

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 Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

other names/site number New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 23 West 118th Street [] not for publication

city or town New York [] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10026

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.)

Richard Purpant DBAPO

12/23/14

Signature of certifying official/Title

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 of the Keeper

date of action

Edson H. Beall

2-23-15

Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

New York County, New York

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 REVIVALS/ Moorish

Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt, with steel-framed domes

other _____

Narrative Description

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

Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

New York County, New York

Name of Property

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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

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: _____

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture _____
- Social History _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance:

1900 _____

Significant Dates:

1900 _____

Significant Person:

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A _____

Architect/Builder:

Michael Bernstein _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .11 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 588845 4517393
Zone Easting Northing

3 18
Zone Easting Northing

2 18

4 18

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jonathan Taylor, historic preservation consultant

organization New York Landmarks Conservancy date October 3, 2014

street & number 191 Luquer St #2B telephone 718-722-9213

city or town Brooklyn state NY zip code 11231

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ

street & number 23 W. 118th Street telephone

city or town New York state NY zip code 10026

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

Name of Property

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Narrative Description of Property

Summary

The Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem synagogue, erected in 1900 and serving today as the New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ, is located on the north side of West 118th Street, east of Lenox Avenue, in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City. The two-story brick Moorish Revival building occupies nearly all of a 50-by-100-foot lot, abutting one tenement to the east and separated from another to the west by a narrow alley. The building is constructed of brick walls with an asphalt roof. The symmetrical and tripartite façade is of brick painted red with massive and intricate terra-cotta trim painted white. It features stair towers to each side crowned by large square bulbous domes; between them runs a corniced horizontal parapet concealing the sanctuary's gambrel roof. The interior consists of a sanctuary with balcony and a basement level with a dining hall and secondary worship space, along with a kitchen and social, utility and other rooms. Although the stained glass appears to have been replaced and original interior finishes are likely concealed by paint, the building retains most of the elements characteristic of a Jewish house of worship and, specifically, of a late example of Moorish Revival religious architecture.

Exterior

South (Main) Façade

The symmetrical façade of the synagogue, constructed of brick painted red with elaborate terra-cotta trim painted white, is divided into three sections: a wide central section flanked by two tower sections which project forward slightly. (Photo 1) The central section is topped with a straight horizontal parapet that hides the gambrel roof behind, and the side sections are crowned with copper squared bulbous domes.

At the ground floor, the central section contains the tripartite main entrance to the building: a central double door and two flanking single doors (non-historic), set in Moorish keyhole arches. This portal is approached by a set of four concrete steps, painted a beige color. Each doorway is flanked by pilasters in brick, with capitals of elaborate Moorish interlaced foliate patterns. Within the arches above the doors are wheel-window transoms, painted gray. (The central and right transoms have protective metal grills over the recessed windows, also painted gray.) The smaller, side arches have elaborated keystone moldings projecting upwards, while the larger central arch is connected by an hourglass-shaped inset panel of interlaced Moorish design rendered in terra cotta painted white, to a rose window, with an inner surround painted gray, and an outer band of trim painted white, surmounted by a larger version of the decorative keystone seen in the portal below. (Photo 2)

In each of the side sections, centered at the ground floor is a secondary entrance: single doors also set in keyhole arches in white-painted terra-cotta trim. Above the doors on each side are bands of intricate Moorish carving, also in white terra cotta. (Photo 3) Sitting atop these bands are pairs of keyhole-arch lancet windows at the second story, again with white-painted terra-cotta arches resting on capitals of Moorish design.

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Above, an elaborate sheet metal cornice runs across all three sections of the façade, composed of a course of molding topped by an arcade of round arches on Ionic capitals, with a band of fleur-de-lis motif above that, and trimmed at the top with an egg-and-dart pattern. The cornice, which exhibits signs of corrosion, is currently draped with netting, and topped with metal coping. Sitting atop the cornice above are the bulbous domes, framed in steel, with infill of asbestos masonry units, and covered in asphalt roofing. Historic photographs show that the domes originally had Star of David finials.

A wrought-iron fence with slender pickets runs in front of the entire length of the façade, separating it from the sidewalk.

Rear and West Façades

The rear elevation of the building overlooks a narrow yard enclosed by a brick wall. The rear façade is of brick, covered in stucco and painted white. A central section projects at the first floor level, resting on beams that form part of the metal fire escape platform that spans this level; the beams are also supported by the brick wall at the rear of the yard. At this level, there is a door on the east side of the façade, and at the west, on the other side of the projection, is a stained-glass window. Two fire-escape stairs lead upwards to two doors on the second floor.

A single stair leads from the east side of the first-floor fire escape platform down to the basement level. At this level there is one metal door, along with two window openings blocked and covered with metal plates.

A small portion of the west end of the yard is sheltered by a gabled wooden roof. Under it, at the west edge of the rear façade, an iron gate opens to the alley that runs along the west side of the building.

The west side of the building is covered in gray stucco. (Photo 4) At the basement level, from left to right, are: a window (all window openings at this level have bars in them); a doorway blocked and covered with wood; another window; a metal door; another window; a second metal door; and two windows. At the first-floor level, there is a pair of windows at the left side of this façade that are both blocked up, one with an air-conditioning unit. To the right are eight stained-glass windows. On the second story there are ten stained-glass windows. The rolled roofing curls over the top of the length of the side façade.

At the south end of the alley, a set of concrete steps leads to a solid iron gate, with spikes atop it, that opens to the street.

Interior

Vestibule

The main entrance to the synagogue leads into a vestibule. (Photo 5) The floor is of black and white tile, and the walls and ceiling are of plaster with marble wainscoting. The portal doors and arches, and their flanking pilasters and carved, molded surrounds, are painted red on the inside. The transom wheel windows have lights of frosted glass. At each end of the foyer is a staircase, with carved wooden banisters and newel posts painted red; the newel posts are adorned with Jewish Stars of David. (Photo 6) On each side, five steps down from the

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main vestibule floor, are the secondary entrance doors of the façade, similarly trimmed in red, and with frosted wire glass in the transoms. The stairways continue down to the basement and up from the first floor to the balcony level.

The central section of the vestibule ceiling is raised, forming a rectangle trimmed with molding, including brackets, an egg-and-dart motif, and garlands. A metal and frosted glass lamp, with cruciform ornamentation that indicates it was installed since the synagogue became a Christian church, hangs from the center of this section.

The three doors of the portal and their carved surrounds are mirrored in the tripartite entrance to the sanctuary. The doors are non-historic metal and glass doors; their transoms have stained glass with Stars of David in them. Flanking the central sanctuary entrance door are historic cylindrical radiators.

Sanctuary

The main sanctuary is of a rectangular basilica plan, with a U-shaped balcony level that extends along the rear and the entire length of the sides and a barrel vault ceiling. (Photo 8) The bimah, or raised platform for the reading of the Torah, which now functions as the church's chancel, is situated at the north end. Facing it are sixteen rows of pews, with aisles running down the center and sides of the sanctuary. Unlike in the balcony, the pews are not original to the synagogue, being of modern design and adorned with crosses.

On the main level, the floor is finished in composite tile flooring, with red carpeting in the aisles. The plaster-finished walls are painted white above a chair-rail molding, which is painted in the red color seen in the vestibule, as is the portion of the wall below the molding. The moldings surrounding the rectangular stained-glass windows, as well as those around the three entrance doors, are painted the same color. There are eight window bays on each side of the sanctuary, set in pairs. The stained glass of the vertical-pivot windows is decorated in rudimentary floral and geometric motifs in bright colors. (Photo 9) On the east side, the four rearmost windows were blocked up due to security problems, probably in the 1960s or 1970s according to church personnel, and are painted to resemble the stained glass of the remaining counterparts.

Supporting the balcony are four metal columns on each side. They are painted white, with their lower sections, molded in a twisting pattern, painted red. Their flared Moorish capitals, with intricate foliate ornamental patterns, are painted gold and white. Ceiling fans hang from the balcony undersides on the side aisles, and a non-historic chandelier from the rear balcony.

The bimah has a curved front of wood, surmounted by a brass rail, and is accessed by three steps at each side. On the main platform, covered in red carpeting, stands a lectern adorned with a cross, and the church's fiberglass baptismal pool is concealed under the platform. Rising behind are three rows of pews, matching those of the sanctuary, in a recess formed by two rooms partitioned off from the sanctuary to each side. Above, in the center of the north wall, is a round-arched recess, trimmed with foliate and gold-painted egg-and-dart carving, which would have contained the Ark of the Torah in the synagogue. The Torah niche is now empty and painted white. It is surrounded by a series of light bulbs. The wall panels to each side feature arched moldings painted

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white, brown and gold, surmounted by motifs of scrollwork and sun's rays painted gold against a brown background. (Photo 7)

Above the Torah niche is a rose window, with moldings and carving that connect the two elements in a manner similar to the main façade's portal and rose window. The window's round central panel bears a Christian image, the dove of the Holy Spirit, surrounded by a decorative pattern consistent with the stained glass windows in the side walls.

Stair Towers and Balcony

The front of the balcony, which curves from the sides to the rear of the sanctuary, is covered with stamped metal in foliate and quatrefoil patterns, painted white with a band of gold-painted molding running along the middle. Fluorescent tubes run along the bottom, and a clock hangs at the center of the rear balcony. A wooden cross stands at the center of the rear balcony front.

The balcony is reached by the twin wooden stairways at each side of the vestibule. The stairwell walls are painted a warm cream color, with marble wainscoting and small light sconces. The stairwells are illuminated by pairs of stained-glass windows at the second floor, with separated keyhole-arch transoms.

At each landing, double doors with glass panes open into the balcony. In the balcony, the historic wood floor is visible, and the historic carved wood pews bear metal plates with seat numbers and, at their ends, are carved with keyhole-arch openings. (Photo 12) The pews rise in three rows on the side and seven rows in the rear. On the side sections of the balcony, there are three benches in each row, with narrow aisles between and, in the rear, a center aisle runs between each row of two pew benches.

There are ten round-arched window openings on each side wall of the balcony, grouped in pairs and trimmed in red as on the main level. On the east side, seven of the windows are blocked up, with one of these painted like the filled-in windows on the level below. One opening on the west side has a frosted pane of Plexiglas covering the window on the inside. The stained-glass motifs of the deeply recessed windows are similar to those below, with the upstairs windows bearing a circular element, with cruciform detail, in their arches.

As on the main floor, the walls on the balcony level are red below a chair-rail molding at the sill level and warm beige color up to the point where the ceiling vault, of Lincrusta embossed with repeating squares of abstract foliate patterns, begins to curve in. (Photo 13) Between each pair of windows, a pilaster bears a molded ornament of cartouches and palmettes, painted green, red and gold. Courses of multiple bands of molding in the Lincrusta ceiling spring from the pilasters across the vault.

At the north end of the side balconies are exit doors to the building's rear fire escape. Each is surmounted by a round arch of gold-painted molding, slightly wider than the door opening, effectively creating a near-keyhole arch.

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At the south end of the balcony level, behind the rear pews, there is a space between the stair towers, dominated by the façade rose window, with its stained glass in a starburst or floral pattern. At the west end of the south wall of the balcony, a single door leads to a platform in the stair tower, with a wrought metal ladder leading up into the bulbous dome, where a north-facing hatch door gives access to the roof. (Photos 14-15)

In the ceiling are two round stained-glass skylights with Christian imagery. The northernmost depicts the Lamb of God and the other the Hand of God. Two chandeliers of gold-colored metal, in a Moderne style with cruciform elements, hang from the ceiling. A smaller lamp of similar ornament hangs from a round metal grill-work medallion over the rear balcony.

Ground Floor Auxiliary Rooms

To each side of the bimah is a pair of small partitioned-off rooms. The western room is currently the pastor's study. Its walls are finished in synthetic woodgrain paneling, with a carpeted floor and a drop ceiling with fluorescent light fixture. It has a stained-glass window in the northern wall and a pair of blocked-up window openings in the western wall. The eastern room is currently for the deacons' use. It has similarly finished walls and ceiling, with a composite tile floor, two blocked-up eastern windows and, in the north wall, a metal door exiting to the rear fire escape.

Lower Level

From the ground floor vestibule, each stairway leads down to the basement level, with steps of terrazzo, and floral wallpaper on the upper stairwell walls above red-painted molding. On the west side, at the bottom landing of the steps, a door opens to the right to a janitorial closet and ahead to a men's room. The east stairs, similarly, lead to a utility room and the women's restroom.

From the bottom of the western steps a hallway runs north, with the kitchen and another room off the right and a series of rooms off the left. (Photo 16) The hall, with composite tile floor and dropped ceiling with fluorescent light panels, leads into the large space used as a "junior church" and social hall by the current congregation. From the bottom of the eastern steps, one passes a closet with gas meter, with a wooden door and exposed wooden floor, into a passage that leads to the main hallway, with a doorway also opening into the kitchen.

The kitchen's cooking space is divided from the rest of the room by a wood-composite partition, with windows and counters for serving. The cooking space has a terra-cotta tile floor, white tile walls, a plaster ceiling with fluorescent light fixture. A metal column, similar in form to those in the sanctuary, but painted all white and with a simplified capital, stands near one end. The outer area of the kitchen has wood-composite paneled walls, a composite tile floor, and a historic stamped-metal ceiling with a non-historic ceiling-fan light fixture and built-in wooden bench seating with storage underneath on two walls. Two doorways without doors and one double-width and a four-light window open into the hallway. (Photo 18)

On the opposite side of the hall, proceeding from the western stairwell, are a utility room currently occupied by a pair of refrigerators serving the kitchen. It has a wooden door and floor, metal ceiling, and a blocked doorway

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to the western alley. The next room to the north, painted blue and with another metal column, serves as a Sunday school room, and the third room off the hall is the secretary's office.

Before the entry to the dining room, there is an L in the hall, with wooden-door closets to the right, leading into a space used by the church as a youth room. Finished with composite tile floor, the youth room has two blocked window openings in the west wall, two in the north wall shared with the dining room, one freestanding metal column and one embedded in the north wall.

From the hallway, a double doorway leads into dining room and junior church, an L-shaped room that in its widest portion occupies the width of the building. It has a composite tile floor, white-painted plaster walls and ceiling with fluorescent light fixtures, and five metal columns. In the north wall, there is an exit door to the rear yard, approached by three steps, and two blocked windows. The east wall has three blocked windows, and the west has three blocked windows and two doors to the western alley. (Photo 17)

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Statement of Significance:

The Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem synagogue, built in 1901 in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan, is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture and Social History. The two-story building, which today serves as the home of the New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ, is an intact example of an early twentieth-century synagogue in a Moorish Revival style. The synagogue was designed by Michael Bernstein, an architect of tenement buildings, adapting the late nineteenth-century trend of grand Moorish synagogues with dome-topped towers, large rose windows and intricate ornamental carving to a somewhat more modest building, using brick and terra cotta to achieve imposing effects. The synagogue is significant in the history of Jewish New York, as well as the development of Harlem: It was built for one of New York City's oldest Jewish congregations, which like others, moved from the older Jewish section of the Lower East Side to Harlem when the later became an important Jewish neighborhood at the end of the nineteenth century. When Harlem's Jews largely left the neighborhood after World War I, Congregation Shaare Zedek moved to a new home on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and since the 1930s the building has served Protestant congregations in what became a predominantly black section of the city. The churches made few substantial changes to the building, largely preserving its original liturgical features as well as its highly distinctive Moorish style.

Jewish Harlem

The Harlem area of Upper Manhattan was given the name "Nieuw Haarlem" by Peter Stuyvesant, director-general of the Dutch colony of New Netherland, in 1658, six years before the colony was ceded to the English and became New York. Harlem remained a rural area until the nineteenth century, when, in 1837, the tracks of the Harlem Railroad reached the area. This spurred the growth of a suburban settlement with the character of a separate village from the rest of the city of New York, which was still early in the process of growing northward from its origins in Lower Manhattan.

Jewish settlement in Harlem had its origins with a small number of German-Jewish merchants who moved to its commercial district, centered along Third Avenue after the U.S. Civil War. This group established a synagogue, Congregation Hand-in-Hand, in 1873, followed in the succeeding decade by a Talmud Torah religious school for young boys and branches of Jewish community organizations such as the Young Men's Hebrew Association and B'nai B'rith.¹

Contracts were awarded for the construction of the Second and Third Avenue elevated railways in 1875, making transport to and from downtown New York easier, and integrating Upper Manhattan with the rest of the city as a residential neighborhood. Consequently, residential development of Harlem intensified in the 1880s, with the construction of both tenements for workers prosperous enough to seek to escape the older, overcrowded working-class districts downtown, as well as brownstone townhouses for wealthier classes.²

¹ Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish*, pp. 7, 10-11.

² *ibid.*, p. 14.

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Irish and Germans, including German Jews, predominated among the immigrant groups who migrated uptown to Harlem. The development of Harlem coincided with a wave of Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Russia in 1881. Many came to the U.S., flooding the already crowded Jewish immigrant quarter of the Lower East Side, and prompting some of the older German Jewish population to move to the new uptown neighborhood. German domination of the Harlem Jewish community lasted until about 1895, when more of New York's Eastern European Jews also began settling in Harlem, furthering its emergence as a major Jewish district of New York. While in 1892, the Lower East Side was home to about 75 percent of New York's Jews, in 1903 it only had about 50 percent, amid migration to Harlem and Brooklyn's Williamsburg and Brownsville neighborhoods. Harlem had a Jewish population of about 100,000 at the turn of the century.³

According to historian of Jeffrey Gurock, the "most notable" migration of a German Jewish institution from downtown was that of one of New York's oldest and best known synagogues, Congregation Shaare Zedek.⁴

Congregation Shaare Zedek

Origins

Congregation Shaare Zedek (in Hebrew, "gates of righteousness") variously believed to be the second- or third-oldest Jewish congregation in New York City, traces its origins to a group of Jews of Polish heritage who began gathering for prayer around 1837—the year of the congregation's earliest archival record, which indicates that it met at 42 Water Street in Lower Manhattan. The group formally organized itself in 1839, in a meeting at the Shakespear [*sic*] Hotel at William and Duane Streets, declaring its adherence "to the form of worship of the Polish Israelites." The congregation in its subsequent years gathered in a rented room on Pearl Street, before moving, in 1844, to a larger space on Centre Street. In 1849, Shaare Zedek leased a pair of lots on Henry Street in the Lower East Side from Anche Chesed, one of the older Jewish congregations of New York, and erected a synagogue and school in 1853. In 1866, Shaare Zedek bought the leased land and remodeled its synagogue. The growing congregation enlarged the Henry Street Synagogue in 1886 and demolished and rebuilt it five years later.⁵

Congregation Shaare Zedek was Orthodox in its origins, maintaining a mikveh (ritual bath) and separate seating for male and female members, but it began to depart from Orthodox practices toward the end of the nineteenth century. The congregation abolished the mikveh in 1891 and also decided to adopt mixed seating then, before rescinding that decision.⁶

Division and Migration to Harlem

As increasing numbers of New York's Jews moved to Harlem, in 1897 a dispute erupted over a plan by some of the congregation's leaders to sell the Henry Street synagogue and relocate uptown. The congregation's board rejected the idea, but the proponents broke away, relinquishing their rights as members of the congregation,

³ Gurock, pp. 16-17; Polland and Soyer, *Emerging Metropolis*, p. 130; Israelowitz, *Synagogues of New York City*, p. 2.

⁴ Gurock, p. 25.

⁵ Congregation Shaare Zedek, *150th Anniversary: 1837-1987*, n.p.

⁶ *150th Anniversary*.

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including burial privileges, in return for a \$6,000 payout toward the establishment of a new synagogue in Harlem.⁷

Construction of the Harlem Synagogue

The breakaway congregation in July 1899 purchased three adjacent 25-foot lots on West 118th Street for its new synagogue building. In October 1899, it was reported that the architectural firm of Schneider & Herter was preparing plans for a synagogue building that would fill the 75-by-100-foot plot, at a stated cost of \$65,000. These plans were filed with the New York City Department of Building in 1900. Schneider & Herter were prolific designers of tenement and industrial buildings in New York. Many of their clients were German Jews like them, and the firm also designed synagogues for this community, including the Romanesque Revival Kol Israel Arshi on Forsyth Street on the Lower East Side (1892) and the exuberant Moorish Park East Synagogue on East 67th Street (1889-90).⁸

However, perhaps for reasons of economy, the congregation opted to build a synagogue smaller than that specified in the Schneider & Herter filing and apparently designed by Michael Bernstein, also a prolific tenement architect but arguably a less prominent one. Another set of plans was also filed in 1900 by Bernstein for a building measuring 45 feet wide and about 92 feet deep, at an estimated cost of \$50,000. These plans match the dimensions of the structure that was eventually built on only two of the original three lots. The third, westernmost, lot was sold by the congregation in 1901.⁹

The new synagogue opened in time for the Jewish High Holy Days of 1900.¹⁰

Architect Michael Bernstein

Bernstein (dates undetermined) was a designer of a large number of “tenements and small apartment houses—more than 100 in 1901 alone,” many on the Lower East Side, in a variety of revival styles. In a 1901 article about an investigation of his compliance with the new Tenement House Act of that year, he was reported as testifying that he “was graduated from the office of F.D. White.” He is known to have practiced in partnership with David Stone in 1897, and with his brother Mitchell Bernstein from 1903 to 1911, before practicing independently until 1937. Among his more unusual projects was a grand neoclassical limestone-fronted bank on the Lower East Side, the State Bank at 374 Grand Street, demolished in the 1970s.¹¹

⁷ Gurock, p. 25; “Local News,” *Jewish Messenger*, June 25, 1897, and Aug. 20, 1897.

⁸ *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, July 15, 1899, p. 80, and Oct. 14, 1899, p. 551; “Local News,” *Jewish Messenger*, July 21, 1899; “Jottings,” *American Hebrew*, July 21, 1889; “Real Estate News,” *Sun*, July 15, 1899; “Real Estate,” *New-York Tribune*, May 3, 1900; “The Building Department,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1900; New York City Department of Buildings New Building Application 404 of 1900, cited by Office of Metropolitan History; Gurock, p. 25; *150th Anniversary*; Landmarks Preservation Commission, 858 West End Avenue House Designation Report LP-1621 (Aug. 14, 1990), p. 7.

⁹ New York City Department of Buildings New Building Application 123 of 1900, cited by Office of Metropolitan History; Israelowitz, *Oscar Israelowitz’s Guide to Jewish New York City*, p. 114; *Real Estate Record*, March 2, 1901, p. 367.

¹⁰ “Jewish Holidays,” *New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1900.

¹¹ Landmarks Preservation Commission, Greenwich Village Extension II Designation Report, June 22, 2010, pp. 311-312; Landmarks Preservation Commission East Village/Lower East Side Designation Report, Oct. 9, 2012, pp. 33, 271-271; “Tenement Law Evaded,

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Moorish Synagogues

Bernstein's design for Shaare Zedek is a late example of the vogue for Moorish Revival architecture in synagogues in the United States, particularly among German-Jewish congregations. The building's pronounced style, with its interlacing ornament, bulbous domes, pronounced keyhole arches, and dominant rose window, recalls the Park East synagogue, suggesting that the members of the Harlem Shaare Zedek held that building in esteem when originally commissioning Schneider & Herter, before turning to Bernstein for a seemingly more modest version.

The late-nineteenth century trend of Moorish architecture for synagogues was a seemingly incongruous one, the style being associated with Islamic civilization. However, it was part of the wider fascination with "Oriental" and other exotic forms in the U.S. and Europe in that century, exemplified, for example, by the fancifully Indian-inspired Royal Pavilion in Brighton, England (completed 1823). German architect Gottfried Semper designed a synagogue in Dresden, Germany (1838-40), with a Romanesque Revival exterior and an interior that was an early use of Moorish Revival for a synagogue. Semper said he chose the style, referring to it as Saracenic, because of the "oriental suggestions" of an association with the Middle Eastern origin of Judaism.¹²

In the United States, the introduction of Moorish Revival synagogues was associated particularly with German-Jewish congregations, whose immigrant members likely brought knowledge of the prototypes like Semper's in Germany. Early examples include Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia (1864), Emanu-el in San Francisco (1866), B'nai Yeshurun in Cincinnati (1866). Major examples in New York included Temple Emanu-el (Leopold Eidlitz and Henry Fernbach, 1868) and Ahavath Chesed, known as the Central Synagogue (Fernbach, 1872).¹³

Working with a relatively limited palette of materials, Bernstein achieved much of the monumentality characteristic of these synagogues. Like most Moorish Revival synagogues, it has a rectangular basilica plan. (In a concession to the New York lot configuration that was made by some congregations, the Ark is located in the north wall, rather than the traditional east.) Like many of its predecessors, the façade is composed of two imposing stair towers crowned with distinctive bulbous domes and also includes a prominent rose window. Some measure of the complexity of ornament of some of the grander predecessors is achieved through more modest means than expensive carved stone: interlacing patterns in terra-cotta, a tall stamped-metal cornice with numerous courses of widely varied ornament; and, historic photographs show, patterned brickwork in the lower portions of the stair towers, now covered by paint.

The Moorish Revival elements of the interior include the keyhole-arch doorways, windows and molded surrounds, and elaborate Moorish column capitals. The prominent circular forms of the arches and rose windows are echoed in the curving balcony and the rounded bimah and arched Torah niche. It is possible that the current white interior paint conceals a previous layer of ornament that would suggest the richly painted and inlaid interiors of other Moorish synagogues.

Says Mr. De Forest," *New York Times*, July 23, 1901; "Architect Answers Charges," *New York Times*, July 24, 1901; "Tenement Plans Approved," *New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1901.

¹² Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States*, pp. 69-70; *Two Hundred Years of Synagogue Architecture*, p. 13.

¹³ Wischnitzer, pp. 67-68, 71, 72, 77; *Two Hundred Years*, p. 13.

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In Orthodox synagogues, gallery seating often functioned as a separate section for women, but because the breakaway Shaare Zedek members and the reunited congregation abandoned separate seating, the balcony of the 118th Street building would not have served that function.

Reunification of the Congregation in the 118th Street Building

Over the first decade of the 20th century, more members of the Shaare Zedek group that had stayed on Henry Street moved uptown, leading them to eventually move to Harlem just as the dissidents had—but not immediately to reunite with them. In 1909, the downtown congregation rented a church in Harlem for High Holy Day services, and continued to use temporary facilities after selling the Henry Street building in 1911. Following a fruitless search for a suitable permanent building to acquire, the congregation decided that a merger with the breakaway synagogue was its best option, and the two congregations were formally reunited in 1914. The merger required the two groups to reconcile their differing worship practices. The combined congregation retained the mixed seating of men and women that the Harlem group had adopted while the downtown group had retained more Orthodox services.¹⁴

Move to the Upper West Side

The united Shaare Zedek remained in the 118th Street synagogue for only eight years, as members of Harlem's Jewish community began to migrate again to new neighborhoods in the 1910s and 1920s. During World War I, Harlem had experienced “pronounced physical deterioration...under the impact of severe wartime overcrowding and wartime building restrictions that precluded builders from providing new housing for an expanding urban population and allowed landlords to exploit this temporary housing shortage.” The broad extension of the subway system to new areas of the city's outer boroughs had opened brand new neighborhoods for residential development, attracting many Jews of Harlem and other older ethnic neighborhoods to areas of Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, and in some cases to other parts of Manhattan.¹⁵

In particular, many of the Jews of Central Harlem, where Shaare Zedek was located and which was generally more affluent than the East Harlem of working-class Jews, moved to Manhattan's Upper West Side. Shaare Zedek, along with other congregations that had moved to Harlem from the Lower East Side such as Temple Israel and Ohab Zedek, “continued their traditions of following their most affluent members to newer sections of Manhattan and also erected large synagogue buildings on the West Side during this period.” In 1921, Shaare Zedek acquired a building site on West 93rd Street on the Upper West Side, and accepted an offer for its 118th Street synagogue from another Jewish congregation, the Chevra Talmud Torah Angustower.¹⁶

Scant records are found of this congregation, though a *New York Times* bar mitzvah notice confirms its presence at 118th Street in 1923. (A congregation in Harlem with a similar name is also recorded on 129th Street.) The WPA survey of New York religious institutions' historical records in 1939 noted the former existence of both Shaare Zedek and a “Chevra Talmud Torah Anshe Augustov” at the 118th Street building, replaced by that time

¹⁴ Gurock, p. 26; *150th Anniversary*; Monsky, *Within the Gates*, pp. 79-81.

¹⁵ Gurock, p. 150-151.

¹⁶ Gurock, p. 150-151; Monsky, p. 84.

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by a “Negro” church, the Canaan Baptist Church, reflecting the influx of black residents to Harlem as its Jewish population left.¹⁷

Canaan Baptist Church and New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ

The Canaan Baptist Church had been founded in 1932 and met in a room in a funeral parlor in 134th Street before moving to the former synagogue on 118th Street sometime in the 1930s. Canaan moved to a former theater on West 116th Street in 1966, and sold the 118th Street building to the New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ, which moved into it in that year. The Way of the Cross Church of Christ had been founded in Washington, D.C., in 1938, and a bishop of that church, after a successful preaching visit to New York, returned to found a branch congregation in 1958 on Seventh Avenue in Harlem. The growing church’s needs for more space led it to acquire the 118th Street building.¹⁸

Despite its occupancy by two Christian congregations, the distinctive elements of the synagogue plan—the configuration of the sanctuary and its bimah and balcony—remain largely unaltered, as does its imposing exterior. Though the stained glass may have been replaced, and some decoration concealed by paint, the building’s key ornamental elements remain, making it an intact example of Moorish Revival architecture.

¹⁷ Works Progress Administration Federal Writers Project Survey of State and Local Historical Records: Church Records/Jewish Synagogues, 1939, cards 939, 990, 995.

¹⁸ “Church History,” Canaan Baptist Church website (www.cbccnyc.org/history); “The Origin of the Way of the Cross Church of Christ, International,” Way of the Cross Church of Christ website (<http://wotcc.net/about-us/our-history.html>), accessed Aug. 31, 2014.

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Archival Sources

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New-York Tribune

Sun [New York]

Jewish Messenger

American Hebrew

American Israelite

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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

Name of Property

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Verbal Boundary Description

The rectangular parcel, 50 feet by 100.92 feet, consisting of Borough of the Manhattan Tax Map Block 1717, Lot 21, which encompasses the land on which the 1900 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.

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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

Name of Property

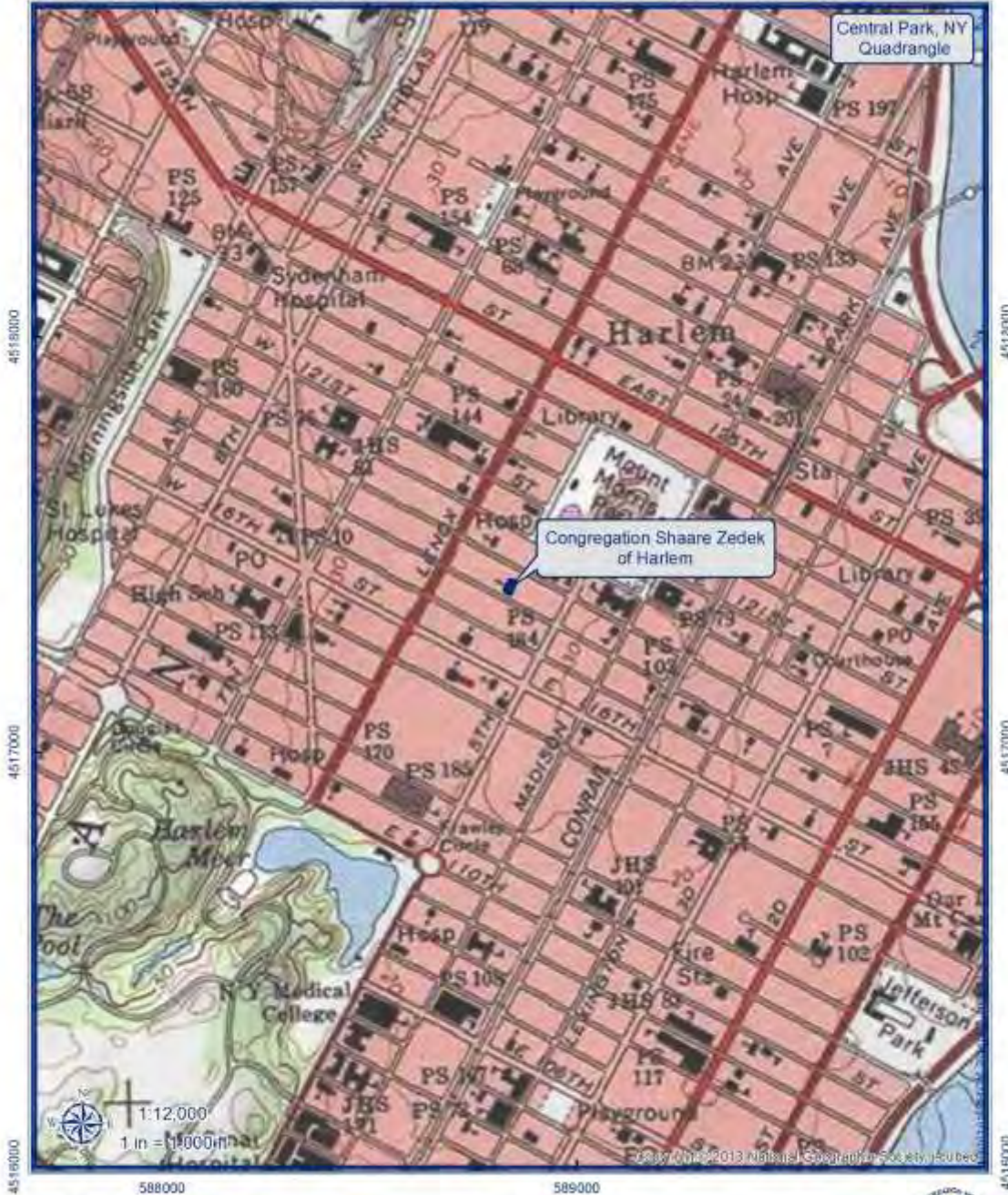
New York County, New York

County and State

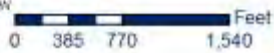
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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem
New York City, New York Co., NY

23 West 118th Street
New York, NY 10026



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



Congregation Shaare Zedek

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



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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

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New York County, New York

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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem
New York City, New York Co., NY

23 West 118th Street
New York, NY 10026



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



Congregation Shaare Zedek

Tax Parcel Data:
NYC PLUTO
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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

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Additional Information

Photographs

Former Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem (New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ)
23 W. 118th St., New York, N.Y.

- 01 Facade
- 02 Facade rose window and ornament
- 03 East tower secondary entry and ornament
- 04 West wall overlooking alley
- 05 Vestibule, facing east
- 06 Stair at west side of vestibule, with Jewish star on newel
- 07 Sanctuary with bimah
- 08 Sanctuary view toward rear
- 09 Windows in west side of sanctuary
- 10 Sanctuary view from rear balcony
- 11 View of balcony toward rear
- 12 Historic pews in balcony
- 13 Ceiling detail
- 14 Tower dome interior
- 15 Roof view to north from tower

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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem
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1932 image courtesy of the NY Public Library



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Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem
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1940 Tax Photo- courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives





APARTMENTS
FOR RENT
(530) 421-7371

NO PARKING
ANYTIME

NO PARKING
ANYTIME

THE BISHOP OF CINCINNATI
WELCOMES YOU
WEDNESDAY
10:00-11:00 AM
THURSDAY
10:00-11:00 AM
FRIDAY
10:00-11:00 AM
SUNDAY
10:00-11:00 AM
Pastor
ELDER PERCY B. HICKS
Pastor
BISHOP JAMES H. HICKS
"ALL ARE WELCOME"





New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ

✠

ORDER OF SERVICES	FRIDAY
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30-11:00AM	PRAYER 3:30-8:00PM
SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:30AM	BIBLE STUDY 8:00

Pastor
ELDER PERCY E HICKS

Founder
BISHOP JAMES H. HICKS

"ALL ARE WELCOME"



NO PARKING
ANYTIME



























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 1/09/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/24/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000031

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 2-23-15 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.



New Bethel Way of the Cross Way of the Cross Church of Christ
223-25 West 118th Street
New York, New York 10026

212-534-9236

Elder Joshua A. Wilder, Pastor | Bishop James H. Hicks, Founder

STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

I, **Derrick Johnson**, am the Deacon Board President, of New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ that owns the property at:

23-25 West 118th Street New York, New York 10026

(Street number and name, city, state of nominated property)

and I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Derrick Johnson

7/2/2014

(Signature and date)

New Bethel Way of the Cross Church of Christ

23-25 West 118th Street

New York, New York 10026

(Mailing address)



Landmarks Preservation
Commission

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

Sarah Carroll
Executive Director
SCarroll@lpc.nyc.gov

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

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

November 6, 2014

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

Re: Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem, 23 West 118th Street, Manhattan

Dear Deputy Commissioner Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem, located at 23 West 118th Street in Manhattan, 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 Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sarah Carroll

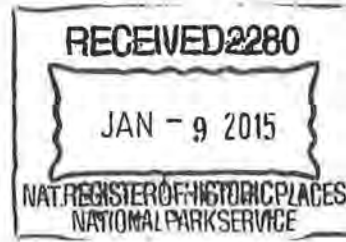
cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Mary Beth Betts, Director of Research





**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

26 December 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:

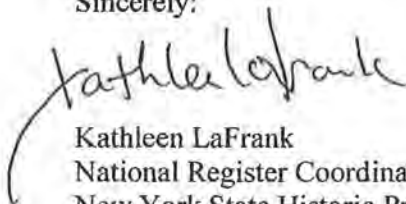
I am pleased to enclose the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Congregation Shaare Zedek of Harlem, New York County
Elmwood, Livingston County
James Bolton House, Steuben County
Potsdam State Normal School Campus, St. Lawrence County
Washington Park Historic District (Boundary Increase), Albany County

Please note that there is an additional submission for the Washington Park Historic District. The original Washington Park Historic District, listed in 1972, did not include a building list. As part of the project to add two small areas to the district, a building list for the original district was prepared according to current standards. The new building list is included on a separate disc because it should be filed with the 1972 district.

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

Sincerely:


Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office