



934

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

other names/site number Green Pasture Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 1115 Ward Avenue [] not for publication

city or town Bronx [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Bronx code 005 zip code 10472

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Pappert DSAPD
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/20/14
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined not eligible for the National Register
- [] removed from the National Register
- [] other (explain) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall date of action 11-19-14

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility (synagogue)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility (church)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revival/

Romanesque Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Plastic slate

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Social History

Period of Significance:

1928-1932

Significant Dates:

1928

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Paul Lubroth, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Section 7 Page 1

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Narrative Description of Property

The Chevra Linas Hazedek of Harlem and the Bronx synagogue, erected in 1924-32 and serving today as the Green Pasture Baptist Church, is located on the west side of Ward Avenue, just north of the corner with Watson Avenue in the Soundview neighborhood of the New York City borough of the Bronx. The three-story, brick, vernacular Romanesque Revival building occupies nearly all of a lot with 50 feet of frontage on the street and measuring 100 feet deep. It abuts to the south a five-story brick tenement, and across a narrow alley to the north is a two-story dwelling, part of a row of semidetached houses. The building is constructed on a stone foundation, with brick walls and a flat plastic slate roof with a tripartite and symmetrical façade in yellow brick, with red brick and cast-stone accents. The interior consists of a main sanctuary, with a secondary worship hall and offices below and a dining hall with kitchen in the lower basement. The building retains most of the distinguishing elements of a Jewish house of worship despite its subsequent occupancy by the church.

Exterior

East (Main) Façade-

The highly symmetrical yellow brick façade of the synagogue is divided into three sections. The central section projects slightly from the two flanking sections and is crowned with a gable-shaped parapet, and each of the side sections is crowned with a parapet in the rudimentary shape of a broken pediment flanked by pillars, giving a crenellated effect.

At the ground floor, the central section contains the tripartite main entrance: a central double door and two flanking doors, set in round arches with fanned red brick trim accented with cast-stone keystones. The wooden doors, painted black, appear to be original, as shown in the 1940s New York City tax photo. Approached by two stone steps, the doors are surmounted by tympanums of plain stained glass. The main entrance doors and steps are surrounded by a spiked iron fence, which is not seen in the 1940s photo but dates to the building's use as a synagogue, bearing a Jewish star over the fence's central gate.

Above the main entrance, a rectangular cast-stone plaque is set into the brick, bearing the name of the synagogue in Hebrew, flanked by Jewish stars. Above the inscription is a molded cast-stone stringcourse that spans the central façade section. Atop the stringcourse sits a set of seven round-arch lancet stained-glass windows separated by wreathed cast-stone columns, with the row of windows crowned by a flowing red-brick head molding.

Above the row of round arch lancets, and centered beneath the central gabled parapet, is a round window, which the 1940s tax photo shows to have once contained stained glass forming a Jewish star. It is now simply divided into quarters of stained glass. (A blade sign added by the Green Pasture Baptist Church, in the shape of a cross bearing the congregation's name, is affixed to the brick below the round window.)

The central section of the façade culminates in a gable-shaped parapet that rises above the flat roof behind, coped in cast stone. An arched corbel table rendered in red brick adorns the rakes of the gable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

On the ground floor, each of the two flanking sections of the façade contains a smaller round arched lancet window adjacent to the main entry, and each also contains an additional entrance: single, non-historic doors situated toward the extreme edges of the façade and set in round archways similar to those surrounding the main doors, with red brick trim and a cast-stone keystone. (At the south end of the façade is a cornerstone inscribed with the year of the beginning of the building's construction, 1928.)

On the second floor, each of the two side sections of the façade has a set of three round arched lancet windows with opalescent stained glass, set into yellow brick that is recessed in pointed-arch, red-brick surrounds. The windows sit atop cast stone sills, and below them, the surrounding yellow brick slopes gently outward to the plane of the façade, meeting a row of red bricks set vertically and at an angle, which forms the bottom of the pointed-arch surrounds.

At the third floor, each of the side sections of the façade has a grouping of three round-arch lancet windows with opalescent stained glass, larger versions of those above the portal, similarly separated by wreathed columns and with red brick trim atop their arches, and sitting atop a cast stone molding. These trios of windows are set in slightly recessed panels of the façade, with a molded cast-stone stringcourse above, surmounted by the parapets.

Rear and Side Façades-

The rear elevation of the building overlooks a small clearance between it and the property line. The rear façade is of common red brick, with two metal fire escapes, painted red, that lead down from doorways that open from each side of the balcony of the main sanctuary, down to double doorways at each side of the main sanctuary's floor, and to single doors on the next level below, the secondary sanctuary.

At the upper level, the rear elevation has a central rose window flanked by two round-arched lancets and then by two sash windows with round-arched glass tympanums and the balcony exit doors, which have stained glass panels and round tympanums.

On the exterior, the double doorways of the main sanctuary level, with stained-glass inset panels and transoms, have steel beam lintels that also span adjacent single windows. At the center of the façade on this level, below the round window, is a section that projects forward about the length of three brick stretchers, with a sloped top covered in asphalt roofing.

At the level below, there is a solid metal door at the south end of the façade, with a sash window adjacent to the north, and a sash window on the opposite side. At the yard ground level, at the south side, is a door opening into the basement (dining hall) level of the building, with a boarded-up window adjacent, and at the north side, a pair of boarded-up windows.

On its north and south sides, the building is contiguous with its neighbors in its front-most section, roughly corresponding to the vestibule area of the interior. On the north side, the building recesses slightly, leaving a narrow alleyway. On the upper level there are two rows of six round-arched windows of the main sanctuary, six windows at the lower sanctuary level, and four windows at the basement level. Overlooking the alley to the west

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Section 7 Page 3

Bronx County, New York

County and State

from the front section of the building between this and the street, there is one sash window on the second story and one on the third story.

On the south side, the façade is flat, overlooking an alley that is created by the shape of the adjacent tenement and is part of that property lot. On this façade there are also two rows of six round-arched sanctuary windows, and five lower-sanctuary sash windows.

Interior

Main Entrance Stair-

Inside the main entrance doors is a very steep staircase of fourteen marble steps with brass banisters. Flooded with light from the stained-glass tympanum windows and the round-arch lancets above, the stairway foyer has plaster walls painted white (currently exhibiting water damage). At the top of the stairs are two recessed round archways with double wooden doors, surmounted by opalescent stained-glass transoms with floral motifs. These doors lead into the main sanctuary. On each side of the landing are double doors: to the left, a staircase within provides access to the building's other levels (secondary sanctuary below and balcony above), and to the right, a door leads to another stairwell and an office. On the walls above and surrounding the doors are a number of marble plaques dating to the building's use as a synagogue, commemorating leaders of the women's group and donors and committees of decorating campaigns in 1944 and 1950. One plaque, between the two sanctuary doors, has a framed "Church Covenant" hanging over it, but remains intact, commemorating the dates of the congregation's 1913 organization and the 1932 completion of the building. Hanging from the foyer ceiling is a Moderne fluted light fixture with stylized floral motifs etched in its frosted glass, of the same kind found throughout in the sanctuary.

Sanctuary-

The main sanctuary is rectangular, with a U-shaped balcony level that extends along the rear and the entire side walls. At the east end, flanking the two sets of double doors leading from the main entrance are two sets of wooden double doors (without tympanums) leading to stairwells that circulate to the other levels of the building.

The walls are finished in warmly colored scagliola throughout, imitating colorfully veined marble, other stone, and brick. On the upper portions of the side walls, the scagliola imitates blocks of travertine, with trim of dark faux-marble and panels of reddish veined faux-marble finish on the lower portions. The bays are separated by projecting square pilasters of golden-hued scagliola with multicolored painted capitals.

The floors are of wood, with red carpet on the main level and dark gray carpet on the balcony level. There are six bays of opalescent round-arched stained-glass windows along the walls, on both the main and balcony levels. The large windows create a combination of subdued light underneath the balcony and a bright flood of light from the many large windows above, both on the side walls and across the west wall, illuminating the rich hues of the interior finishes. Against a backdrop of squares of opalescent glass, each window's circular central motif depicts a symbol and Hebrew script referring to Jewish holidays and Biblical events; the panes are adorned with floral and garlanded column motifs, with Jewish stars in the tympanum portions of the windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 4

The front of the balcony is finished in orange faux-marble scagliola that is divided into panels by multicolored trim—each panel with a painted rosette. The balcony's front is lined at the bottom for its full length by a marquee-like row of light bulbs, all set in Jewish star-shaped bases, adding further to the illumination of the sanctuary.

At the west end of the sanctuary, the original synagogue's raised bimah is enclosed by a solid wooden rail, with six cylindrical lamps of metal and frosted glass atop it, four at the corners and one on each side. An open metal canopy rises from the bimah, lined with light bulb sockets and with torch-shaped lamps at each corner. The wooden pulpit and two of the benches at the rear wall are original to the synagogue, being adorned with Jewish stars. The rear wall has a red curtain at the center, which veil the original Torah ark with sliding wood doors. The former ark is flanked by panels of exuberant tracery depicting urns of pomegranate plants, symbolic in Judaism of the Promised Land.

Above, set against the golden scagliola of the west wall, a brightly colored mural depicts a building—possibly the Tower of Babel, or the Temple of Jerusalem before its destruction—as viewed through an arcade of Solomonic columns. Surmounting that panel is a painted pair of Decalogue tablets, flanked by golden lions, sitting atop a painted trompe l'oeil molding adorned on each side with Jewish stars.

On the wall to each side of the bimah is a monumental painted trompe l'oeil pillar, crowned with a florid capital in blues and greens, similar to those of the pilasters along the side walls.

The Decalogue tablets appear also in the round stained-glass window above, floating on clouds and radiating light; the window is encircled by stencil work and light bulbs. Flanking it are two lancet windows and two pairs of round-arched stained-glass windows.

Centered in the flat, white sanctuary ceiling (which is currently suffering significant water damage) is a stained-glass dome, damaged and covered since an attempted break-in through it. The opening is surrounded by light bulbs. Hanging from the ceiling are two large, fluted, Moderne chandeliers, with smaller versions hanging over and below the balconies and matching sconces along the walls. Historic ceiling fans also hang from the undersides of the balcony.

The wooden pews on the main sanctuary floor and in the balcony are likely original. On the balcony level, three rows of pews line each side of the sanctuary, and at the east end, three rows are set into a recessed area, beneath the round window in the main façade of the building. Doorways behind these pews lead into the south stairwell, and, to the north, into a ladies' lounge and restroom.

Secondary Entrance and Lower Sanctuary-

The secondary door at the south end of the façade today serves as the principally used entrance to the building, leading to a small foyer with white plaster walls and red-carpeted floor. A metal staircase with terrazzo steps, illuminated by a round-arched lancet window, leads up to double wooden doors opening into the secondary sanctuary and, on the same level, double wooden doors to restrooms. The walls at this landing bear marble

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 5

plaques commemorating donors to the support of the synagogue and its Talmud Torah school and the erection of the outer entrance gate (undated); to a campaign "to free this temple from debt" (1948) and to the donation of carpeting by the ladies' auxiliary (1953). The stairwell, illuminated through lancet stained-glass windows, leads further up to the main sanctuary level and balcony, and down to the lower basement level.

The secondary worship space is a rectangular room with white plaster walls painted white, with five sash windows recessed in molded surrounds, with a molded chair railing. The wooden floor is bare except for red carpet running down the central aisle between the rows of original pews. At the west end is a raised carpeted platform with non-historic lectern and furnishings, and a baptismal pool added by the church congregation, flanked by sash windows overlooking the rear yard, and a metal exit doors at each side. A partition wall runs along the north side of the room, with doorways to two office spaces and a closet. At the rear stands a freestanding former Torah ark.

The single door at the north end of the main façade opens into a corridor that leads straight ahead to a door to the alley running along the north side of the building, with access also to the secondary sanctuary.

Basement Dining Hall and Kitchen-

A stairwell with red carpet on the steps and marble panels lining the lower portions of the walls leads down from the secondary entrance foyer to the basement level containing a dining and social hall and kitchen. This stairway dates to a 1949-50 renovation of this level, which included the lowering of the floor level and creation of new partitions. At the foot of the stairs, a door to the right leads to a utility room and the boiler room, and one to the left, to restrooms. Ahead, double doors with windows, covered with leather whose rivets form Jewish stars, lead to a short hallway, with a door to a utility room opening on the left and to the kitchen on the right. (A mezuzah case remains on the jamb of the double doors.) The kitchen is finished with tile walls, a linoleum tile floor and non-historic equipment.

An arched opening, with Jewish stars in the molding, leads down two more steps to the dining hall, a rectangular space with composite tile flooring, white plaster walls with wooden wainscoting, and a drop ceiling with inset fluorescent lights and ceiling fans. (A hole in the damaged ceiling reveals an earlier stamped metal ceiling.) Along the north wall are four frosted glass windows with metal grilles on the inside and concrete steps leading to an exit door to the north alley. On the west wall are three boarded-up windows and a door to the rear yard.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance

The Chevra Linas Hazedek of Harlem and the Bronx synagogue, built in 1928-1932 in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx, is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Social History and Architecture. The three-story building, which today serves as the home of the Green Pasture Baptist Church, is a largely intact example of an early twentieth century synagogue in a Romanesque Revival style, gracefully interpreted for a small congregation in brick with cast-stone details. The synagogue was designed by Paul Lubroth, a Polish-born Bronx architect who was prolific in the design of the five- and six-story tenements that characterized the development of much of the borough in the 1920s. New subway lines made possible the migration of many of New York City's Jews to new neighborhoods, including the previously undeveloped Soundview area. The synagogue's congregation, which originated in the Manhattan neighborhood of East Harlem but relocated to Soundview with the migration of its members, is significant in this history of the development of the Bronx and of New York City's immigrant Jewish population. Although the Jewish residents of Soundview largely departed later in the twentieth century, the former Chevra Linas Hazedek synagogue remains remarkably little changed and continues to play a similar role in the religious and social life of the area's African American community as the Green Pasture Baptist Church. The church has occupied the building since 1979, largely preserving the historic bimah as the focus of liturgy and preaching, and the balcony level that possibly served as seating for female members of the original synagogue.

Historical Background: The Development of the Watson Estate

The neighborhood now known as Soundview is located along the east side of the Bronx River just north of its mouth in the East River. The portion of the borough of the Bronx on the east side of the Bronx River was annexed to New York City in 1895, following the earlier annexation of the western portions in 1874. The Soundview area, which lay in what had been the town of Westchester and consisted almost entirely of land owned by the estate of merchant William Watson (died 1877), remained undeveloped into the early twentieth century, being the site of the Westchester Golf Club in the early years of the century.¹

In 1909, the American Real Estate Company purchased the section of the Watson estate north of Westchester Avenue, an east-west thoroughfare that had been laid through the land. At this time, the Watson estate and the adjacent Trask and Astor tracts, constituted "the largest land area entirely without development in the Bronx."² American Real Estate had apparently acquired more of it by 1912, when it began offering 200 acres of building lots, and the *New York Times* correctly predicted that "the time is not far distant when the Watson tract will witness the erection of rows of houses and apartments for thousands of tenants."³ The area's development was assured by the plans for the Pelham Bay branch of the Lexington Avenue subway line. Work began on the line in 1911, and it opened in 1920, running in part on an elevated track along Westchester Avenue.⁴ Soundview's

¹ "Golf Now at Fever Heat," *New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1897; *Insurance Maps of the City of New York, Borough of the Bronx*, vol. B (1905), plate 55; "In the Real Estate Field," *New York Times*, July 13, 1906.

² "Big Bronx Tract Sold for \$1,500,000," *New York Times*, April 15, 1909.

³ "Ready to Sell Watson Estate," *New York Times*, May 12, 1912.

⁴ Gonzalez, *The Bronx*, pp. 57-58; "Ready to Sell Watson Estate," *New York Times* 1912; Wells, *The Bronx and Its People*, vol. 2, pp. 776-777.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

transportation links to the West Bronx were also improved with the construction of a bridge over the Bronx River at 174th Street, which was approved in 1925 and completed in 1928.⁵

American Real Estate had led the way in an earlier, similar “subway boom” had led to the development of the former Hoe and Simpson estates in Hunt’s Point, across the river just to the south of Soundview, in the early 1900s, with five- and six-story apartment buildings.⁶ In addition to apartment buildings, new Bronx neighborhoods also saw the erection of modest homes in the years following World War I, when a property tax exemption was in effect, intended to spur development and relieve a postwar housing shortage.⁷

In Soundview, like much of the East Bronx, swampier land with less bedrock was more amenable to small dwellings, typified by the semidetached brick multifamily houses that line the synagogue’s block on Ward Avenue and others in the vicinity. The area north of Westchester Avenue was developed first—some brick houses are shown on a handful of blocks in a 1913 atlas—but development to the south of the thoroughfare, where Chevra Linas Hazedek is located, proceeded only in the second half of the 1920s.⁸

Jewish Migration from East Harlem to the Bronx

The development of Soundview was part of the process by which the Bronx grew in population from 200,500 at the turn of the twentieth century to 1.27 million by 1930, along with similarly dramatic growth in the other outer boroughs.⁹ Much of this growth was driven by migration of immigrant working-class communities, for whom the subways and the affordable new apartments and houses were “the means to break the bonds of New York’s older tenement districts.”¹⁰ The move out of the earlier immigrant population centers was characterized by the creation of even more ethnically distinct neighborhoods: In 1920, 54 percent of New York City’s Jews lived in neighborhoods that were more than 40 percent Jewish; by 1925, two-thirds did.¹¹

In the 1920s, the Bronx in particular was a destination for working-class Jews from East Harlem, a deteriorating tenement neighborhood, and with them, many of East Harlem’s Jewish congregations and other institutions “relocated out of the borough [of Manhattan] and were reconstituted in various parts of the northernmost borough [the Bronx].” (The largely more affluent Jews of Central Harlem had begun relocating slightly earlier

⁵ “Break Ground on Site for New Bronx Bridge,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1927; “New Bridge Opened Over Bronx River,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1928.

⁶ “Big Bronx Tract Sold,” *New York Times* 1909.

⁷ “Many Bidders for East Bronx Lots” *New York Times*, Sept. 8, 1921.

⁸ *Atlas of the City of New York Borough of the Bronx, Annexed District*, 1913, plate 33; Ultan, pp. 237-238; “Bronx Acreage Brings \$2,000,000,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 22, 1925.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990* (<http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/ny190090.txt>), retrieved July 29, 2014.

¹⁰ Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, p. 144.

¹¹ Gurock, *Jews in Gotham*, p. 30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

to the Upper West Side or Washington Heights, with their synagogues also relocating.¹²) By 1930, Jews made up 49 percent of the population, and a significantly higher percentage in the South Bronx.¹³

Congregation Chevra Linas Hazedek - Origins in Harlem

According to the 1939 Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers Project survey of New York City congregational historical records, the congregation Chevra Linas Hazedek owed its origin to a group of eight men who gathered for prayer in a private residence on East 103rd Street in Harlem. After moving in 1912 to a rented room in a German settlement house on the same street, the gathering organized formally with a charter in 1913, when it moved again to a new space. Renting a loft in the Fox Star Theatre at East 107th Street and Lexington Avenue, the congregation, which was an Orthodox one, took the name Chevra Linas Hazedek (“Organization for Aiding the Poor”) of Harlem. The group adopted a mission of ministering to the sick.¹⁴

Newspaper obituaries in 1942 identified Morris Florman, born in Poland around 1860 and an immigrant to the United States in the early 1890s, as a founder of the congregation, along with “the late Jacob Schiff.”¹⁵ It is not clear whether that means that the synagogue was aided by the Jewish American financier and philanthropist Jacob Schiff, namesake of another now-defunct Bronx synagogue, the Jacob H. Schiff Jewish Center.¹⁶ (Florman died at his home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, reflecting the trajectory of a successful Jewish immigrant from Europe, to the tenements of the then-Jewish district of East Harlem, to the new “subway suburbs” of the Bronx, to the more genteel Jewish milieu of the Upper West Side.)

The Move to the Bronx

As part of the broader migration of many of Manhattan’s Jews to other boroughs in the 1920s (and from East Harlem to the Bronx in particular) many members of Chevra Linas Hazedek moved away from Harlem in that period, prompting the relocation of the synagogue. According to the WPA record, in 1928 congregation member I. Horowitz organized a “consolidation” of members in the old and new neighborhoods, which led to the plans for a new synagogue building in Soundview. Architect Paul Lubroth, a designer of apartment buildings, residences and commercial, industrial and institutional buildings in the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn, was commissioned to design the building.

While the new synagogue was under construction, the 107th Street synagogue remained in operation, until attendance fell so low that it was closed in 1930. The new building was completed in stages, with the basement hall and lower synagogue in use before the main synagogue was completed in 1932. The lower sanctuary continued to function for “daily services” according to the WPA record.

¹² Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, pp. 150-151.

¹³ Hermalyn and Ultan, “One Hundred Years of the Bronx,” Bronx County Historical Society Website, <http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org/bxbrief>, accessed July 10, 2014.

¹⁴ Works Progress Administration Federal Writers Project Survey of State and Local Historical Records: Church Records/Jewish Synagogues, 1939, form no. W-75, card no. 193.

¹⁵ “Morris Florman” (obituary), *New York Herald Tribune*, May 17, 1942; “Morris Florman” (obituary), *New York Times*, May 17, 1942.

¹⁶ “Bronx Centre Named After Jacob Schiff,” *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, April 16, 1923.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

Design of the Synagogue

The design of the Chevra Linas Hazedek synagogue reflects a combination of trends both in American synagogue architecture and in the development of New York's new outer-borough neighborhoods in the 1920s. Medieval Revival styles, both Gothic and Romanesque, had been employed for New York City synagogues since the mid-nineteenth-century. Leopold Eidlitz's Wooster Street Synagogue (1847) was notable for its use of the round arches on columns, corbel-lined gable elements and rose window elements that could still be found in the early twentieth century, both in grand, elite synagogues, such as the Park Avenue Synagogue (Deutsch and Scheider, 1926) or Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan (Kohn, Butler and Stein, 1930), and in contemporaneous modest renditions, such as the Chevra Linas Hazedek building.¹⁷

As in many synagogues of the period in new working- and middle-class Jewish settlements in the outer boroughs, at Chevra Linas Hazedek, these elements were translated from the stone materials seen in grander synagogues into more modest, but still dignified, "tapestry brick" and terra cotta. Lubroth coaxed variety and texture out of such simple materials with the deft use of contrasting red brick in varying shapes and set at varying angles to accent doors and windows, in combination with varying recesses for windows and different areas of the façade. The result is a modest building with dignity and depth.

These elements, though related to historical trends in American synagogue architecture, were also commonalities with the secular architecture of these new neighborhoods of the 1920s, where the housing—apartment buildings and modest brick houses—were often designed by the same architects as their neighboring synagogues. Paul Lubroth, a prolific designer of tenement buildings in the Bronx, was such an architect, as were other Jewish outer-borough architects of Eastern European heritage, such as Edward M. Adelson, Jack Fein and Peter Millman.¹⁸ They used simplified brick versions of an array of historical styles, including Romanesque, Gothic, Mediterranean and Colonial Revival, to ornament a variety of buildings. An example of a contemporaneous tenement by Lubroth using parapets and corbeling similar to those of Chevra Linas Hazedek is at the northeast corner of Morris Avenue and East 166th Street in Morrisania, another Bronx neighborhood developed and settled by Jews in the 1920s.¹⁹

The design of the interior similarly exemplifies the creative use of materials for maximum effect, notably the scagliola walls and murals and the deployment of both Art Deco light fixtures and marquee-like rows of light bulbs. Because the congregation was Orthodox, the balcony level served the purpose of separate seating for its women members, with the women's lounge and restroom accessed exclusively from the balcony.

¹⁷ *Two Hundred Years of Synagogue Architecture*, pp. 12-13; Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation*, pp. 42-44, 127-128.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Tapestry Brick Dwellings*, pp. 134-136; Congregation Beth Abraham, Brooklyn, N.Y., National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2008.

¹⁹ "Building Plans Filed," *New York Times*, Jan. 22, 1928.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

Architect Paul Lubroth

The architect of Chevra Linas Hazedek, Paul Lubroth, was born in Poland in 1897 and arrived with his family in the United States in 1903 or 1904.²⁰ He began his architectural career at a young age, with a house design recorded in the *Real Estate Record* in 1915, when he was about 18. At this time, he was apparently working with his older brother, architect Jacob Lubroth, based in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.²¹ Over the next several years, based at a succession of addresses in Brooklyn and Manhattan, Paul Lubroth was responsible for a number of small buildings and alteration projects in Brooklyn and Manhattan.²²

In 1922, Lubroth designed a group of semidetached two-family brick houses in Norwood Gardens, a planned community in Astoria, Queens, which was designed by Walter Hopkins, an associate architect of the prominent New York City firm Warren & Wetmore. In keeping with the garden apartment movement that was giving rise to other developments in Queens such as Jackson Heights, Hopkins's notion was, in the words of a newspaper article, to "do away with the conventional construction of the city house and to give each house...the atmosphere of an individual home"; Lubroth's house plans "bring into the house the fresh air, sunshine and easy housekeeping features of a home in the country."²³ Modestly ornamented with brickwork patterns and small stone details, the houses were similar to some in Brooklyn designed by Lubroth and architects of similar backgrounds, who also were known to design synagogues in the same neighborhoods where they designed houses and apartments.²⁴

Beginning in 1925, however, Lubroth's work was overwhelmingly devoted to designing five- and six-story tenements in the Bronx, where he established an office on East Kingsbridge Road near Fordham University. Many of these were built in areas that were newly developed with the expansion of the New York City subway, to which working-class Jewish and other immigrant groups migrated from older, more crowded ethnic enclaves such as the Lower East Side and Harlem in Manhattan. At least 20 building plan filings for five- and six-story brick tenements by Lubroth are recorded in the Bronx.²⁵

Lubroth was one of a generation of Jewish American architects born in Russia or Eastern or Central Europe and based in the outer boroughs of New York City who designed houses, apartment buildings, and commercial and institutional buildings for the new Jewish neighborhoods. These various building types were united in their use of pattern brickwork and decoratively shaped parapets as ornament, often in vernacular versions of a variety of historical styles, including Romanesque, Gothic, Mediterranean and Colonial Revival.²⁶

²⁰ 1918 Draft Card for Paul Lubroth; 1910 and 1930 United States Federal Census.

²¹ 1910 United States Federal Census; *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, vol. 96 no. 2474 (Aug. 14, 1915), p. 292.

²² Numerous notices in *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 1915-1922.

²³ "Conditions Have Pushed 2-Family House to the Front," *New-York Tribune*, July 9, 1922; *Real Estate Record* vol. 109 no. 23 (June 10, 1922), p. 732.

²⁴ Taylor, pp. 134, 136.

²⁵ Numerous notices in the *New York Times*, *New York Sun*, Department of Buildings New Building applications indexed by Office for Metropolitan History (metrohistory.com).

²⁶ Taylor, p. 26-28.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 6

Subsequent History of the Congregation

There are few records of the Chevra Linas Hazedek congregation's subsequent years in the Bronx building. A small number of newspaper articles and advertisements illustrate its role as a local center of Jewish civic life—as a meeting place, for example, of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Group Hadassah (a chapter of the U.S. Jewish women's voluntary organization) in the 1940s, and as a polling place for elections of delegates to the American Jewish Congress and World Zionist Congress.²⁷ Commemorative plaques surviving in the building indicate that it maintained a Talmud Torah (religious primary school). The basement dining hall was renovated in 1949-50, to designs by Bronx architects Gelbman & Glick.

The synagogue building was sold in 1979 to the Green Pasture Baptist Church; however, the synagogue had likely fallen into disuse years before, according to church members' recollections of its dusty condition upon purchase. Green Pasture Baptist Church has its roots in a congregation that began gathering in a Bronx house in 1958 under the leadership of Dupree Fort. The congregation moved to a series of buildings before purchasing the former synagogue building in 1979, under the pastorate of Clyde Hambrick, father of the current pastor, Roger Hambrick.²⁸

The Baptist church refrained from altering the exuberant Jewish iconography of the sanctuary, contributing to an extraordinary level of integrity for a synagogue repurposed as a Christian church. In 2002, Roger Hambrick was quoted as saying of the building, that his father had "felt this was a special landmark that we had to protect. When we walked in here, we knew right away that this was a house of God," noting, "We try not to even paint over anything."²⁹ A predominantly African-American congregation located in a former Jewish neighborhood that today has a significant Latino population, Green Pasture and Hambrick have cultivated ties to the Jewish spiritual heritage of the building, notably through relations with the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in the Bronx, originating in an interdenominational response to the police shooting of Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo nearby in Soundview in 1999.

²⁷ E.g. "In the Bronx," *New York Post*, March 14, 1948; American Jewish Congress advertisement, *New York Post*, June 234, 1938.

²⁸ Interview with Roger Hambrick.

²⁹ "A Bronx Tale: Soundview Baptists Find Fellowship with Riverdale Jews," *The Jewish Week*, Feb. 22, 2002.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Section 10 Page 1

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The rectangular parcel, 50 feet by 100 feet, consisting of Borough of the Bronx Tax Map Block 3741, Lot 72, which encompasses the land on which the 1932 synagogue is situated. The boundary is indicated by the heavy line on the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the current boundary of the church property, which is consistent with the historic boundary of the original synagogue property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

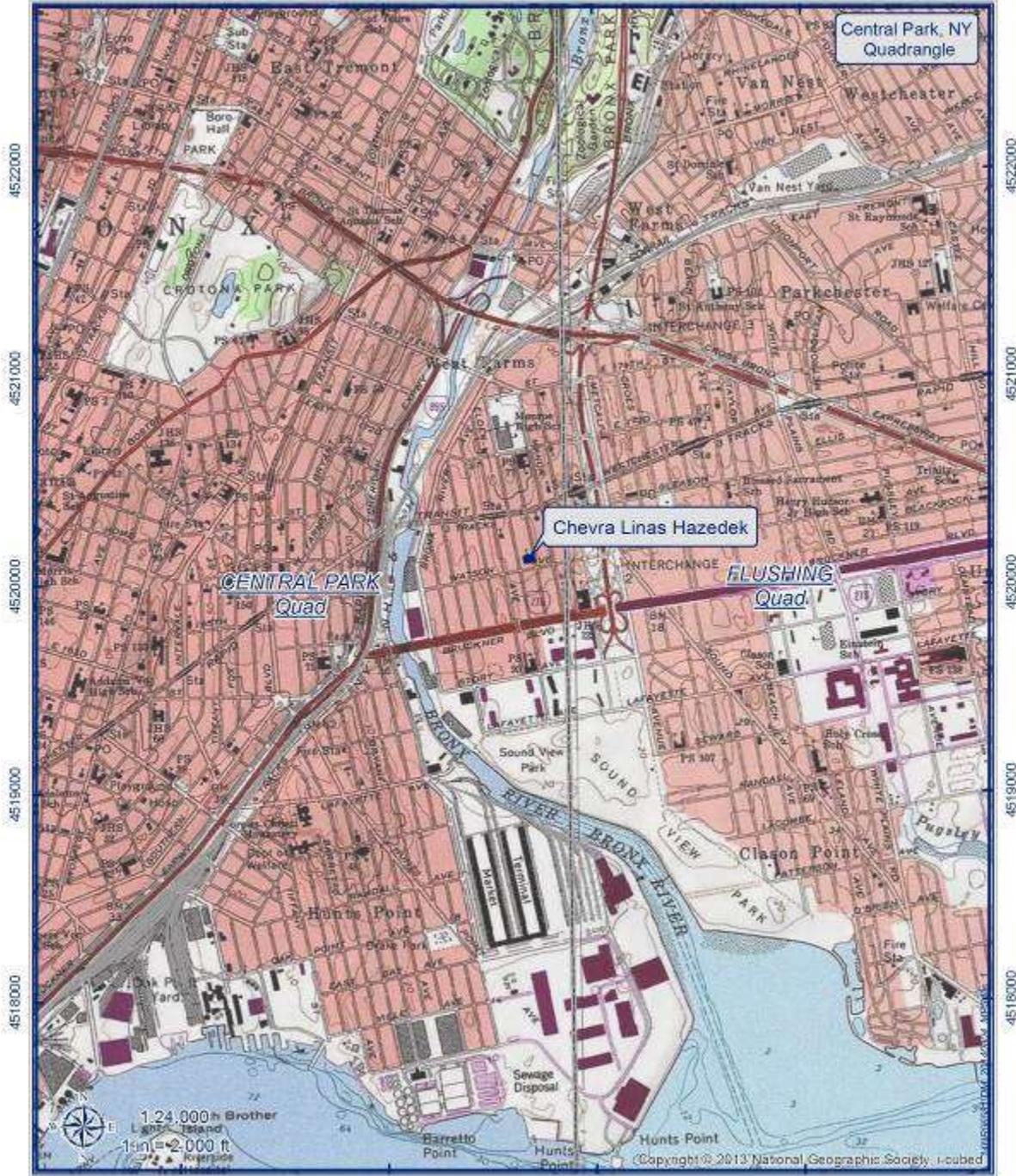
Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 2

Chevra Linas Hazedek
Bronx, Bronx Co., NY

1115 Ward Avenue
Bronx, NY 10472



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



-  Chevra Linas Hazedek
-  USGS quad index

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC PLUTO
<http://www.nyc.gov/>



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

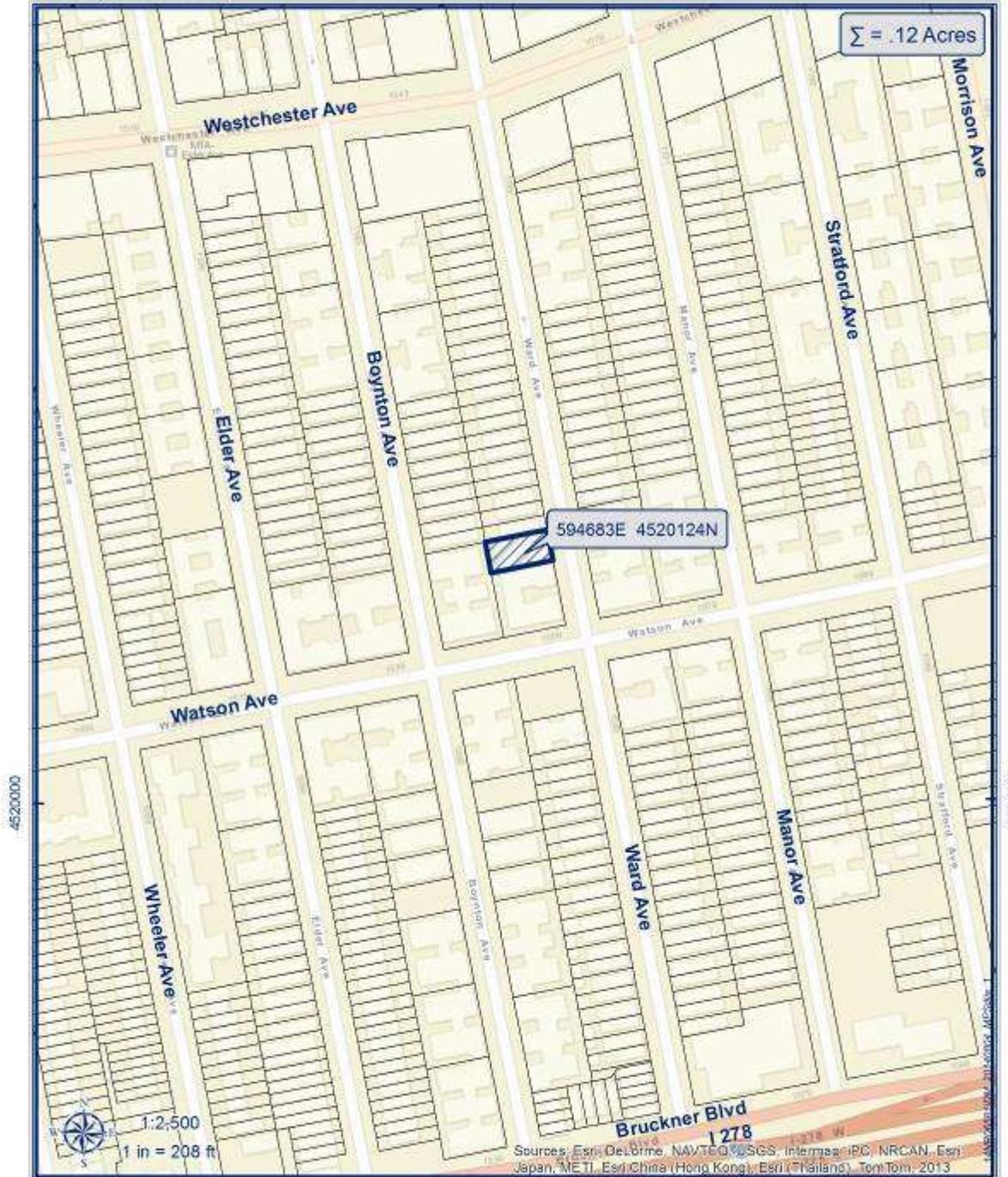
Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 3

Chevra Linas Hazedek
Bronx, Bronx Co., NY

1115 Ward Avenue
Bronx, NY 10472



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Chevra Linas Hazedek

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC PLUTO
<http://www.nyc.gov>



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

Name of Property

Bronx County, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Photographs

Former Chevra Linas Hazedek (Green Pasture Baptist Church)
1115 Ward Ave., Bronx, N.Y.

- 01 Building façade
- 02 Main sanctuary
- 03 Main sanctuary rear
- 04 Stained glass window in main sanctuary north wall
- 05 Bimah in main sanctuary viewed from balcony level
- 06 Main sanctuary balcony level
- 07 Southern circulation stairwell
- 08 Lower sanctuary
- 09 Basement dining hall
- 10 Stair and entrance to dining hall
- 11 Stairs in building main entry
- 12 Commemorative tablets in main entry stair
- 13 Building rear wall with fire escape
- 14 Light fixtures at rear of main sanctuary

1940 Ward Tax Photo





















decisions, decisions

Coca-Cola

A vending machine with a large screen at the top displaying a colorful graphic. Below the screen, the text "decisions, decisions" is visible. The machine has a coin slot and a keypad with several buttons, each showing a different beverage option. The side of the machine features the classic Coca-Cola logo in white on a red background.

A white arched doorway with decorative carvings of the Star of David on the side columns. The arch is supported by two white columns, each featuring a carved Star of David. The doorway leads to a hallway with a red carpet and a wooden door. Above the door is an "EXIT" sign. The hallway continues to a set of red-carpeted stairs.



A white refrigerator with a turkey sticker on the top door. The sticker depicts a brown turkey standing on a small patch of ground. The refrigerator has two doors and a silver handle on each.







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Chevra Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Bronx

DATE RECEIVED: 10/03/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/18/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/19/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000934

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11.19.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



NYC
Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

August 25, 2014

Kate Daly
Executive Director
kdaly@lpc.nyc.gov

Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7926 tel
212 669 7797 fax

Re: *Chevra Linas Hazedek, the Bronx*

Dear Deputy Commissioner Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of Chevra Linas Hazedek, located at 1115 Ward Avenue in the Bronx, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Mary Beth Betts has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and has determined that the building appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kate Daly

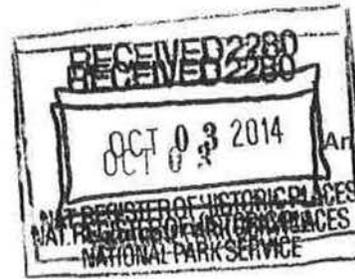
cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research





New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor
Rose Harvey
Commissioner

30 September 2014

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

High and Locust Street Historic District, Niagara County
Beddoe-Rose Family Cemetery, Yates County
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Lodge Number 878, Queens County
Chivas Linas Hazedek Synagogue of Harlem and the Bronx, Bronx County
Jamestown Downtown Historic District, Chautauqua County

Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office