

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Tephereth Israel Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: NA

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 76 Winter Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: New Britain Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: Hartford Code: 003 Zip Code: 06051

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
Private: <u>x</u>	Building(s): <u>x</u>
Public-local: <u> </u>	District: <u> </u>
Public-State: <u> </u>	Site: <u> </u>
Public-Federal: <u> </u>	Structure: <u> </u>
	Object: <u> </u>

Number of Resources within Property	Noncontributing
Contributing	_____ buildings
<u> 1 </u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u> 1 </u>	_____ Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Synagogues of Connecticut

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, 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
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 5.11.95

Entered in the National Register

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, CT

6. FUNCTION OR USE

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

Tephereth Israel is a brick synagogue set close to the street in a dense urban ethnic neighborhood in downtown New Britain three blocks northeast of City Hall. Other religious buildings are in the neighborhood, as well as a strip shopping center dating from 1970s urban renewal.

The building combines traditional Romanesque Revival features in its architecture, with influences of the Colonial Revival period. In typical fashion, the building is approached by a long flight of wide steps to triple double doors under round arches with keystones in a central recessed section of the facade. Three tall windows of similar shape occupy the second floor, under a corbeled gabled roof line. The central section of the facade is flanked by projecting towers with brick quoins and two-story-tall narrow round-arched windows. There are Magen Davids in panels over the tower windows. The tower roof lines are segmental in shape, echoing the round arches of the doors and windows.

A high water table serves as a string course wrapping around the towers to the side elevations. Windows in the side elevations are four large panes in width and two stories tall with rounded arches that spring from a second stringcourse. A door to the one-story rear addition is located at the northeast corner.

The facade, consisting of recessed central section with flanking towers, and the machicolations of the roof line are derived from the Romanesque Revival style. The round arches with keystones, the stark white string courses and door and window surrounds, the quoins, and the red brick and white mortar of the masonry suggest the Colonial Revival. All courses of the brickwork are laid up with alternating headers and stretchers. A copper-clad dome rises from the roof.

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, CT

Interior

The first floor of the main block is principally occupied by a social room, which is also used as a school. The rear addition is for a chapel and offices. The high second floor of the main block is the sanctuary. It is a large open space facing an ark and accompanying decalogue, Lions of Judah, and Eternal Light that date from a 1962 fire. The tall wide windows, which are industrial steel sash with awnings, dominate the space. The windows, leaded and glazed with borders in tones of blue, green, and lavender around beige central sections, rise to ceiling height behind the galleries. The galleries, with molded and balustraded fronts, extend along three sides of the auditorium. There are no columns to support the galleries, which are hung by steel rods from the roof framing. An original elaborate chandelier hangs from the domed central clerestory.

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, 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>1925</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1925</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Adolph Feinberg/Levio Bessoni

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

Architectural Significance

Tephereth Israel Synagogue is significant architecturally because it combines traditional Romanesque Revival and Colonial Revival features. In this respect it is similar to Agudas Achim Synagogue, Hartford (see separate registration form). The towers under segmental roof lines projecting on either side of the entrance, and the corbeling at the roof line over the entrance are strong Romanesque Revival features. On the other hand, the round-arched windows and overall effect of red brick with white trim, strengthened by quoins at the corners, reference the Classical Revival and Colonial Revival.

The architect, Adolf Feinberg (?-1958) of Hartford, was born and educated in Austria, where he served in the army during World War I. He held both architectural and engineering degrees, having graduated from the Vienna and Lamberg polytechnic institutes. After arriving in the United States in 1921, Feinberg first appeared in Hartford city directories as a partner in Storrs & Feinberg during the years 1924-1927. Subsequently, he practiced by himself to his death in 1958. While much of his work was residential, associated with the development of Hartford's South End and Blue Hills area, in the Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles, Feinberg carried on a diversified practice. In New Britain he designed what may have been the state's first ramp garage. His other synagogue and church commissions include Beth David Synagogue, West Hartford; Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Windsor; and Grace Episcopal Church Parish House, Windsor.

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, CT

While the exterior combination of Romanesque Revival masonry with heavy white trim from the Colonial Revival at Tephereth Israel creates a somewhat awkward effect, the interior space displays a monumental unity. The proportions which seem strained on the exterior translate on the interior to an auditorium of impressive volume. The unusual absence of columns to support the galleries and the high drum of the dome contribute to the sense of volume of space. The device of suspension from the roof framing was more commonly followed in industrial buildings. The colored-glass windows and chandelier add to the effectiveness of the spatial design, overcoming for the regrettable 1962 loss of the original ark and other Judaic symbols.

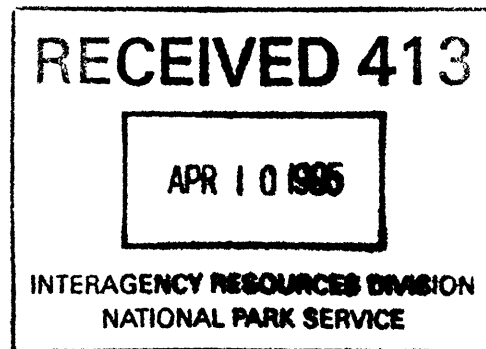
Historical Background

Tephereth Israel Synagogue has a long association with an early Orthodox congregation in New Britain. The first Jews to arrive in New Britain in the 1860s and 1870s came from Austria and Germany. They formed Congregation Aheyu B'Nai Israel (Brethren Sons of Israel) in 1889. Services were held first in a theater, then in the Talmud Torah on Elm Street (built in 1896), before the congregation bought the former Swedish Lutheran Church at Chestnut and Elm streets, c. 1908. In 1924 the congregation reorganized as Conservative, in the wing of American Judaism known as the United Synagogue of America (see entry for Temple B'Nai Israel). At that time, George A. Zunner of Hartford designed alterations to the church for synagogue use, original drawings for which exist in a private collection. Other members of the congregation, who had emigrated near the turn of the century largely from the area around Vilnius, Lithuania, and held to the Orthodox conviction, withdrew in 1925 to form Congregation Tephereth Israel.

Registration Requirements

Tephereth Israel 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



Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, CT



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Herbert E. Fowler, A History of New Britain (New Britain: New Britain Historical Society, 1960), p. 201.

New Britain Assessor's Records.

Rabbi Henry Opolica, interviews, May 14, 1991, September 28, 1991.

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: _____

Tephereth Israel Synagogue, New Britain, CT

████████████████████
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM Reference: Zone Northing Easting

A 18 684890 4615520

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the New Britain Land Records at volume 187, page 354.

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: June 6, 1994

Street/#: 59 South Prospect Street

City/Town: Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06106

Telephone: 203 566-3005