

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: West End Congregation/Achavath Achim Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: Iglesia Christiana El Buen Pastor/Good Shepherd Christian Church

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 725 Hancock Avenue Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Bridgeport Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: Fairfield Code: 001 Zip Code: 06065

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Private: x
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

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

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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
 Determined eligible for the

Edson B. Beall 5.11.95

Entered in the National Register

Register
 Determined not eligible for the

National

Register
 Removed from the National Register
 Other (explain):

National

Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: religious structure Sub: synagogue

Current: religious structure Sub: church

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS
Colonial Revival

Materials: Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK
Roof: asphalt
Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Exterior

Achavath Achim Synagogue is a brick Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival building with a projecting two-story portico. (Photograph 6) It is located in a commercial neighborhood in the western part of Bridgeport, as indicated by the first part of its double name, West End Congregation.

Broad wide steps of 17 risers lead up to the white wooden portico of the rectangular brick building. A tetrastyle portico of slender fluted columns, with capitals formed of corn-husks rather than the usual acanthus leaves, projects under a pedimented roof in front of the main block. The doorway is in a shallow recessed arch, flanked by side lights with colonettes which support a plain entablature under half-round fanlight. Narrow windows, two panes wide, are on either side of the doorway at first and second floors. The portico frieze is plain, under a strong modillion course, which also runs under the raking cornices.

The wooden entablature is repeated at the roof lines of the side elevations of the main block and in very brief returns at the front corners, while the modillion course both repeats above the side-elevation friezes and under the cornices of the front gable. Each side elevation features four tall round-arched windows which are industrial steel sash with awnings, glazed in stained glass. A modest louvered octagonal lantern rises above a square base, and is topped by a bell-shaped roof.

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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>1926 1945</u> | <u>1926</u> |

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Leonard Asheim
E. & F. Construction Company
(both of Bridgeport)

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

Architectural Significance

Achavath Achim Synagogue is a rare example in Bridgeport of a house of worship constructed in the Colonial Revival style; the Gothic Revival was favored well into the 20th century. On the exterior, this building, because of its attenuated proportions, slender columns, corn-husk capitals, semi-circular fanlight, and round-arched side windows, effectively recalls the Georgian/Federal style of the early 19th century. The interior, on the other hand, somewhat contemporary and plain, particularly the octagonal piers, lacks the refinement associated with Federal or Adamesque precedent. The stained-glass steel-sash windows are unusual but not unique in early-20th-century Connecticut synagogues; see also Agudas Achim Synagogue, Hebron.

Bridgeport architect Leonard Asheim designed many prominent ecclesiastical and municipal buildings during the years he practiced, ca.1910-ca.1940. His Henry N. Sanborn Branch Library (1922, now Lafayette Bank & Trust Company), 1705 Fairfield Avenue, also in the West End, is another building of red brick with white trim inspired

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------|---------------|---|-----|-------|-------|
| A | <u>18</u> | <u>4558950</u> | <u>649960</u> | B | ___ | _____ | _____ |
| C | ___ | _____ | _____ | D | ___ | _____ | _____ |
| E | ___ | _____ | _____ | F | ___ | _____ | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the Bridgeport Land Records at volume 950, page 642.

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: August 20, 1994

Street/#: 59 South Prospect Street

City/Town: Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06106

Telephone: 203 566-3005

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Interior

On the interior a central aisle divides the pews in the sanctuary. Oversize octagonal concrete-block piers support galleries on three sides. The central ceiling is coved. At the front, a large recessed arched area is reminiscent of the facade's recessed arch surrounding the front door. In the sanctuary, the arched recess originally surrounded the ark. (Photograph 6) The stained-glass windows continue to display Judaic symbols such as the Magen David and serpent in medium to light shades of lavender, green, and amber. (Photograph 7)

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by the Federal style, while Engine House No. 11 and Police Precinct Station (1917), 2664-2676 Fairfield Avenue, use the materials of red brick and white trim in a more classical manner. The Klein Auditorium (1940), 910 Fairfield Avenue, is a larger statement in the Neo-Classical Revival style. In domestic work, Asheim is known for the 14-room Ferdinand Frassinelli House (1932), 32 Eames Boulevard, in the fashionable Black Rock section, a skillful design in the Italian Renaissance Revival mode.

The contractor for Achavath Achim, E. & F. Construction Company, which also built the Klein Auditorium and the Ferdinand Frassinelli House, long was a leading Bridgeport firm, continuing in business until 1990.

Historical Background

The Orthodox synagogue West End Congregation/Achavath Achim (Love of Brethren) was associated with the city's sizeable Hungarian Jewish community. The building is one of the few tangible reminders of the size, influence, and contribution of Hungarian Jews, who settled primarily in the West End. Services were initiated nearby in 1906 in a building that the congregation purchased and moved to 41 Cherry Street, between Howard Avenue and Pine Street. Twenty years later the Hancock Avenue synagogue was built at a cost of \$60,000. The congregation was long known by the dual name of West End Congregation/Achavath Achim

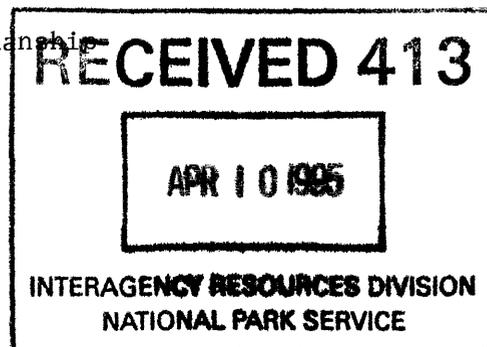
Bridgeport Land Records, volume 579, page 245, September 15, 1927, record the sale by Congregation Ahavas Achim Anshei Bridgeport, Inc., to Martin Feldman of one seat on the main floor and one seat in the women's galleries, presumably for husband and wife, pursuant to the long-standing custom of separate seating areas for the sexes. In the 1960s, the congregation moved to a new synagogue at 1571 Stratfield Road, Fairfield.

The building now functions as a church, owned and occupied by Iglesia Christiana El Buen Pastor.

Registration Requirements

West End Congregation/Achavath Achim 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



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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Assessor's Records.

Bridgeport Land Records, volume 488, page 107, April 8, 1924; 564/2, February 17, 1927; 579/227, September 6, 1927; 579/245, September 15, 1927; 645/127, March 28, 1936; 647/66, August 18, 1931.

Ethel M. Freedman, Archivist, Greater Bridgeport Jewish Historical Society, letter, August 9, 1991.

Magdalene Havadtoy, Dawn in Villa Park (West Hartford, Connecticut: News Press, Inc., 1976).

Norma Klein, Historic Theater Survey, Statewide Historic Resource Inventory, Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission, 1981, Inventory Form for Klein Memorial Auditorium.

Edward Mohylowski, Historical and Architectural Resource Survey of Western Bridgeport, Statewide Historic Resource Inventory, Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission, 1986, Inventory Forms #89, #121, #124, #155.

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

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: _____