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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 FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

other names/site number Temple Beth David

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 626 Humboldt Parkway [] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14208

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.)

Ross Daniel Muehl Signature of certifying official/Title 6-14-2018 Date

DSMPD 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 [Signature] date of action 7/27/18

FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
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	
1	1	buildings
-	-	sites
-	-	structures
-	-	objects
1	1	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

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH

CENTURY REVIVALS/Neoclassical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, concrete

walls Brick, concrete

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

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

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:

1924-1969

Significant Dates:

1924, 1925, 1955, 1969

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Louis Greenstein (1924)

George B. Smyth (1969)

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
Name of Property

Erie County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .47 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 676068 4753960 3 17
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 17 4 17

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 Joseph Duggan, Kelsie Hoke, M.Arch, Caitlin Moriarty, Ph.D./Architectural Historians [Ed. Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studios, LLC date 4/1/2018

street & number 170 Florida St telephone (716)-725-6410

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208

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 _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 20

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Narrative Description of Property

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church is located at 626 Humboldt Parkway on the east side of the city of Buffalo, New York, three miles northeast of City Hall and one mile southeast of Forest Lawn Cemetery and Delaware Park. Originally, the church was part of the Hamlin Park neighborhood and sat on the east side of Frederick Law Olmsted's Humboldt Parkway facing west onto the tree-lined avenue, however the east side of Humboldt Parkway is now separated from the Hamlin Park neighborhood by the Kensington Expressway, or State Route 33, that was installed in the 1960s. Surrounding the church, the area to the north, south, and east is densely residential and is composed of handsome frame housing stock which dates from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. To the west, the Kensington Expressway runs adjacent to Humboldt Parkway and beyond it is Hamlin Park and additional turn-of-the-century housing stock. The building itself sits near the center of the block, set back approximately twenty feet from the street, and has a grassy lot present to the north and an asphalt paved parking area to the south.

Designed by local Jewish architect Louis Greenstein and built between 1924 to 1925, the Faith Baptist Church is a modestly-sized house of worship designed in an eclectic Neoclassical style and built of beige brick with details executed in cream-colored cast stone. It was commissioned by the Temple Beth David congregation and for its first thirty years was a synagogue serving a Jewish community. In 1955, the Jewish congregation sold the building and it was purchased by the Faith Missionary Baptist church who use it as a Christian church to this day. In 1969, a two-story, brick and masonry addition, the Martin Luther King Community Center, was made to the rear (east) end of the church, giving the building an overall L-shape. Later in 1975, an elevator tower and stair tower were added to this volume but neither expansion impacted the original church volume. The building has been in constant use since its construction and is in good condition throughout and is also very intact. The exterior has original features on each elevation and retains all of its original stained glass windows. On the interior, the original floorplan remains in place with plaster walls and wood casework present in most spaces and original details and original architectural features in the sanctuary. The building still serves as an active house of worship to this day and continues to play an important role in both the social and the architectural fabric of the community.

Exterior

The Faith Baptist Church is composed of the 1924 church and the attached 1969 Martin Luther King Community Center (MLK Center) volume with later stair and elevator tower additions. The church is oriented east-west and is a double-height, rectangular volume that measures approximately 120' by 43' and sits along the northern edge of the lot facing west onto Humboldt Parkway. The MLK Center extends east and south from the rear wall of the church, forming an L-shape with the original portion, and is also two stories in height and rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 96' by 36'.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

Name of Property

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1924 Church

The church is designed in an eclectic Neoclassical Revival style and has a tall raised basement of pale, rough-hewn, ashlar stone with walls of beige brick and a front-facing gabled roof concealed behind a gabled parapet. The primary façade of the building is taken up by one wide bay while the side elevations are composed of seven narrower bays. On each face, the bays are articulated with double-height pilasters and the church is wrapped by a flat cast stone water table and a cast stone entablature with a flat frieze of beige brick. Almost all of the building's original, vibrantly-hued stained glass windows remain in place. Those on the primary facade have stone frames and sills while those on the side elevations are set into brick openings with cast stone sills.

Primary (west) Façade

On the primary façade, a wide flight of stone steps runs the width of the building and leads up to an elaborate entryway framed by a double-story arch, all executed in cream-colored cast stone. The entryway is composed of a wide double-door opening at the center flanked by single door openings to either side. At the center, the opening is framed by engaged Corinthian columns with a full entablature and capped by a dramatic broken pediment. Each of the openings has a transom of stained glass at the top and while the center opening has pair of flush modern doors, the flanking openings both retain their original paneled wood doors. Above, a short Palladian window spans the width of the entranceway, lighting the upper volume of the church, and has a molded stone frame with large dentils at the sill. Surrounding the entry and Palladian window is a large, double-story, segmental arch supported by paired Tower of the Winds pilasters with a full entablature featuring floral swags at the frieze. To either side of the arch, the remainder of the elevation is rendered in beige brick, with a gabled parapet of beige brick rising above, capped by a simple flat coping of cast stone.

North and South (side) Elevations

The side elevations of the building are largely identical. Both are seven bays in width and have Tower of the Winds brick pilasters with cast stone bases and capitals framing each of the bays. The six eastern bays of the north elevation and the five eastern bays of the south elevation each contain a large, segmentally arched opening containing a stained glass window which lights the interior volume of the church with a recessed brick panel beneath and a rectangular, glass block window at the basement. On the south side of the church, the easternmost bay projects just enough to accommodate a rear entry at the southeast corner and its western face has a single door opening with a modern flush door, a cast stone frame, and segmental pediment with a rectangular window centered above. The southern face of this bay is of concrete block and abuts the 1975 elevator tower. On both sides, the westernmost bay has a handsome door opening at grade with a modern flush door, a flat cast stone surround, and a segmental pediment. Centered above the door at the upper story of the church, there is a rectangular, multi-paned window with clear glazing on the south elevation and a small lunette with clear glazing on the north side set above a raised brick panel.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

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1969 Addition

Wrapping around the rear of the church and extending south is the 1969 MLK Center addition. This portion of the building is a simple rectangular structure built of painted concrete block. Its primary façade or western face is clad in beige brick to match the church and originally had a double door entry at the south end with rectangular windows flanking it to either side and regular windows at the second story. In 1975, a concrete block elevator tower was built at the north end of this elevation, a large concrete block stair tower was added at the southern end, and a concrete block vestibule with a pitched roof was built around the entry and has a glazed door at the center with a window to either side. The remaining sides of the nursery school each have unarticulated walls with regular, small, rectangular windows at both floors and an exit door at the west end of the north elevation.

Interior

On the interior, the church and worship functions are located in the 1924 church portion while classrooms, some parish offices, and additional community space are located in the 1969 addition. At the church portion, the front doors open into a large entry vestibule which runs the width of the building and provides access to the sanctuary just beyond and to the lower level and choir loft via a staircase at either end. The sanctuary space is entered through three sets of doors on the east wall of the vestibule and is a double-height space comprising the majority of the church building's volume. At the west end of the space there is an open choir loft above the location of the vestibule. Behind the sanctuary, the east end of the building contains a small chapel and some storage space and circulation space at the first floor, and the priest's study and offices at the second floor occupying what were originally the men's choir loft area and dressing rooms when the building was a synagogue. The lower level of the church has a large community gathering hall with bathrooms and storage at the west end and a kitchen at the east end. On each floor, the church building is connected to the 1969 addition by a hallway at the center of the east end as well as by an elevator and small elevator lobby at the southeast corner. The addition has a simple, double loaded corridor plan on each floor with a stair in the northwest and southwest corners. The lower level contains offices and storage space, the first floor contains classrooms, and the second floor is taken up by a gymnasium space with a kitchen at the south end. Throughout, all of the interior spaces are very intact both in regard to the original floorplan as well as in regard to the original finishes.

In the 1924 portion of the building, the entry vestibule is a wide, shallow rectangular space with a stair leading to the lower level at the north end, a matching stair to the lower level and a stair to the choir loft at the south end, and three door openings on both the east and the west walls. The space has original plaster walls, a shallow, barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling with an original brass light fixture, and original paneled wood doors, wood casings, and brass hardware at each of the openings. The base of the room is wrapped by original wood

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baseboard and though carpeting covers the floor it is likely that the original marble tiled floor remains in place beneath it. At either end, the stairs leading down to the lower level have a simple cast-iron structure with marble tiled treads, straight cast-iron spindles with a polished wood handrail, and square cast-iron newel posts stamped with a Star of David. The stair leading up to the choir is a closed-stringer wood stair with a solid paneled railing and a matching newel post at the base.

The sanctuary space is an airy, double-height, rectangular volume with the altar centered on the east wall and the choir loft projecting from the west wall. Almost all of its original features and finishes remain intact. The space has flat plaster walls above a wainscoting of Venetian plaster finished to look like marble tiles and capped by painted wood chair rail. On the north and south walls, the large arched windows spring from the chair rail and have original wood casings and stained glass in brightly colored organic patterns with a Star of David centered at the upper third. On both walls the bays are framed by shallow pilasters and these visually support a heavy plaster entablature that wraps the room. Above, the space has a shallow barrel-vaulted ceiling divided into sections by ribs that spring off of the pilasters and several original brass chandeliers which incorporate Stars of David in their decoration. The floor of the sanctuary has modern carpeting over what appears to be terrazzo below, and most of the floor space is occupied by three ranks of wood pews with aisles flanking the wider center pews. The original Jewish altar remains in place at the center of the east wall and consists of a raised, curved platform with a handsome wood railing and a paneled wood wall behind with a solid paneled railing above, all in the original finish. Centered in the raised platform is the original almemar (also called a bema or bimah) from which the Pentateuch readings were given, that now serves as a pulpit for the church. Two carved and fluted Corinthian columns frame the original ark for the Torah at the center of the paneled wall and are capped by an arch above at the center of the balcony. The balcony was originally open to a second choir loft beyond but has since been filled in with gypsum in the same plane as the paneled wall below. Framing the altar space is a wide, double-height, segmental arch visually supported by a pair of pilasters to either side. To the north and south of the central arch, there is a single doorway with a handsome wood frame and a segmental pediment supported on scrolled brackets. Both openings have original paneled wood doors and access the small chapel and circulation space beyond.

The lower floor of the church can be accessed via the stairs from the vestibule at the west end, or via the original back stair or modern elevator at the southeast corner. The large community space at the center retains its original volume and has deep beams at the ceiling, original terrazzo floors, modern gypsum walls and gypsum at the ceiling. A small lobby at the west end has original plaster walls, a plaster ceiling, terrazzo floors, and original wood casings and paneled doors at the openings to the bathrooms and storage areas. The bathrooms currently have finishes which date mostly to the 1950s but they do retain their original ceramic hexagonal tiled floors and marble thresholds at the doors. At the east end, a pair of original pocket doors leads to a short hallway and a commercial style kitchen occupying the northeast corner. The kitchen has been updated with modern cooking equipment and gypsum walls, but retains all of its original built-in wood cabinets as well as a

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short, paneled overhead wood serving door that communicates with the community space. The southeast corner of this floor is taken up by the original back stair and stairhall, as well as the modern elevator and its lobby while an east-west hallway beyond the lobby connects the 1924 church portion to the 1969 addition.

At the east end of the church, there are some ancillary spaces at the first and second floor which include a chapel, an office and a study, and storage and circulation space. Each of these is a small, modest space that retains its original plaster walls and ceilings, original wood baseboards, and wood casings and paneled wood doors at the openings. The small chapel at the northeast corner of the first floor appears to have served previously as a sacristy or preparation area and retains a built-in wood closet along its south wall. On the second floor, in the space which used to be the open men's choir loft, there is a plaster Palladian motif with Corinthian columns on the east wall where it was once visible to the remainder of the church. As at the lower level, a short east-west hallway at the center of both floors connects this portion of the building to the addition.

In the 1969 addition, the finishes throughout are both very consistent and very economical. At the lower level and first floor, the corridors, classrooms, and offices all have vinyl tile at the floors, dropped acoustic tile ceilings, and gypsum walls with painted CMU walls at the perimeter. The second floor gymnasium space is similar and has a vinyl floor, painted gypsum walls, and a dropped acoustic tile ceiling. A kitchen with the same finishes is present at the southeast corner and at the north end of the gymnasium there is a small stage on a short, raised platform. In each of the western corners the enclosed exit stairs are steel pan stairs with concrete treads, metal pipe railings, and painted CMU walls.

Non-Contributing Buildings

One non-contributing building is present on the parcel and is a small, one-story, one-car garage at the southeast corner of the parking lot. Originally, a house was located on the site of the current parking lot and, together with the garage, occupied the parcel adjacent to the church. When the house was demolished and the parcel was joined to the church property to accommodate the parking, the garage was retained. It is a wood frame structure with a low-sloped front-facing gable roof and vinyl siding. The western face of the garage has a modern overhead door and the northern face has a single flush door at either end.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

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Statement of Significance:

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church building at 626 Humboldt Parkway is locally significant under Criterion C as a good example of a Neoclassical religious building in Buffalo. Designed for the Temple Beth David congregation in 1924 to face Humboldt Parkway, one of the city's grandest parkways, the building served the growing Jewish population in the surrounding community. The Neoclassical style of the building resonated with civic role that synagogue played in the lives of Jewish population. Inside, the simple basilica form of the building, traditionally oriented east, allowed worshipers to face Jerusalem and included a raised Ark to hold the Torah and bimah (raised platform) from which readings were given. These traditional elements of synagogue design accommodated an easy transition of the house of worship to a Christian church in 1955, when Faith Missionary Baptist Church purchased the building. The building is additionally significant for its association with architect Louis Greenstein, one of the first and most prominent Jewish architects in Buffalo. Greenstein trained in the Beaux-Arts style at the Atelier of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects at Columbia University.

The church building is also locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History for its association with of the shift in the demographic composition of Buffalo's East Side from predominantly white in character to predominantly African American. During the early twentieth century, German, Polish, and Jewish residents of downtown Buffalo began to spread north throughout the neighborhoods of the East Side. This migration delivered a significant Jewish population to the Hamlin Park neighborhood, and those adherents to the Conservative sect of Judaism included in this wave of settlement required a convenient space to conduct their services. These Conservative families organized as the Temple Beth David congregation, the second Conservative congregation in Buffalo, and raised a synagogue which offered them a place to worship for nearly thirty years. Around the middle of the century, members of the original ethnic groups that settled the neighborhood moved to homes farther out in suburban rings, and middle-class African American families, escaping the worsening conditions of the downtown area, purchased the homes they left behind. One of the religious institutions founded by members of this second wave of settlement, the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation, purchased the house of worship at 626 Humboldt Parkway, and the building became host to a second religious group with a distinct mode of worship. The change in ownership of so many houses of worship in this section of the East Side substantiated this transition: as earlier settlers of Hamlin Park found homes in new neighborhoods, subsequent waves inherited and remade existing public spaces as well.

The period of significance for the church building, 1924-1969, begins with the building's construction. The period encompasses the three decades during which the Beth David congregation conducted services at 626 Humboldt Parkway and the year in which they sold the building to the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation. It also spans the first few decades of Faith Missionary Baptist's occupation of the building, a period in which the congregation assumed a prominent role in local involvement in the American civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. The period of significance ends in 1969, the year that the Martin Luther King Community

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Center, an addition to the church building that the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation commissioned in honor of the late civil rights activist, was completed.

American Jewish Settlement and the Birth of Conservative Judaism

In the late nineteenth century, differences in religious beliefs and practices divided the Jewish community of the United States into three major sects with distinct characters and demographic compositions. These sects, namely Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism, emerged out of a series of organizational schisms that occurred between 1885 and 1900 and left each sect with a base of worshippers that subscribed to varying degrees of leniency in religious and cultural practice.

This religious scheme approximately corresponds with the historic patterns of Jewish settlement in the United States. Most of the early waves of Jewish settlement in the country consisted of immigrants from Western European countries who held a more traditional interpretation of the Jewish identity as something unyielding to outside influences.¹ The influx of German-Jewish immigrants toward the end of the nineteenth century diversified the previously near-homogeneous Jewish population in the United States and complicated the ideological timbre: unlike their traditionalist predecessors, these second wave settlers had already relaxed their interpretation of religious identity in order to deflect discrimination and better assimilate into their surrounding communities.² They more willingly adhered to the Talmudic axiom that had served them back in Europe: “The law of the land is the law to be obeyed.”³

As the concentration of subscribers to this moderate ideology increased, American Jewish leadership recognized the need to address the growing heterogeneity of beliefs. The Union of American Hebrew formed in 1873 with the hope of uniting the entire Jewish community in the United States.⁴ This short lived organization did not survive the schismatic Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which ended aspirations for a coherent American Jewish identity and from which emerged the liberal sect known as Reform Judaism.⁵ The most conservative Jewish communities, including the later immigrants from Eastern European countries, eventually identified as Orthodox and adhered to a very strict interpretation of Jewish tradition.⁶ Those communities caught between these two opposite ideologies subscribed to another new sect known as Conservative Judaism.⁷

¹ Ben Zion Bokser, “Conservative Judaism,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 45, no. 4 (1955): 334.

² *Ibid.*, 335.

³ Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 40.

⁴ Bokser, “Conservative Judaism,” 334.

⁵ Jewish intellectuals forming what became the original school of Reform scholars composed a call to all Jews in America to shed certain traditionalist practices in favor of assimilation. The document, known as the Pittsburgh Platform, served as a catalyst for birth of Reform Judaism and marked the end of a united front of Jewish congregations in the United States. Bokser, “Conservative Judaism,” 334.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 339.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 338.

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Conservative Judaism became the ideology of choice for the traditional elite of American Jewish communities with roots in both the Western and Central Europe.⁸ The centrist system of beliefs stressed the importance of historical Jewish identity while maintaining a degree of tolerance for acquiescence to the cultural norms and scholastic practices outside of the Jewish tradition.⁹

Jewish Settlement in Buffalo

The origins of the Jewish community in Buffalo predate the emergence of these modern spiritual divisions in the American Judaism. The first record of Jewish settlement in Buffalo occurred in 1835, when L. H. Fleischman emigrated from Germany to what was then a fledgling town at the terminus of the Erie Canal.¹⁰ More Jewish settlers followed soon after and, by 1847, the Jewish population of Buffalo grew enough to substantiate the organization of the first synagogue in the area.¹¹ These early Jewish immigrants formed Congregation Beth-El, and in order to accommodate their worship services, they purchased a lot and constructed a synagogue (demolished) on Pearl Street in the area that eventually became Buffalo's Downtown.¹² These early Jewish settlers often worked in the clothing manufacturing industry located close to the city harbor, and, like many laborers of the era, they lived within walking distance of their workplaces.¹³

In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, manufacturing and commerce intensified in downtown Buffalo, crowding conditions and incentivizing residents to found communities in the proximate neighborhoods. The Jewish community largely relocated their homes and institutions to the burgeoning Lower East Side in what is now referred to as the Ellicott District, centered around the area between Eagle Street and Genesee Street.¹⁴ This shift coincided with a major swell of immigration from the Russian Empire, where Jewish communities faced intensifying violence induced by rising anti-Semitism.¹⁵ Estimates place the Jewish population of Buffalo at approximately 1,500 in 1890.¹⁶

Although the Ellicott District maintained a significant Jewish population for the first several decades of the twentieth century, the area failed to appeal to the long-term sensibilities of more affluent residents. Around the turn of the century, wealthier Jewish families began to relocate their communities to newer neighborhoods on

⁸ Ibid., 339.

⁹ Ibid., 345.

¹⁰ James Napora, "Houses of Worship: A Guide to the Religious Architecture of Buffalo, New York," Master of Architecture Thesis (Buffalo: State University of Buffalo, 1995).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Anthony Cardinale, "Ethnic Heritage Enriches Buffalo," *Buffalo News*, October 12, 1980.

¹⁴ Napora, "Houses of Worship."

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cardinale, "Ethnic Heritage Enriches Buffalo."

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the West Side and the Upper East Side, including the Hamlin Park neighborhood.¹⁷ The demographics of the Ellicott District underwent a transformation during this period in Buffalo's history, as virtually all of the nearly 10,000 African American migrants from the American South who arrived during World War I settled in the Ellicott District.¹⁸ Although Jews and the African Americans coexisted in the neighborhood during the decades leading up to World War II, the vast majority of Jewish residents in the Ellicott District relocated in favor of more northerly neighborhoods by 1960.¹⁹

The Settlement of the Hamlin Park Neighborhood & Religious Buildings on Humboldt Parkway

Settlement of the Hamlin Park neighborhood of Buffalo began as early as the 1880s, when the first streets took shape across the plot of land that the German born August C. Hager had previously owned and farmed.²⁰ Other smaller land titles also contributed to the area spanning out from the corner of Delavan Avenue and Humboldt Parkway known as the Hager Division, and by 1915, these small developers had nearly completed the neighborhood.²¹ Around the same time as the development of the Hager Division, another large portion of the Hamlin Park neighborhood grew into a residential destination. In 1888, the Toronto developer John C. Cook received the title to the land that had been the location of the Hamlin Driving Park, a popular track for harness racing and for polo events, and began developing this portion of neighborhood, which bordered Humboldt Parkway to the south of the Hager Division.²² The burgeoning neighborhood known as Hamlin Park, designed with middle-class families in mind and complete with a streetcar line that connected the neighborhood with the rest of the city via Jefferson Avenue, became home to first and second generation German and Polish families looking to carve out a space for themselves in Buffalo's ever expanding and vibrant East Side.²³

The first homes rose in Hamlin Park during the incipience of a migration of Buffalo's Jewish population up through the East Side of the city.²⁴ In the years surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, over 10,000 Jewish immigrants settled in downtown Buffalo and found work in the thriving clothing manufacturing industry in the area.²⁵ By the end of the 1910s, a large caucus of Buffalo's Jewish population resettled in Hamlin Park between Jefferson Avenue and Humboldt Parkway, seeking to escape the industrial character and the

¹⁷ Mark Goldman, "High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York" (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983) 212-215.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Caitlin Boyle, Derek King, and Michael Puma, "Hamlin Park Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Preservation Studios LLC, Buffalo, May 3, 2013), 8.3.

²¹ Ibid., 8.4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 8.7

²⁴ Selig Adler and Thomas E. Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia: The History of the Jewish Community in Buffalo* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 323.

²⁵ Boyle et al., "Hamlin Park Historic District," 8.8.

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overcrowded conditions that had come to define downtown Buffalo and the Lower East Side in favor of the seclusion and tranquility offered by their new residential neighborhood.²⁶

While Hamlin Park is today generally defined as the area as bounded by Jefferson Avenue, Main Street, Ferry Street, and the Kensington Expressway, the role of the expressway as a border differs greatly from that of Humboldt Parkway, the tree-lined boulevard that lined the thoroughfare from the 1870s until the expressway construction in the 1950s. Humboldt Parkway was a central feature and unifying element of the larger Hamlin Park neighborhood. The gracious parkway was an ideal setting for religious architecture that communicated the values of the community. In addition, restrictions within the driving park subdivision limited construction within the subdivision to residential buildings, which further encouraged religious buildings to locate on Humboldt Parkway, the perimeter of the tract.²⁷ Various congregations erected houses of worship at or near intersections along Humboldt Parkway as the residential neighborhoods developed. Between 1895 and 1930, religious groups commissioned at least six houses of worship in addition to Temple Beth David that faced the parkway: the Emanuel Reformed Church (1895, extant, now Cedar Grove Baptist Church, 878 Humboldt Parkway), the Humboldt Parkway Methodist Episcopal Church (1911-12, now Humboldt Parkway Baptist Church, 790 Humboldt Parkway), Holy Communion Episcopal Church (1915, now Memorial Baptist Church, 770 Humboldt Parkway), Second United Presbyterian (735 Humboldt Parkway), and St. Francis de Sales Church (1926-27, now Tabernacle Baptist Church, 407 Northland Ave at Humboldt Parkway).²⁸

The building at 626 Humboldt Parkway was designed to front Humboldt Parkway and, thus, the Faith Missionary Baptist Church now faces the Kensington Expressway. While the highway poses an impermeable border today and therefore impacted the formal definition of the Hamlin Park neighborhood for the National Register listing, it does not alter the historical associations of the neighborhood across Humboldt Parkway. According to Esterphine Green, a longtime resident of the neighborhood and a member of the Faith Missionary Baptist Congregation, the term Hamlin Park referred to the neighborhood that grew along both the sides of the historic parkway.²⁹ Prior to the construction of the expressway, the nominated property served families from either side of the parkway, most of whom identified as residents of Hamlin Park.³⁰ Therefore, discussing Faith Missionary Baptist Church as part of the Hamlin Park neighborhood reflects the history of the neighborhood and parish.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Laura Beausire, Ken Mernitz, and Carolyn Schaffner, "Application for Landmark Site Status for: Eight Hamlin Park Religious Structures," (Buffalo: Preservation Coalition of Erie County and Hamlin Park Community and Taxpayers' Association, 1993), 14.

²⁸ Ibid., "Churches in Buffalo in 1931," 8, <https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/pdf/genealogy/subject-guides/Buffalo%20Churches%20in%201931.pdf>.

²⁹ Esterphine Green in discussion with Joey Duggan, August 24, 2017.

³⁰ Ibid.

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The Organization and Construction of Temple Beth David

While plenty of Orthodox congregations flourished throughout Buffalo's East Side in the early twentieth century, the moderate ideology of Conservative Judaism appealed to many of the middle-class Jewish families that settled in the Hamlin Park neighborhood. However, the only established place of worship for this Conservative community, Temple Beth El, stood across town on Richmond Avenue in Buffalo's West Side.³¹ These like-minded families in Hamlin Park therefore began meeting around 1921 in order to hold services in recognition of major holidays.³² The early services held by these families took place at the Delta Temple Hall, which stood at the intersection of East Utica Street and Fillmore Avenue.³³ The Beth David congregation coalesced out of these early services; by 1923, Joseph Sanes led the congregation as the first president, and roughly fifty members participated in regular worship services held in a private house at 652 Humboldt Parkway (only a few numbers up from the site of the future Temple Beth David).³⁴ Temple Beth David identified itself as the second Conservative congregation in the Buffalo area, offering the Jewish settlers of Hamlin Park an alternative to several Orthodox congregations that organized in the neighborhood.³⁵

The developing congregation quickly recognized the need to establish a formal place of worship in the neighborhood. In 1924, following its celebration of Rosh Hashanah at Boreal Hall on Glenwood Avenue (now the site of the Bright Morning Star Baptist Church), the congregation acquired a deed for a plot of land on the east side of Humboldt Parkway, and Jacob Tick and Samuel Coplon formed a building committee to oversee the construction of a synagogue.³⁶ Construction plans moved quickly, and on November 23rd of that year, Mayor Frank X. Schwab and Rabbi Eichler of the Conservative Temple Beth El addressed a crowd of 500 as the congregation held a ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone.³⁷ The committee solicited a design from Louis Greenstein, a local Jewish architect with a Beaux-Arts education, and laid a cornerstone marking the foundation of the Neoclassical building that he designed.

The construction of Temple Beth David, which cost \$105,000 in total, took less than one year to complete, and the congregation held a substantial dedication ceremony for the temple on August 30th, 1925.³⁸ Rabbis from every congregation in Buffalo attended the ceremony, and Mayor Schwab again addressed the congregation.³⁹

³¹ Chana Revell Kotzin, *Images of America: Jewish Community of Greater Buffalo* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 24.

³² Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 324.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 325.

³⁶ Boreal Hall unites the histories of the Temple Beth David congregation and the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation: both groups held foundational services in this community center prior to moving into the building at 626 Humboldt Parkway. Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 324.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

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Regular worship commenced immediately after the completion of the temple building, and Rabbi Solomon Frank led services as an interim rabbi during the first year of the building's occupation.⁴⁰

The Mid-Century Demographic Transition in Hamlin Park

As the Temple Beth David congregation acclimated to the new building, it attracted new leaders and standardized practices. After roughly a year of Rabbi Frank's interim service at Temple Beth David, the congregation elected to install a permanent leader. In 1927, Rabbi C. David Matt began leading the congregation as the congregation's head rabbi, a position he occupied for the next two years. Rabbi Matt attended the Jewish Theological Seminary and served in Minneapolis for fourteen years prior to his move to Buffalo and his service with Temple Beth David.⁴¹ His fluency in Yiddish appealed to the older generation of Beth David's membership, and the congregation thrived during the two years of his leadership.⁴² After Rabbi Matt's departure for West Philadelphia in 1929, Dr. Harry Silverstone assumed the position of head rabbi. Under his leadership, Uriah Z. Engelman developed the school at Temple Beth David.⁴³ Rabbi Silverstone served until 1936, when the congregation instated Rabbi Judah Nadich as the head rabbi. Rabbi Nadich's youthful energy attracted new members to the thriving congregation, and by the time of his departure in 1940, Temple Beth David's membership exceeded 250.⁴⁴ His tenure with Temple Beth David preceded his service to the international Jewish community. In 1945, Nadich successfully convinced General Dwight D. Eisenhower to allow Jewish Europeans displaced by the atrocities of World War II entrance into the American sphere of influence in Europe before the drop of the Iron Curtain and the onset of the Cold War.⁴⁵

In the wake of Rabbi Nadich's departure from Temple Beth David, a series of leadership replacements suggested the instability of the congregation's residency in the Hamlin Park neighborhood. After World War II, the Jewish population that had settled on the East Side of Buffalo decades earlier began a migration to the North Park neighborhood. Their decision to relocate to North Park fit into a popular trend among Buffalo's Jewry. In their history of the Jewish community in Buffalo, Selig Adler and Thomas E. Connolly note that the Jewish population of Buffalo experienced the effects of a major shift in professional status in the 1950s: "By mid-century... Jews were generally employers or professional men who took a different view of labor from that which they once held."⁴⁶ Bolstered by the financial freedom offered by their newfound success, Jewish families moved even farther away from downtown. Jewish settlement of North Park began as early as the 1920s, when some families moved to the neighborhood straight from downtown and started small businesses such as kosher

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 324.

⁴² Ibid., 324-325.

⁴³ Ibid., 325.

⁴⁴ Kotzin, *Images of America: Jewish Community of Greater Buffalo*, 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 389.

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butcheries and clothiers.⁴⁷ In the subsequent decades, more families moved from Hamlin Park to the North Park neighborhood and founded businesses and synagogues, and by the middle of the century, over half of Buffalo's Jewish population called North Park home and could choose to worship at one of six local synagogues.⁴⁸

In 1955, the leadership of Temple Beth David decided that this demographic transition rendered their occupation of the temple building untenable: travelling from North Park to Hamlin Park for worship services proved too inconvenient for the resettled congregation.⁴⁹ President Joseph Sanes and Rabbi Seymour Freeman initiated a merger with Temple Ner Israel of North Park and began the construction process of a new temple building on Starin Avenue, also designed by Louis Greenstein.⁵⁰ During November of that same year, the congregation decided to pass ownership of the temple building on Humboldt Parkway to the recently formed Faith Missionary Baptist congregation for the price of \$68,000.⁵¹

The Resettlement of Hamlin Park

The Temple Beth David congregation's decision to relocate to the North Park neighborhood and Faith Missionary Baptist congregation's installment in the building they left behind was an early instance of a phenomenon that swept through the Hamlin Park neighborhood following the demographic shift. As the people who originally settled Hamlin Park sought homes in other neighborhoods, they sold off the churches that once housed their religious services. Other Jewish organizations in the area sold their places of worship as well: the Humboldt Orthodox Center (extant as the Walls Memorial AME Zion Church) sold its building in 1955, and eventually the Congregation Ohel Jacob on East Ferry Street (demolished) followed suit.⁵² The faiths of new congregations that inherited these standing churches and synagogues aligned with the beliefs of the new residents of the evolving neighborhood. In 1962, the Michigan Avenue Baptist congregation purchased the building at 790 Humboldt Parkway from the Methodist Episcopal Church, which established a new place of worship in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst.⁵³ In 1969, the Lutheran Church of the Atonement congregation left its church building at 224 Northland Avenue and merged with the Parkside Lutheran Church congregation. The

⁴⁷ Ibid., 326-327; Kotzin, *Images of America: Jewish Community of Greater Buffalo*, 18.

⁴⁸ Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 326-327, 332.

⁴⁹ Adler and Connolly describe the merger as the culmination of a "struggle to remain in the vicinity," informing a suspicion that the congregation's residential absence from the neighborhood strained the precarious created an anticipation for some kind of reorganization. Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 325.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 326, 349.

⁵¹ *Open Doors: Western New York African American Houses of Worship*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah (Buffalo: The Writer's Den, 2011), 86.

⁵² Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 326.

⁵³ Laura Beausire, Ken Mernitz, Carolyn Schaffner, "Eight Hamlin Park Religious Structures," Application for Landmark Status, Preservation Coalition of Erie County and Hamlin Park Community and Taxpayers' Association, Buffalo, April 26, 1993.

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Agape African American Methodist Episcopal Church began holding services in the sanctuary in 1970, and the rest of the building served as a community center.⁵⁴

A dynamic tension drove the resettlement of the Hamlin Park neighborhood: “white flight” and a changing American ideal propelled ethnic whites from Buffalo’s urban neighborhoods to suburban areas farther away from downtown.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the Great Migration, coinciding with the increase of job opportunities associated with war-time economy, inflated the African American population of Buffalo by nearly 20,000 during the 1940s.⁵⁶ Discriminatory housing practices forced most of Buffalo’s African Americans to make their homes in the Ellicott District directly to the east of downtown during and after the German and Jewish populations’ exodus from the area, and this neighborhood swelled with new arrivals from the American South.⁵⁷ In the meantime, federal programs such as the G.I. Bill and housing loan from the FHA awarded a greater degree of residential freedom to ethnic whites, and many chose to relocate to newly developed suburbs farther away from the city center.⁵⁸

As the demographics of the Ellicott District transformed, the area experienced an economic downturn. Administrative neglect aggravated housing conditions in the district, a situation further exacerbated by the rapid influx of population.⁵⁹ As unemployment and housing shortages intensified, crime rates in the area worsened, and in 1955 the Buffalo Common Council announced plans to demolish a large portion of the buildings in the Ellicott District.⁶⁰ In recognition of this decision, the more established middle-class African American communities left the failing conditions of the district behind in favor of the opportunities offered by neighborhoods farther north, as had their German and Jewish predecessors.⁶¹ After two major waves of migration, the first during and shortly after World War II and the second in the middle of the 1950s, Hamlin Park, one of several destinations for these migrating families, developed a predominantly African American population.⁶²

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Boyle et al., “Hamlin Park Historic District,” 8.10.

⁵⁶ Mark Goldman, *City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York, 1900 - Present* (Erie County: Prometheus Books, 2007), 173.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Boyle et al., “Hamlin Park Historic District,” 8.10.

⁵⁹ Goldman, *City on the Edge*, 173.

⁶⁰ Boyle et al., “Hamlin Park Historic District,” 8.10.

⁶¹ Goldman, *City on the Edge*, 174.

⁶² The first wave of migration was a reaction to the overcrowding accelerated by the Great Migration during World War II. A public policy decision announced in 1955 drove the second wave of migration: as part of the Urban Renewal program in Buffalo, the Buffalo Common Council carried out the demolition of much of the Ellicott District, discouraging residents and investors from locating their commitments and efforts in the area. Boyle et al., “Hamlin Park Historic District,” 8.10.

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The Organization of the Faith Missionary Baptist Congregation

The Faith Missionary Baptist congregation acquired the title to what had been the Temple Beth David building during the infancy of its organization. The original eleven members of what would become the congregation first met in prayer under the leadership of Deacon DeWitt Smallwood in January of 1955.⁶³ They held their first meeting at 123 Waverly Place, in the home of Artelia Snyder.⁶⁴ Later that month, the group formally adopted the name Faith Missionary Baptist for its congregation and organized under the leadership of the Reverend Roscoe M. Mitchell, whose guidance had a profound impact on the congregation throughout subsequent decades.⁶⁵ On February 6th of that year, the Reverend Mitchell led the first public worship service at Boreal Hall, and 183 members attended.⁶⁶ The city of Buffalo formally recognized Faith Missionary Baptist's incorporation on April 14th, and in November, the congregation purchased Temple Beth David's place of worship, as well as the house next door at 630 Humboldt Parkway, for \$68,000.⁶⁷

The circumstances of Faith Missionary Baptist's inaugural ceremonies in the recently acquired church building attest to the success of the congregation's rapid evolution. Boasting a membership that exceeded 200, Mitchell organized a series of services between December 4th and December 18th in the new Faith Missionary Baptist Church.⁶⁸ Leading reverends from other Baptist congregations spoke in support of Reverend Mitchell at some of these services. The congregation assumed a regular worship schedule following the events of the inauguration period, and by 1958, Faith Missionary Baptist's membership reached 400.⁶⁹

When designing the house of worship on 626 Humboldt Avenue, Greenstein made formal and stylistic decisions that accommodated this transition of ownership and religious affiliation. Due to the building's adaptable Neoclassical design, the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation experienced very few limitations as it transitioned to the building it purchased from the Temple Beth David congregation.⁷⁰ The main chamber of the building required very little structural adaptation, as the rectangular floor plan and traditional layout of the pews and the bimah at the front of the building (unlike Orthodox congregations, which placed it in the middle) accommodated the services of both congregations. As the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation inhabited this space, they installed religious iconography more closely aligned with their denomination, including a cross on the building's facade below the Palladian windows, while keeping certain icons more closely associated with the previous occupants' Jewish faith, such as the Star of David patterns in the historic stained glass windows.

⁶³ *Open Doors*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah, 86.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ "Faith Missionary Baptist Has First Service in New Building," *Buffalo Courier Express*, Dec. 5, 1955.

⁶⁹ Beausire et al., "Eight Hamlin Park Religious Structures."

⁷⁰ Alicia D. Givens in discussion with Joey Duggan, September 12th, 2017.

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In the decades following their purchase of the house of worship on Humboldt Parkway, the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation undertook a series of changes to the building in order to accommodate their practices and community programs. During the first few years of their occupation, they upholstered the pews and laid down carpeting in the main chamber.⁷¹

The most substantial change to the building occurred in 1968, when the congregation constructed the major addition that held the Martin Luther King Memorial Center. Local architect George B. Smyth designed the addition, which included classrooms, office space, and meeting areas necessary for many community functions coherent with the Faith Missionary Baptist mission.⁷² The Reverend Roscoe M. Mitchell envisioned the church community center for over a decade before its construction and with its realization, opted to honor the late civil rights leader and his personal friend, who had visited Buffalo in 1959. Mitchell stated at the groundbreaking ceremony that the center would “promote the philosophy for which the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived and died.”⁷³ The facility included an “inter-faith, interracial classroom complex,” and offered counseling, education, home management and daycare services.⁷⁴

Sometime between 1975 and 1981, the congregation closed off the balcony above the altar, and in 1981, it renovated the office of the pastor, located behind the closed balcony.⁷⁵ The house at 630 Humboldt Parkway (demolished) originally served as a parsonage and then as the congregation’s child care center before the construction of the Martin Luther King Memorial Center.⁷⁶

While they adapted the space to best accommodate their mode of worship, the members of the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation honored their predecessor’s occupation of the building through what they refer to today as “the covenant light.”⁷⁷ Throughout their occupation of the building, the Temple Beth David congregation continuously burned their Ner Tamid in the southwest corner of the chamber as part of a traditional religious practice.⁷⁸ Upon assuming ownership of the building, the members of the Faith Missionary Baptist community agreed to uphold the tradition and care for the of the Ner Tamid. They continue to take pride in “the covenant light” and take steps to ensure that the circuitry for the lamp is well maintained.⁷⁹

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Open Doors*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah, 86.

⁷³ “New Faith Baptist Center To Fulfill Pastor’s Dream,” *Buffalo Courier Express*, May 6, 1968, in the Faith Missionary Baptist Church scrapbooks.

⁷⁴ “Faith Baptist Church Dedicates King Center,” *Buffalo Courier Express*, November 1968, in the Faith Missionary Baptist Church scrapbooks.

⁷⁵ Alicia D. Givens in discussion with Joey Duggan, September 12th, 2017.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The practice of burning an eternal light known as the Ner Tamid is common among Jewish congregations around the world. Jarrassé, *Synagogues*, 274.

⁷⁹ Alicia D. Givens in discussion with Joey Duggan, September 12th, 2017.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church and the Civil Rights Movement

The politically charged atmosphere of the civil rights movement that set in during the 1950s captured the attention of the nation, and the conversations surrounding race increasingly took on an activist character. According to Buffalo historian Mark Goldman, however, this movement offered only a subdued presence in the city of Buffalo. In his book *City on the Edge*, Goldman argues that the civil rights movement in Buffalo struggled to transcend the actions of various scattered groups.⁸⁰ Although overt instances of civil disobedience in the city were few and far between, the spirit of the civil rights movement did find its way to some people in Buffalo through social organizations.

From the onset of the movement, churches throughout the United States became hubs of social activism as African Americans organized and called for social justice.⁸¹ From its foundation onward, the Faith Missionary Baptist organization accepted the mantle of the civil rights movement and began coordinating with Baptist affiliation networks, such as the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc and the Buffalo Baptist Association.⁸² The Rev. Mitchell's outlook and his approach to religious organization corroborated the congregation's mission, a philosophy he described at the onset of his tenure in the following terms: "Never before was mankind faced with such tension, such stress, such strains, with so many confusing and perplexing problems—community, social, racial, individual, and political... when the world is at its worst, the church must be at her best."⁸³ The adoption of this active outlook preceded Faith Missionary Baptist's involvement in multiple visits made by major figures in the civil rights movement, notably those made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.. At the invitation of the Rev. Mitchell, Dr. King visited the church during his time in Buffalo for an address at the opening session of the National Sunday School and Baptist Training Center Congress in 1960.⁸⁴ A planning committee, which included the Rev. Mitchell, coordinated events at the Faith Missionary Baptist Church and the Memorial

⁸⁰ Goldman attributes the absence of a coherent civil rights movement in Buffalo to the attitude of the city's ethnicities, which he describes as "quiet and conservative." He punctuates his brief history of the movement with examples of civil disobedience and unrest in defiance of discriminatory education policies. Goldman, *City on the Edge*, 213-215.

⁸¹ In an article exploring the relationship between American churches and the civil rights movement, James F. Findlay describes how churches all across the United States participated in the struggle for social justice: "The deep concern of the mainline churches to the racial struggle [revived] the Social Gospel tradition that demanded the church demonstrate its faith by active concern for the poor and the dispossessed." James F. Findlay, "Religion and Politics in the Sixties: The Churches and the Civil Rights Act of 1964," *the Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (1990): 66-67. Allison Calhoun-Brown narrows in on the role of the "black church" and the collectivist attitude of the African American religious community in establishing a substantial organized front, citing the role of religious institutions as a major contributing factor to successes like the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Allison Calhoun-Brown, "Upon This Rock: The Black Church, Nonviolence, and the Civil Rights Movement," *Political Science and Politics* 33, no. 2 (2000): 169-170.

⁸² "Faith Baptist Will Occupy New Home Soon," *Buffalo Criterion*, Dec. 3, 1955.

⁸³ "Faith Baptist Has First Service in New Building," *Buffalo Courier Express*, Dec. 5, 1955.

⁸⁴ *Open Doors*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah, 86. The details of Dr. King's visit are unclear, but the presence of such a well-established leader in the civil rights movement had enough of an impact on the congregation to validate the congregation's memorialization of his visit in 1968.

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Auditorium.⁸⁵ The church also sponsored a speech by Dr. King's sister, Christine King Farris, on Sunday, March 22, 1970.⁸⁶

In the wake of his assassination in 1968, the connection between the congregation and Dr. King's message coalesced as Faith Missionary Baptist undertook a new building project. The Rev. Mitchell led the effort to honor the late civil rights activist's legacy and expand the church's outreach with the construction of an addition to the Faith Missionary Baptist Church building. The congregation commissioned George B. Smyth to design a three-story addition that provided space for classrooms, as well as a nursery and a library.⁸⁷ Named in honor of Dr. King, the Martin Luther King Memorial Center opened in 1969. Altogether, the project cost the congregation \$150,000.⁸⁸

The Construction of the Scajquada and the Kensington Expressway and the Transformation of Humboldt Parkway

When developers first planned Hamlin Park, they envisioned a neighborhood centered on the idyllic tree-lined Humboldt Parkway, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as a main thoroughfare in his park system in Buffalo. During the first several decades of development, Hamlin Park was just so: residents recall families picnicking and children playing across the green space offered by the parkway.⁸⁹ As the Buffalo Chamber of Congress committed to allocating land resources and funding to the Urban Renewal program of revitalizing Buffalo's downtown for suburban commuters, plans to construct an arterial highway in place of the scenic parkway began to take shape.⁹⁰ Construction of a six-lane expressway began in 1958, complete with the destruction of residences and businesses that stood in the way of the planned infrastructure.⁹¹ By the time the construction crews completed the expressway system a decade later, many families and businesses left the neighborhood, which the new automobile traffic all but cut in half.⁹² Like many freeway construction projects across the county, low income and minority neighborhoods in Buffalo bore the brunt of the physical, social and economic impact.⁹³

In addition to redefining the Hamlin Park neighborhood, the new expressway system placed a concentrated strain on the routines adopted by the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation. Whereas the congregation had

⁸⁵ "Hear King, Randolph, Powell: 8- To 10 Thousand Expected Attendance," *Buffalo Criterion*, June 18, 1960.

⁸⁶ "Dr. King's Sister Will Speak Here," *Buffalo Courier Express*, March 14, 1970.

⁸⁷ *Open Doors*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah, 86.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Esterphine Green in discussion with Joey Duggan, August 24, 2017.

⁹⁰ Boyle et al., "Hamlin Park Historic District," 8.19; Goldman, *City on the Edge*, 208.

⁹¹ Goldman, *City on the Edge*, 208.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 209.

⁹³ "Highway to Inequity: Disparate Impact of the Interstate Highway System on Poor and Minority Communities in American Cities," *New Visions for Public Affairs* 7 (2015): 9-21.

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habitually held picnic gatherings and other events on the green space that defined the Humboldt Parkway landscape prior to construction, the disappearance of the natural gathering space confined church functions to one side of the expressway.⁹⁴ The new infrastructure also blocked residents on the west side of the expressway from arriving at services on foot, which placed a significant strain on those in the congregation without access to an automobile.⁹⁵ Despite the inconveniences associated with the construction of the expressway, membership in the congregation did not falter.⁹⁶

Faith Missionary Baptist Church and the Late Century

As the twentieth century progressed, the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation demonstrated a resilience in the face of the construction of the expressway system and a willingness to ensure their inhabitation of the space at 626 Humboldt Parkway. The Rev. Mitchell retired in 1972, and the congregation elected the Rev. Junius W. Cofield Sr. as his replacement. Under the leadership of the Rev. Cofield, the congregation installed the surviving altar furniture and communion table. In order to better serve the members of the congregation prevented from reaching the church on foot by the expressway system, the Rev. Cofield coordinated the demolition of the house at 630 Humboldt Parkway and the construction of a parking lot.⁹⁷

After the Rev. Cofield's retirement in 1980, Pastor James R. Banks II assumed the leadership of Faith Missionary Baptist, and oversaw a number of renovations to the church. These renovations include the repainting of the church's interior, the installation of glass block windows in the lower auditorium of the church building, and the renovation of the restrooms.⁹⁸ Pastor Banks also allocated the necessary funding for the payoff of the congregation's mortgage.⁹⁹

The Design of Temple Beth David

The building Greenstein planned for the Temple Beth David congregation adheres to one of the most significant principles of synagogue design. Whereas other religious institutions often refer to specific established styles of design when planning their houses of worship, synagogue designs often reflect progressive architectural concerns of the era.¹⁰⁰ In the forward to Rachel Wischnitzer's 1955 study, *Synagogue Architecture in the United*

⁹⁴ Esterphine Green in discussion with Joey Duggan, August 24th, 2017.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Alicia D. Givens in discussion with Joey Duggan, September 12th, 2017.

⁹⁷ *Open Doors*, ed. Sharon A. Amos and Sharon A. Savannah, 86.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), VII.

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States, Philip C. Johnson, the director of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1955, summarized the pattern of synagogue design in the following terms:

In this microcosm of the macrocosm of the 19th and 20th century architecture one can read the entire fascinating sequence of change and development... For the Jews have historically built in the styles and disciplines of their time.¹⁰¹

In keeping with this tradition, Greenstein based his design for the synagogue on the standards of the era. The Neoclassical style building that housed the Temple Beth David's services fit the general standards of vogue for Buffalo's contemporary civic buildings, emphasizing the role of the synagogue not only as a space for confessional worship but also as a community center for the congregation.¹⁰² Through his effort to integrate the building in its stylistic and geographic context, Greenstein drafted a plan for a synagogue that grounded the Temple Beth David congregation in the greater narrative of Buffalo's civic achievement. The triumphant Neoclassical synagogue evidenced the successful realization of the congregation's upward mobility.

Greenstein recognized the principle of progressive disciplines when he designed the synagogue for the Temple Beth David congregation, but the result did not simply mimic the contemporary styles of the most prominent American synagogues. As architects wrestled with eclecticism in synagogue design, the desire to establish a modern form with historic roots propelled the Neo-Byzantine style to the forefront of 1920s synagogue design.¹⁰³ The Neo-Byzantine style drew on the Beaux-Arts principles of the Ecole in Paris while referencing Middle Eastern architecture associated with Judaism's roots in Palestine.¹⁰⁴ The original Temple Beth Zion building at 599 Delaware Avenue (1890–1961, destroyed by fire) was an early example of this style as well as a prominent reference for synagogue design in Buffalo.¹⁰⁵ Yet Greenstein does not seem to have been interested in the Middle Eastern motifs that popular opinion deemed appropriate for synagogues of the era when he designed the Temple Beth David building. Instead of implementing the Neo-Byzantine principles gaining momentum in the 1920s, Greenstein drew on both his own traditional Beaux-Arts education and the Neoclassical temples designed in prior decades.¹⁰⁶ The building design exhibits qualities more typical of Greenstein's usual Neoclassical mode: rather than affixing it with a dome and Moorish motifs typical of Neo-Byzantine temples, Greenstein designed the Temple Beth David building with a gable roof and Corinthian pilasters.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Greenstein designed the Temple Beth David building during a period in which Jewish congregations in America reimagined the role of the synagogue in the community. Breaking from the intense emphasis on symbolism, architects began to apply functionalist principles to their designs in order to accommodate more community spaces in synagogues and emphasize their responsibilities beyond the more straightforward accommodation of worship services. Dominique Jarrassé, *Synagogues* (Paris: Vilo International, 2001), 222.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 213.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Kotzin, *Jewish Community of Greater Buffalo*, 28-29.

¹⁰⁶ Around the turn of the century, Neoclassicism dominated the tastes of the era. Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture*, 95-108.

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His attention to these stylistic concerns allowed Greenstein to satisfy another major principle of synagogue design. While American synagogue design usually adheres to the prevailing architectural fashions, the monumental presence of the synagogue remained a necessary aspect of design well into the twentieth century with the acceptance of Modernity.¹⁰⁷ Prior to the influence of Modernity in the United States, the commanding presence of the synagogue as a symbol of Judaism's perseverance and civic centrality superseded inclinations for understatement and austerity.¹⁰⁸ Greenstein designed the facade of the Temple Beth David building to demand attention, a double entranceway flanked by engaged columns and complete with a triumphal archway, garlands and stained-glass Palladian windows. From its position on the picturesque Humboldt Parkway, the impressive building celebrated the Conservative congregation's successful transition from downtown Buffalo to the idyllic middle-class neighborhood in Hamlin Park, as well as their devotion to their faith.

Architects Associated with the Faith Missionary Baptist Church Building

Louis Greenstein

The Temple Beth David congregation hired Louis Greenstein to design the building that would house their services for over three decades. By the time the congregation solicited his service, Greenstein had already established himself as a respected architect, as well as one of the first Jewish architects in Buffalo.¹⁰⁹ Greenstein was born in Buffalo in 1886. He worked in the employ of multiple firms during the early years of his career. In 1907, McCreery, Wood and Bradney hired Greenstein as a junior draftsman; by 1908, he had worked his way up to a senior draftsman position at Green & Wicks.¹¹⁰ Greenstein accepted another position during that same year. He relocated to New York City, where he worked as the chief draftsman, associate designer and superintendent of construction for Edgar E. Joralemon's New York City office.¹¹¹

Greenstein's studies in New York City equipped him with the experiential understanding of architectural style that would direct the rest of his career. While working for Joralemon's firm, he enrolled in the School of Architecture at Columbia University, which awarded him a degree in 1909.¹¹² He left the firm in 1913 to work in the Atelier of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects at Columbia, an experience that impacted many of his later designs.¹¹³ After he received this formal education in the Beaux-Arts architectural tradition, Greenstein

¹⁰⁷ Modernity did not make a profound impression on synagogue design in the United States until after World War II. In 1946, a marked leap occurred with the construction Cecil Moore's Anshei Israel in Tucson, Arizona; prior to this, modern experiments in synagogue design were confined to Europe. Orthodox groups most readily accepted the spread of modernism, as its restrained aesthetics appealed to their more traditional sensibilities. Jarrassé, *Synagogues*, 209, 224.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁰⁹ Adler and Connolly, *From Ararat to Suburbia*, 349.

¹¹⁰ Chuck LaChiusa, "Louis Greenstein in Buffalo, New York," *Buffalo as an Architectural Museum*, <http://www.buffaloah.com/a/archs/greenst/greenst.html>.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.* Joralemon was a Buffalo-based architect.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

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returned to Buffalo and started his own firm.¹¹⁴ Between his return in 1914 and his death in 1972, Greenstein's architectural oeuvre grew to include many significant designs in Western New York. In addition to the temple for the Beth David congregation on Humboldt Parkway, Greenstein's significant designs include, but are not limited to, the Coplon Mansion on the Daemen College Campus in Amherst (1918-1919), the 40 North Building (1925), now occupied by Bryant and Stratton Business Institute, and Lederman's Furniture Store Building (1929).¹¹⁵ He also took part in the design of the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium (1938-1940, demolished).¹¹⁶

Greenstein also had a recognizable impact on the city of Buffalo through other avenues of community involvement. He helped operate the Buffalo Rectagon Atelier, an institution resembling the one which had previously offered him opportunities in New York City, and participated in early architectural rehabilitation and adaptation efforts around the City of Buffalo.¹¹⁷ In addition to his architectural achievements, the legacy of Greenstein's graphic designs shaped the cultural legacy of Western New York. He authored both the Buffalo Flag and the official seal of the City of Buffalo, both of which remain in use today.¹¹⁸ Recently, the current economic and social revitalization in Buffalo a revival of interest in Greenstein's design for the Buffalo Flag: according to Newell Nussbaumer, founder of the publication *Buffalo Rising*, the people of Buffalo have re-embraced the flag in accordance with newfound civic pride.¹¹⁹

George B. Smyth

George Bucklind Smyth was born in 1886 in Rhode Island. By 1920, he worked as an architect in Buffalo, where he lived with his wife and two sons. While the details of Smyth's career remain unclear, a newspaper report indicates that he worked as a draftsman on plans for the Buffalo city hall design in 1927, at which time he resided at the Ford Hotel.¹²⁰ In 1942, he lived at the Markeen Hotel in Buffalo. Smyth designed an addition to the Sterling Engine Co at 1270 Niagara Street in 1941.¹²¹ Plan for a home included in a Merrill Builders' subdivision off of Sheridan Drive at North Forest Road in Amherst in 1953.¹²² The *Courier Express* toured the design as a modern home based on a T-shape that featured "open planning," built ins, a basement, high windows, and a garage. In 1968, Smyth designed the community center addition for the Faith Missionary Baptist Church.¹²³

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Newell Nussbaumer, "Fly the Official City of Buffalo Flag," *Buffalo Rising*, 18 June 2016.

¹²⁰ "Made Water Inspector," *Buffalo Courier-Express* July 7, 1927, 22.

¹²¹ "Artists Contrition OK," *Marine Engineering and Shipping Review* 46 (1941): 130.

¹²² "Merrill Bldrs. Showing Home Of Own Design," *Buffalo Courier-Express* September 20, 1953, 54-C.

¹²³ George B. Smyth had a son of the same name born c.1913. It is unclear if the younger was also an architect and if so, which Smyth designed the center.

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Conclusion

The house of worship which the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation now calls home draws its significance from its history as a focal point in a complex narrative of neighborhood transformation. The building served generations of families and adherents to multiple faiths as Hamlin Park matured around it. As the demographics of the neighborhood changed, the acute function of the building changed as well. Greenstein's design equipped the building with a versatility that ameliorated this transition: the Neoclassical facade and the internal layout are capable of satisfying the needs of a multitude of faiths. The monumentality of the building granted credence to the burgeoning social mobility of its middle-class occupants and to their civic projects. Through two iterations of ownership, the house of worship was the site of significant social activity, housing the second Conservative Jewish congregation in Buffalo before opening its doors to the Faith Missionary Baptist congregation's dignified brand of activism. The building and its history testify to the influence of identity and religion on the Hamlin Park neighborhood.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Name of Property

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Name of Property
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is depicted with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

This boundary corresponds with the historic boundary of the Temple Beth David and Faith Missionary Baptist Church located at 626 Humboldt Parkway in the City of Buffalo.

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Faith Missionary Baptist Church
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Faith Mission Baptist Church
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

626 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Faith Mission
Baptist
Church



Parks, Recreation
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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Faith Mission Baptist Church
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

626 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Faith Mission
Baptist
Church



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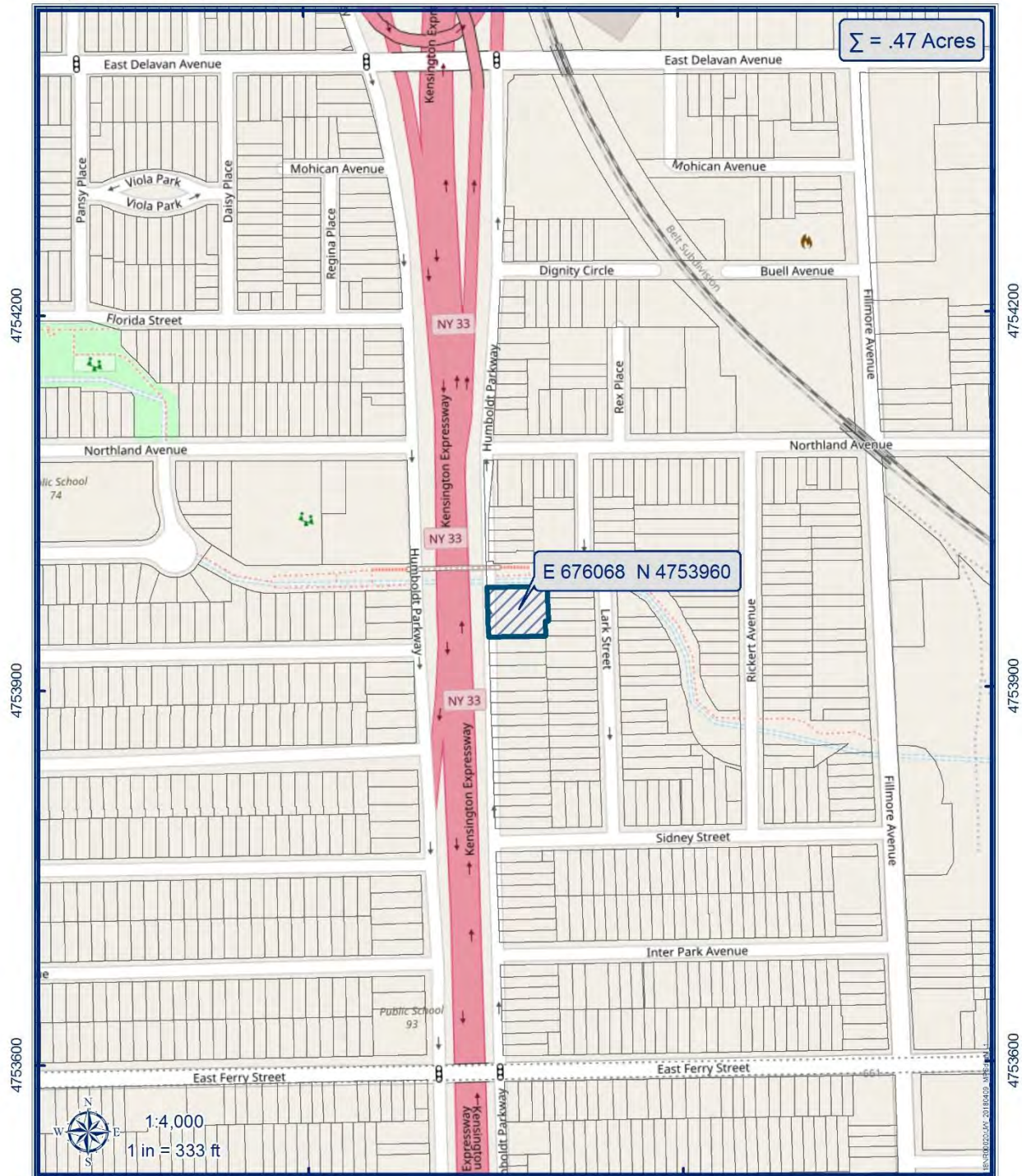
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Faith Missionary Baptist Church
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Faith Mission Baptist Church
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

626 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Faith Mission
Baptist
Church



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Faith Missionary Baptist Church

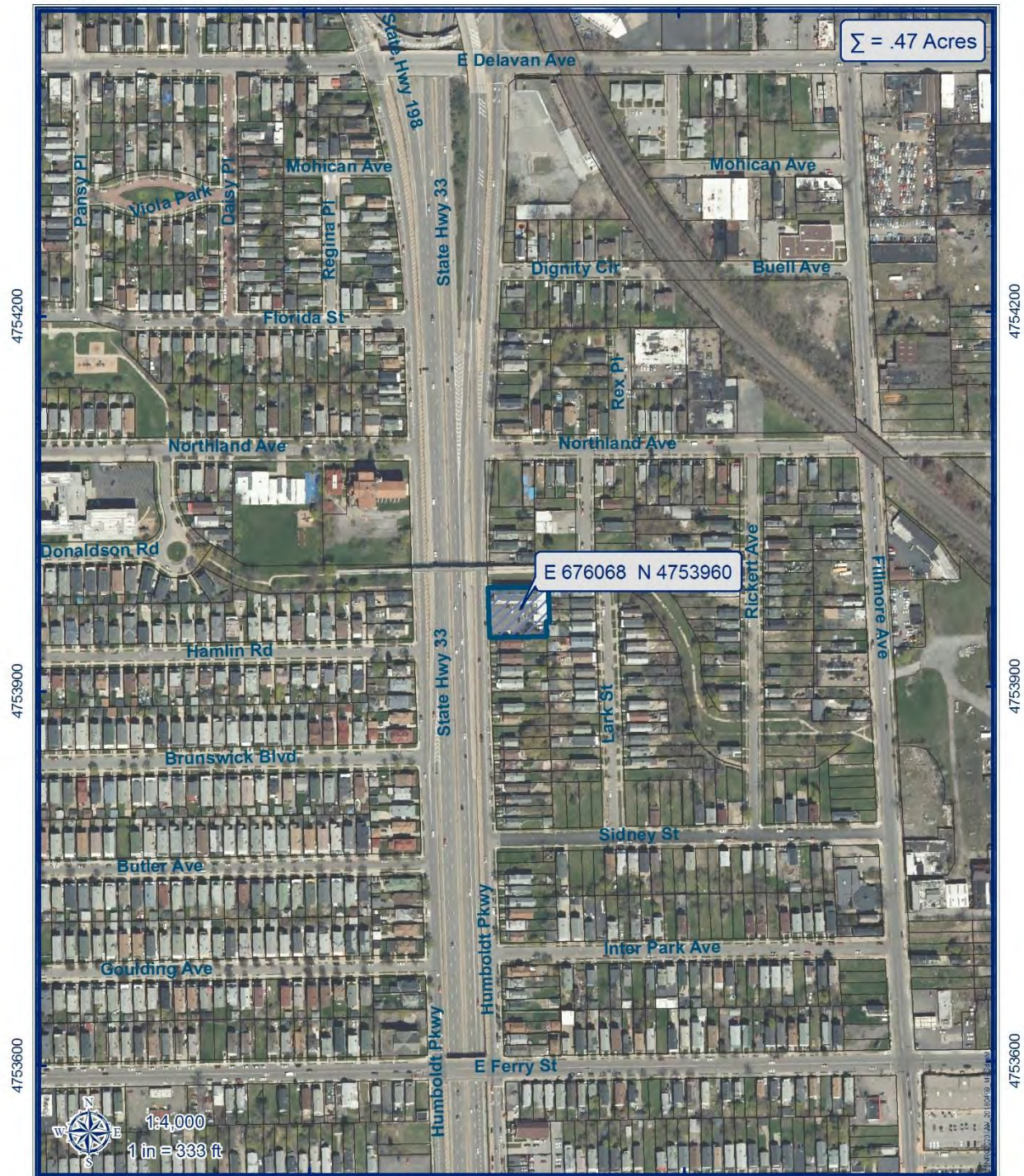
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Erie County, New York

County and State

Faith Mission Baptist Church
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

626 Humboldt Parkway
Buffalo, NY 14211



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Faith Mission
Baptist
Church



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Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Additional Information

List of Photographs

Name of Property: Faith Missionary Baptist Church
City or Vicinity: Buffalo
County: Erie
State: NY
Name of Photographer: Derek King
Date of Photographs: January, March 2018
Number of Photographs: 9

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_001
West and south elevations, camera facing northeast

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_002
West (façade) elevation, camera facing east

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_003
West and north elevations, camera facing southwest

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_004
West and south elevations, southwest corner, camera facing northeast

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_005
Interior, sanctuary space, camera facing southwest

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_006
Stained glass window in sanctuary, camera facing north

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_007
Interior, sanctuary space, showing altar, camera facing east

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_008
Interior, front hall, camera facing south

NY_Erie County_Faith Missionary Baptist Church_009
Interior, front entry, camera facing northwest

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Additional Information:



Architectural Rendering of Church (Nov 20, 1924)

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Name of Property

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c.1955 photograph from congregation records at Faith Missionary Baptist Church.

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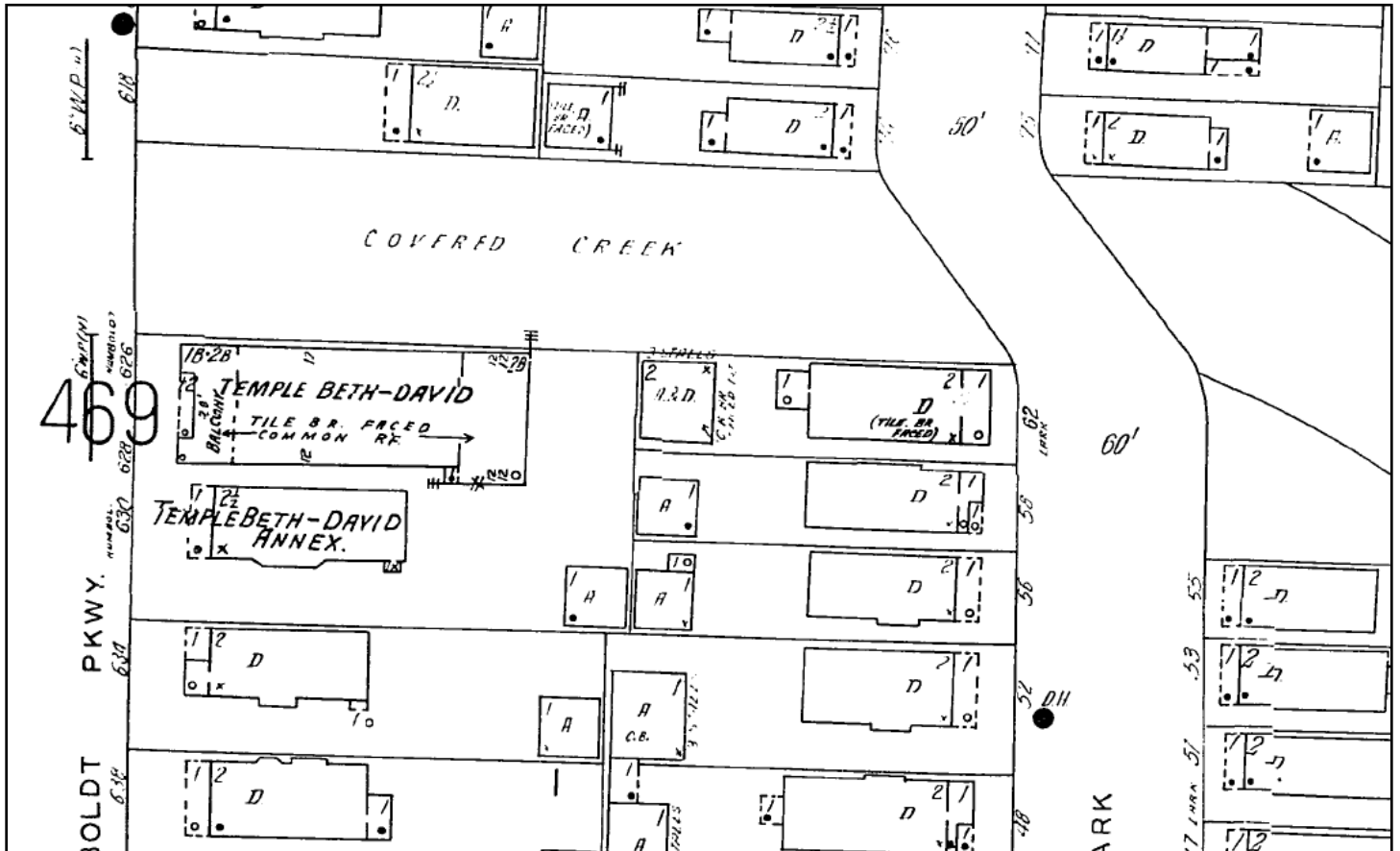
Section 11 Page 5

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Name of Property

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Detail, Sanborn Map (1950)



PASTOR
JAMES K. BARKS II
PARADEWAY

WALTER WINSHILL HALL
ESTABLISHED 1906
ALMA MATER HOURS
BEHIND
THE MATTERS
800.735.4.4000.123

NO PARKING
EXCEPT FOR
EMERGENCY VEHICLES
OR VEHICLES OF
THE CITY



FIRST METHODIST BAPTIST CHURCH
1000 W. 10th Street
Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 262-1234

FALL OF MISSIONARY
WATSON CENTER
ALWAYS BE HAPPY
BECAUSE
"TRUTH MATTERS"
ON 10th ST. JOHN 10:10

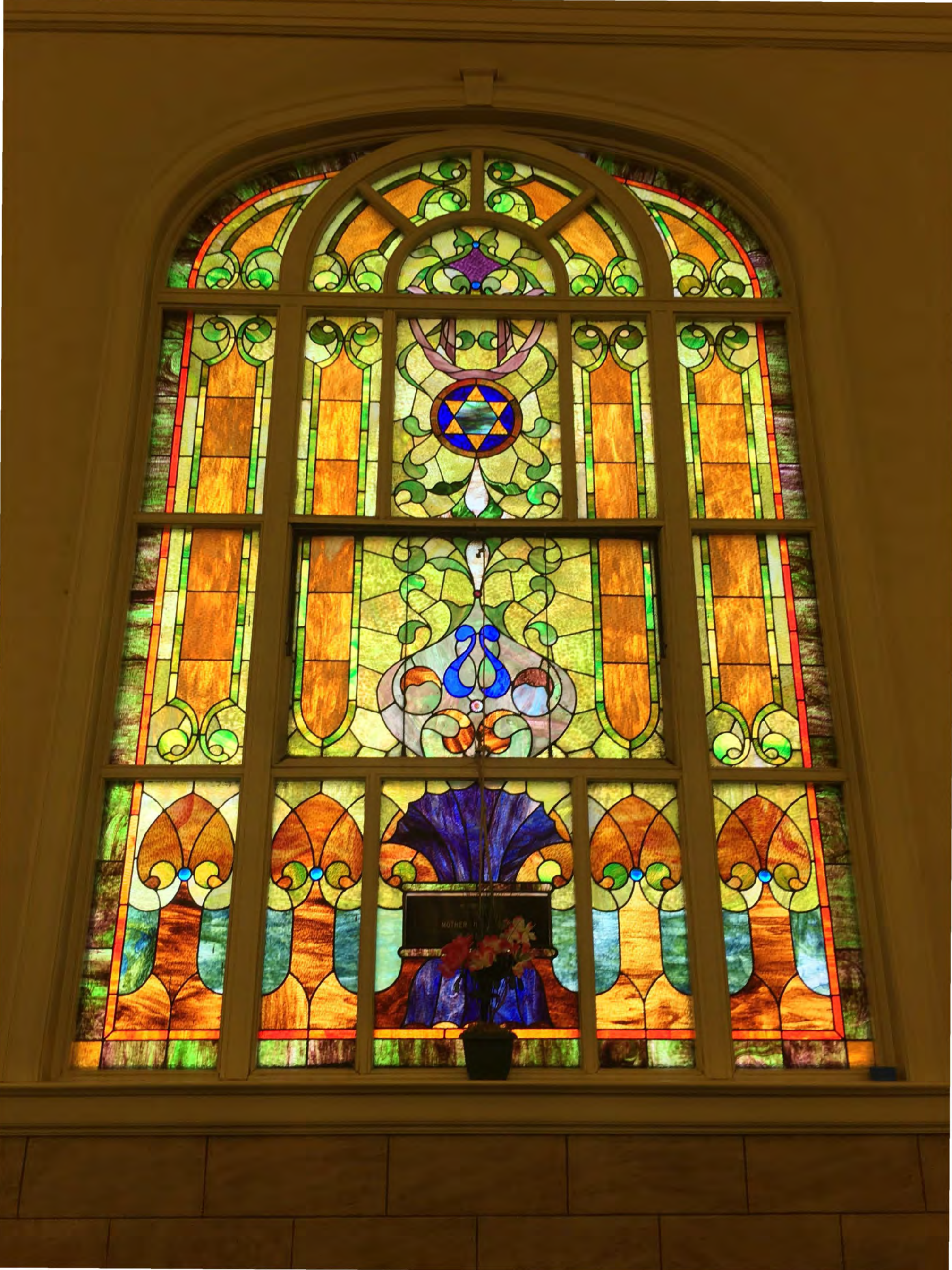
FEDERAL LICENSED
FOR THE SALE OF
REAL ESTATE





PARKING RESTRICTED
EXCEPT FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CHURCH & DAY CARE
ALL OTHERS KEEP OUT









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/19/2018 Date of Pending List: 7/9/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/24/2018 Date of 45th Day: 8/3/2018 Date of Weekly List: 7/27/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 7/27/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

15 June 2018



Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving and Coast Guard Station, Suffolk County (U.S. Government Lifeboat Stations, Houses of Refuge, and pre-1950 U.S. Coast Guard Lifeboat Stations)

St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church Complex, Erie County [note: no longer owned or used as a religious institution]

Fuller Shirt Company Factory, Ulster County
Immanuel Union Church, Richmond County
Buffalo Public School #57 (PS57), Erie County
Buffalo Public School #44 (PS 44), Erie County
Pine Hollow Cemetery, Nassau County
Wollensack Optical Company, Monroe Company
Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Erie County

Wardenclyffe Laboratory, Suffolk [note, while Wardenclyffe is technically a district, there is only one owner, who supports the nomination; please see the file of supporting documentation, which contains more than 9,500 expressions of support for this nomination]

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office