

PH 0509752

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **DEC 5 1977**

DATE ENTERED **APR 19 1978**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

**

HISTORIC

Chizuk Amuno Synagogue

AND/OR COMMON

B'nai Israel Synagogue

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

27-35 Lloyd Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Baltimore

__ VICINITY OF

3rd

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Maryland

Baltimore City

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

B'nai Israel Congregation
c/o Rabbi Samuel Pliskin

Mr. Abbot Hoffman, President
B'nai Israel Congregation

STREET & NUMBER

2204 East Fairmont Avenue

3701 Southern Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Baltimore, Maryland 21206

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office, Room 601

Liber #: GR 719

Folio #: 508

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE
Maryland 21202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE
Maryland 21202

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The B'nai Israel Synagogue is located on Lloyd Street approximately at the center of the block, and set back from the sidewalk about three feet. A plain cast iron fence about four and a half feet high with a decorative arched gate borders the sidewalk along the front of the building.

The Synagogue is a subdued Victorian Gothic structure that synthesizes Romanesque and Moorish elements with traditional Jewish symbols. The architect was Henry Burck, whose design was supposedly based on that of the Schieff Congregation in Vienna. The carpentry was done by E. F. Hausen and the interior frescoes by F. Moore. The building was completed in 1876.

A three-story brick structure, the synagogue is eight narrow bays wide across the gable end that faces the street and ten bays long. The facade is laid in all stretcher bond and is presently painted red and striped to simulate mortar. An earlier black and white photograph shows this painted a light stone color with slightly darker trim. The brick on the other walls is laid in common bond and unpainted.

The facade has a symmetrical design composed of a four-bay center section flanked on each side by a slightly projecting two-bay section. The entrance occupies the entire first floor center section. It consists of a wide but shallow arcaded vestibule containing three Moorish arch doorways; the center arch is taller and wider than the ones on each side. The arches are all faced with smooth Indiana granite and supported by a squat, one-third section engaged columns which have simple leaf pattern capitals. The center columns are attached to brick piers. Arched decorative doors of wood are deeply recessed within each arch. The doors have a curved scallop pattern along the arch and rosettes along the cross bar. Above each side arch is a stone lintel with a crenellated upper and lower edge. A crenellated block that is flush with the lintel extends below the center of the lintel, joining the arch below.

Brick pilasters separate the arches and a vertical half-pilaster flanks each lower side arch, intersecting the projecting bay. The pilasters extend above the arches and terminate in a crenellated, corbelled brick course. Approximately eight courses above is a series of rectangular stone blocks, slightly recessed within brick frames. This pattern stretches across the entire facade. A brick string course under the "paralleling" ornamentation further defines the division between the first and second floors. The string course is interrupted at the center by a rectangular stone block inscribed in Hebrew with the following words: "The Gates of the House of God, Holy Congregation, B'nai Israel, 5633".

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Above the "panelled" section are four lancet arch, one-over-one windows. The center two windows are narrower than the outer two, but all are the same height. Between all the windows are raised brick piers. The windows appear to be recessed because of the rectangular double brick frames surrounding the top upper portion and sides of the windows. The upper edge of the outer frame is crenellated. Above the two center windows is a narrow stone strip with returned corners. The windows have one stone sill, painted red, in common.

The third story, center section is occupied by a large circular window with heavy tracery forming a sept-partie pattern. The molded stone (possibly terra cotta frame) is painted red, and rests upon a stone sill that stretches the width of the center facade. A double brick arch springs from the ends of the sill. The arch is framed by a course of bricks that follows the rake of the gable. The gable comprises Romanesque corbelled cascading blind arches. The cornice is a plain fascia molding. Rising from the apex of the gable are stone tablets inscribed in Hebrew with the Ten Commandments.

The two end double bays project slightly beyond the center section of the facade. Each double-bay terminates in a moderately-pitched cornice repeating the angle of the roof. The first floor is occupied by coupled, narrow one-over-one lancet arch windows. Between each window is a raised brick pier. The windows are slightly recessed within double-brick frames. The upper frame is crenellated. The stone panelled effect and brick string course and window arrangement from the center facade are continued on each bay.

The gable end of each bay has a smaller, circular window. Also framed by stone, the windows have a simpler tracery pattern. The windows rest on a brick string course. The cascading blind arches are also repeated on each gable. A smaller, more simple single stone tablet, painted to resemble an antifex, rises from the apex.

Both sides of the projecting bays project slightly, forming a pilaster effect that emphasizes the verticality of the facade. A simple leaf pattern capital crowns each pilaster. A plain rectangular block with a pedimented cap crowns each capital.

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A brick wall extends from each side of the facade at the first floor level. The wall on the northern side is one bay and contains a lancet arch doorway with a plain wooden, arched door. The arch is framed by a course of raised bricks. The wall above the arch is crenellated and capped with another, vertically crenellated course that has a semi-circular stone decoration rising from the center. The wall at the southern end is two bays and comprises a blind lancet arch enclosed by narrow brick piers. South of the arch is a blank brick wall. A crenellated course runs the width of the wall above the arch. The wall is capped with stone coping that has a crenellated pattern in relief.

A stone foundation occupies approximately one-third of the first floor level. The face of each stone block is bush-hammered with chiseled margins. The stone is painted red, matching the other stone trim on the building.

The sides of the building are simple, laid in common bond with two-over-two rectangular windows on the second floor and two-over-two lancet arch windows on the third floor. A rectangular metal panel connects each second and third floor window.

The rear of the building is also relatively plain, with two circular windows with colored pie-shaped panels at the third floor level. On the second floor are two two-over-two, rectangular windows. The window framing is painted white.

The main sanctuary occupies the second and third floor levels. It seats 425 people. The center aisle terminates at the semi-circular, convex altar. The women's gallery runs along the length of each side. Slender columns support the gallery which is partially screened by a low wooden wall with recessed, rectangular panels. Within each panel is an arch design. The walls and ceilings were frescoed in a plain but tasteful manner.

The highly ornate altar is the focal point of the interior. The two-story altar resembles the facade of the Synagogue. Concentric Moorish arches are set within a larger frame with a moderately-pitched upper frame. The tablets of the Ten Commandments rise at the

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apex of the altar. At each side is an engaged column on a high plinth, with a massive Byzantine capital. Sconces are attached to each column. The altar is covered with rich, stylized scroll work and gothic bline arch patterns. Two sets of candelabra decorate the altar. Wooden banisters along the convex altar separate the altar from the pews. Against the wall behind the altar is a round arch. Above the arch is a flat arch. Both arches have a simple wood molding.

Below the gallery level, near the front of the sanctuary, are Victorian chandeliers. The first floor is occupied by the Beth Hamidrosh, the house of instruction, for study and meeting rooms.

A park, to be named Freedom Park, will be installed to the north of the Synagogue, between this structure and the Lloyd Street Synagogue. The Park will be dedicated to the numerous ethnic groups which emigrated to Baltimore for religious, political and cultural reasons. The Park is part of the City's Commercial Revitalization Plan for the adjacent East Lombard Street Business District. The Synagogue is in good structural condition, but in need of cosmetic rehabilitation.

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Chizuk Amuno Congregation. The Dedication Service was held on April 1, 1871, and the following day an organizational meeting was held. The Minute Book lists twenty-three Charter Members. At their April 23rd meeting, "The Constitution was adapted and dues were fixed at \$8.00 a year". Membership was contingent upon City residency. By April 30, there were thirty-two members. To prevent reforms, the Charter stated that anyone who proposed a reform would cease to be a member.

The new congregation worshipped at Exeter Hall, 2 North Exeter Street. The first floor became a Beth Hamidrash, house of instruction, for the study of the Talmud and theology, while the second floor was the place of worship.

The congregation grew and by 1874 members decided to construct a new synagogue. They purchased a lot, 47' x 100', just to the south of the Lloyd Street Synagogue. According to Rabbi Samuel Pliskin, members of the congregation went to Europe to select a design for the new synagogue. The building is, therefore, similar in design to the Schieff Congregation in Vienna. The new Synagogue was designed by the architect, Henry Burck. The carpentry was done by E. F. Hausen and the interior frescoes by F. Moore. (See Description).

The Synagogue was completed by July 1876. The Ceremonial Inauguration took place on August 18, 1876, and it was dedicated on August 29, 1876 amidst great festivities. It was the only Orthodox Congregation in the city with a large Synagogue.

Chizuk Amuno was one of the sixteen original congregations to send delegates to the Founding Conference of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The Congregation was also at the forefront of the Conservative Congregations of America.

The Congregation occupied the Synagogue for nineteen years, from 1876 to 1895, when it moved McCulloh and Mosher Streets, and later to Eutaw Place and Chauncy Avenue. In 1958 it moved to its present site on Stevenson Road in Baltimore County.

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The Congregation sold the first Synagogue to the B'nai Israel Congregation in 1895; B'nai Israel was organized by eight members in 1873 in the midst of the financial panic. The first service was held on the eve of Passover in rented Osceola Hall on Gay Street near Lexington Street. It later moved to North Exeter Street. Other than the Charter, there are no records or minutes of the early affairs of the Congregation. The Congregation flourished and became known as the "Russische Shule", Russian Synagogue, to distinguish it from the earlier German Congregation. The Russian Jews who replaced the German Jews in East Baltimore emigrated to the United States after the May Laws, restricting Jewish rights, residency and commerce, were enacted in 1882. The German Jews moved to the northern part of the City.

The fathers and grandfathers of many now distinguished Baltimoreans worshipped at "Russische Shule". Today the Synagogue still holds daily prayers, serving the merchants and customers of the 1100 block of East Lombard Street, "Corned Beef Row". That block is now the focus of a City-Sponsored commercial revitalization project. The City is working in tandem with the merchants to provide facade renovation standards, sign controls and street and parking improvements.

The descendents of Russische Shule Congregation and the Jewish Historical Society are raising funds to enhance the area between the B'nai Israel and Lloyd Street Synagogues with a park. The park will be named Freedom Park, dedicated to the numerous ethnic groups which emigrated to Baltimore for religious, political and cultural freedom. The park is being designed by the City's Planning Departments, and will include a fountain, landscaping and benches.

The B'nai Israel Synagogue is living history. It continues to contribute to Baltimore's rich and diverse ethnicity by performing the functions it did one hundred years ago.

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The Synagogue is a subdued Victorian Gothic structure that synthesizes Romanesque and Moorish elements with traditional Jewish symbols. The architect was Henry Burck, whose design was supposedly based on that of the Schieff Congregation in Vienna. The carpentry was done by E. F. Hausen and the interior frescoes by F. Moore. The building was completed in 1876.

A 3 1/2 story brick structure of simple rectangular form, the Synagogue is approximately eight narrow bays wide and ten bays long. All of the architectural details are concentrated on the facade. The ridge of the moderately-pitched roof is perpendicular to the facade.