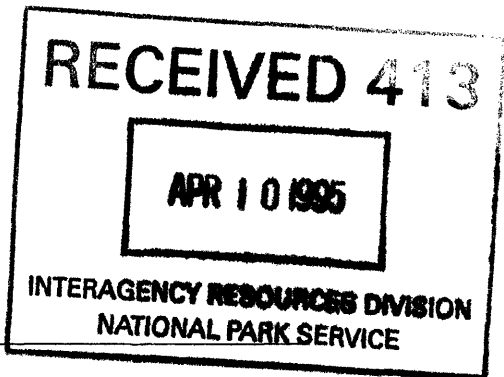


USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form, Multiple Property Listing
Historic Synagogues of Connecticut



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: The Greater Refuge Church of Christ, Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 370 Garden Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Hartford Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: Hartford Code: 003 Zip Code: 06112

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: x
Public-local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s): x
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
 1

 1

Noncontributing
 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Synagogues of Connecticut

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

John W. Shannahan 3/29/95
Signature of Certifying Official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 5.11.95 Entered in the National Register
 Determined eligible for the National Register
 Determined not eligible for the National Register
 Removed from the National Register
 Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: <u>religious structure</u>	Sub: <u>synagogue</u>
_____	_____
Current: <u>religious structure</u>	Sub: <u>church</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
<u>LATE VICTORIAN</u>	Foundation: <u>STONE</u>
<u>Romanesque Revival</u>	Walls: <u>BRICK</u>
_____	_____
	Roof: <u>built up</u>
	Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Exterior

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, a two-story brick building, is located in a dense Hartford urban neighborhood. In its Romanesque Revival style, the central entrance of three doors is approached by wide steps and flanked by projecting towers, in a manner consistent with Connecticut synagogue development.

The 58' x 79' building faces west, close to the street, in the middle of the block. Its neighbors are three-story contemporary brick apartment houses of about the same height and setback. The plan of Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue is a plain rectangle. On the front, five-pointed stars embellish the doors at the top of the long run of wide steps. The triple doorways are surmounted by a pent roof covered with unusual metal pieces formed in the shape of Mission tile. At the second-story level, above the pent roof, a central wheel window is framed by paired round-headed windows. This flanking fenestration is glazed in the tall elongated panes characteristic of the 1920s. A gable roof covers the central portion of the facade and the auditorium. The flanking square towers have paired narrow round-arched windows at first and second floors, and low hipped roofs covered with the metal tile.

On the side elevations there are three tiers of rectangular windows, glazed with small panes, at the basement, first-, and second-story levels. The first-floor windows for the auditorium are taller than the others.

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

Interior

The historic photograph shows the east end of the interior. A wooden railing with quatrefoil frieze between paneled posts separates the main space of the sanctuary from the area of the bimah, lectern, and ark. Traditionally, the platform that is the bimah was located in the center of the room so that the Torah, when read from the lectern on the bima, was surrounded by people. In the typical revised arrangement, as found in Beth Hamedrash Hagodol, the bimah is grouped with the ark for convenience and the Torah is carried up and down the aisles to continue the tradition of being among the people.

The ark, a large stepped cupboard, is elaborately decorated with painted panels of foliate and urn designs, gilded and marbled. The wall behind the ark is embellished with a mural of the Road to Heaven and Noah's Ark. Above is a second wheel window, similar to that on the facade, but with a Magen David in its center. The ark has been removed from the building, and is now in the collection of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford.

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide:___ Locally: x

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A x B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>1922 1944</u>	<u>1922</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Berenson & Moses

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Architectural Significance

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue is significant architecturally because it is a good example of the typical Connecticut approach to synagogue design, well executed by a prominent Hartford Jewish architectural firm. The long wide steps, triple doorway, and flanking towers of the genre are well proportioned. In addition, there are special features, including the pent roof over the doors, the odd metal tile, and the paired round-arched windows which echo the curves of the doorway arches.

The architects of Beth Hamedrash Hagodol, the Jewish partners Julius Berenson (dates unknown) and Jacob Moses (1884-1956), were in practice in Hartford from World War I to the Great Depression. While they designed an occasional large apartment building such as 320 Farmington Avenue (1924), their practice focused on multi-family homes in the North End and South End of Hartford, areas in the city that were experiencing rapid growth at the time.

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol was the first of two synagogue commissions they received, the

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

other being Agudas Achim, 221 Greenfield Street, q.v. The two are similar, both having central round-arched doorways which are flanked by advancing square towers in the Romanesque Revival style as frontispieces to large basilican-plan auditoriums.

There are small but important differences in the plans and in the enframements of the fenestration. At Beth Hamedrash Hagodol the sanctuary and the facade are both contained in a single rectangular plan. At Agudas Achim the plan is slightly irregular: the frontispiece is several feet narrower than the auditorium, setting it off visually. More importantly, the fenestration of Agudas Achim is given a Colonial Revival treatment by joining the first- and second-story windows in a single enframement and by painting the trim white; the side-elevation windows also are round-arched. The overall effect is to make the side-elevation fenestration of the Agudas Achim building resemble the tall round-arched windows of a Georgian Revival church, not the case at Beth Hamedrash Hagodol. Beth Hamedrash Hagodol is Romanesque Revival in style, while Agudas Achim features the Romanesque Revival with Colonial Revival, a fashionable combination at the time.

Historical Background

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol (Great House of Study), an Orthodox congregation, was organized in 1905 on Wooster Street in Hartford's old East Side. In 1921, upon merging with Shaarey (Sharah) Torah, which had begun in a private home on Front Street in the East Side in 1893, the combined group built the Garden Street synagogue, thus following the home migration pattern of members of the congregation, who were moving from the crowded East Side to the more prosperous North End. In 1962 the congregation left Garden Street, merging with Ateres Kneset Israel, to become the United Synagogue of Greater Hartford in a new facility at 840 North Main Street, West Hartford.

The Garden Street building was leased to the Hartford Board of Education until it was purchased in 1970 by the Refuge Church of Christ. The present owner, Refuge Church of Christ, Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God, acquired the property in 1976.

Registration Requirements

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue qualifies under Criterion C for inclusion in this multiple property listing as an urban building constructed as a synagogue in Connecticut by meeting the following requirements:

- Constructed as a Jewish house of worship
- Located in an urban setting
- Exhibits integrity of design and workmanship
- Constructed prior to 1945

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Merle Kummer, Hartford Architecture, Volume Three: North and West Neighborhoods (Hartford: Hartford Architecture Conservancy, 1980), p. 28.

David F. Ransom, "Biographical Dictionary of Hartford Architects," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 54 (Winter/Spring 1989):24, 80, 120-122.

_____, "1843*1943 - One Hundred Years of Jewish Congregations in Connecticut: An Architectural Survey - 5603*5703," Connecticut Jewish History, 2(Fall 1991)1.

Morris Silverman, Hartford Jews, 1659-1970 (Hartford: The Connecticut Historical Society, 1970), pp. 15, 16.

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 Buildings 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: Specify Repository: _____

Beth Hamedrash Hagodol Synagogue, Hartford, CT

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4627600</u>	<u>692400</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___
E	___	___	___	F	___	___	___

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the Hartford Land Records at volume 1540, page 195.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property encompasses land that has gone with the building since it was erected.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Org.: Connecticut Historical Commission

Date: July 26, 1994

Street/#: 59 South Prospect Street

City/Town: Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06106

Telephone: 203 566-3005