy Innocents R.C. Church, Brooklyn Architectural Services for Window and Interior Finish Restoration and Repair	\$6,000
Mt. Zion Church of God (7th Day), Brooklyn Roof Inspection, Repair Scope, and Cost Estimates	\$4,000
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brooklyn Building Conditions Survey	\$4,000
Union Baptist Church (Bedford Stuyvesant), Brooklyn Stained Glass Window Restoration	\$7,500

Livingston

First Presbyterian Church of Avon Development of a Schematic Restoration Design for the Sanctuary	\$4,000
---	---------

New York

Mariners' Temple Baptist Church, Lower Manhattan Development of Façade Stabilization Plan	\$6,000
Old Broadway Synagogue, Upper Manhattan Construction Documents for Roof and Structural Repairs, Parapet Reconstruction and Skylight Restoration	\$6,000
Roof and Structural Repairs, Parapet Reconstruction and Skylight Restoration	\$9,000

Oneida

First Presbyterian Church of Holland Patent Construction Documents for Roof Replacement Roof Replacement	\$3,500 \$10,000
--	---------------------

Onandaga

Temple Society of Concord (Temple Concord), Syracuse Exterior Masonry Repair of Sanctuary Building	\$3,000
---	---------

Ontario

Trinity Church, Geneva Masonry Restoration at Buttresses and Spires	\$7,000
--	---------

Oswego

Trinity Church, Constantia Replace Roof	\$3,000
--	---------

Queens

Trinity Lutheran Church, Long Island City Architectural Services for Roof Restoration and Repair	\$5,000
---	---------

Tompkins

First Baptist Church of DeWitt Park, Ithaca Tower Masonry and Slate Roof Restoration	\$4,000
---	---------

Westchester

St. John's Episcopal Church, Wilmot, New Rochelle Historic Paint Color Analysis	\$1,000
--	---------

Wyoming

First Presbyterian Church of Wyoming Replicate Church Door, Repair Steeple, and Reinforce Balcony	\$5,000
--	---------

2009 Total Sacred Sites and Consulting Grants: 26 \$123,500

Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grants

For comprehensive repair and extensive restoration projects, the Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grant Program offers matching funds to churches. Matching funds must be donated from new sources. Since its launch in 2000, the program has awarded 75 challenge grants totaling \$2.2 million, generating over \$2.4 million in grant matches that will facilitate the completion of nearly \$45 million in restoration of historic religious properties across New York State.

Albany

Presbyterian Church of Rensselaerville Stabilization and Restoration of Steeple	\$35,000
United Church of Cohoes Masonry Restoration	\$25,000

Broome

Christ Episcopal Church, Binghamton Masonry Restoration, Cornice and Gutter Replacement	\$25,000
--	----------

Erie

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Buffalo Exterior Restoration	\$30,000
---	----------

Herkimer

Trinity Episcopal Church, Middleville Installation of Drainage System and Foundation Repair	\$25,000
--	----------

Jefferson

Church of St. Lawrence, Alexandria Bay Roof and Shingle Replacement and Window and Foundation Repairs	\$25,000
---	----------

Monroe

Christ Church, Rochester Restore Roofs and Drainage Systems of Church and Steeple	\$25,000
--	----------

New York

St. Bartholomew's Church in the City of New York Restoration of Dome and Support Structure	\$50,000
---	----------

Onondaga

St. James Episcopal Church, Skaneateles Replacement of Slate Roof	\$40,000
--	----------

Queens

Most Precious Blood, Long Island City Masonry Restoration and Roof Replacement	\$40,000
---	----------

Trinity Lutheran Church, Long Island City Exterior Restoration	\$30,000
---	----------

Seneca

Trinity Episcopal Church, Seneca Falls Church tower, Chancel Arch, and Rose Window Restoration	\$25,000
---	----------

Westchester

First Baptist Church, Ossining Restore Façade Masonry and Gothic Wood Trim	\$25,000
---	----------

2009 Total Wilson Grants: 13 \$400,000

Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grants Extended Five Years



The Church of the Most Precious Blood in Long Island City, a recent Challenge grantee.

Thanks to the generosity of Robert W. Wilson, the Conservancy is pleased to announce that the Challenge grant program will continue in 2010. For major restoration projects in New York State, we will have \$300,000 in annual Challenge grant funding for at least the next five years.

Our largest Wilson Challenge Grant to date is a \$70,000 pledge to Rugged Cross Baptist Church in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, which will help support the replacement of a severely deteriorated roof over the belltower and sanctuary.

For large-scale church restoration projects, the Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge offers matching grants of \$25,000 to \$75,000.

Priority is given to significant restoration of steeples, roofs and related drainage systems, and exterior masonry walls. Consultants' fees and planning documents are not funded. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Priority will be given to large-scale, comprehensive projects, such as the restoration of steeples, roofs, drainage systems, and exterior masonry walls. Grants to restore stained glass windows will only be considered if the windows are highly significant and severely deteriorated. No grant shall exceed half the project cost.

For more information visit: www.nylandmarks.org/programs_services/grants/sacred_sites_program/wilson_grant_criteria

Workshop Provides Hands-On Approach to Maximizing Energy Efficiency of Religious Institutions

Owners, managers, and users of New York's historic religious properties filed into the pews of the Church of St. Matthew and St. Timothy on West 84th Street for an all-day seminar on energy efficiency and "greening" in sacred sites. "Green Theology: Energy Efficiency and Historic Sacred Sites," which the Conservancy co-hosted along with the Episcopal Diocese of New York, Landmark West!, and New York Interfaith Power & Light, was a true meeting of the minds, bringing together expert practitioners and property managers alike to share and gain from one another's experiences.

The seminar provided a hands-on approach to maximize the energy efficiency of religious institutions by guiding participants through a complete, "basement to roof" energy analysis of religious institutions, including how to prioritize spending and plan for the future.

Congregations interested in holding a similar workshop in upstate New York should contact Sacred Sites Director Ann-Isabel Friedman at 212.995.5260.



Sister Catherine Grace of the Community of the Holy Spirit, talks to workshop attendees. Andrew Rudin, an independent energy auditor with Philadelphia's Interfaith Coalition on Energy, the Rev. Lezlie Austin-Kennedy of Cadman Memorial Congregational Church, Page Ayres Cowley of Page Ayres Cowley Architects, LLC, and Nicola Coddington of New York Interfaith Power & Light were among the speakers.



The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center in Brooklyn features a remarkable stained-glass skylight dome in the center of the sanctuary's ceiling.

BERG FOUNDATION GIFT HELPS CONSERVANCY LAUNCH HISTORIC SYNAGOGUE FUND

The David Berg Foundation has awarded a two-year, \$100,000 grant to help establish a new Historic Synagogue Fund. The Historic Synagogue Fund will, for the first time, allow the Conservancy to make Challenge Grants of between \$25,000 and \$50,000 to assist with major repair and

restoration projects in New York City. This initiative builds upon the Conservancy's ongoing, unprecedented survey of synagogues throughout the City's five boroughs.

The gift is a major step toward the Conservancy's initial \$500,000 goal.

Queens Borough President Salutes Conservancy for Guiding Synagogues to State, National Listings

Queens Borough President, Helen M. Marshall, hosted the Conservancy and representatives from three historic synagogues on Tuesday, Dec. 15 at Queens Borough Hall to celebrate the synagogues' listing on National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Marshall hailed Rego Park Jewish Center, Astoria Center of Israel and the Free Synagogue of Flushing as important to Queens' history and ongoing community life.

"These National Register Nominations are the first step in what we hope will be a long relationship with the Conservancy, as we work with the congregations to maintain these beautiful structures," said Peg Breen, President of the Conservancy.

The Conservancy worked to get these synagogues listed as part of its ongoing historic synagogue survey of New York's five boroughs.

Director Takes Part in Panel on Controversial Church Move

Sacred Sites Director, Ann-Isabel Friedman participated in a Preservation Buffalo-Niagra forum on a controversial plan to dismantle and move a closed Catholic church, the Italian Renaissance Revival St. Gerard's, from Buffalo to Norcross, Georgia.

More than two dozen people took part in the September forum to discuss adaptive use, planning and advocacy strategies for redundant churches.

"(The church would be) taken apart from top to bottom, piece by piece. Everything would be cataloged. It would be shipped to Georgia and then put back together from the ground up," said Kevin Keenan, Director of Communications of the Roman Catholic Diocese-Buffalo.

"While removing a historic building from its original location and community is not generally an acceptable preservation practice, it can't be entirely ruled out, either, in communities with dozens of vacant historic churches," said Friedman.

For more information see "Deconstructing and Moving St. Gerard's Church" at: <http://www.preservationbuffaloniagra.org>



From back left: Rabbi Michael Weisser, Cantor Steven Pearlston, Free Synagogue of Flushing; Rabbi Pearl, Astoria Center of Israel; Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall, Conservancy President Peg Breen; Rabbi Samuel Waidenbaum, Rego Park Jewish Center; Jeff Gottlieb, President, Queens Jewish Historical Society. From front left: Project Historian Tony Robins, Ann-Isabel Friedman, Conservancy; Erin M. Tobin, Preservation League of NYS; Michael Perlman, Chair, Rego-Forest Preservation Council.

On the Cover

Temple Beth-El of Borough Park,
Brooklyn

Please route to Property Committee, Clergy, Board of Trustees, and Maintenance Staff

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

One Whitehall Street
New York, NY 10004

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
New York, NY
Permit No. 9513