

RECEIVED 415

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Ohev Sholem (Ohave Cholum) Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: Centro De-La-Comunidad

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 109 Blinman Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: New London Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: New London Code: 011 Zip Code: 06320

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing  
   1  
     
     
     
   1

Noncontributing  
    buildings  
    sites  
    structures  
    objects  
    Total

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

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Historic Synagogues of Connecticut



Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, CT

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
<u>20TH CENTURY AMERICAN</u>	Foundation: <u>CONCRETE</u>
<u>Neo-Classical Revival/</u>	Walls: <u>BRICK</u>
<u>Colonial Revival</u>	Roof: <u>built-up</u>
	Other: _____
	_____
	_____

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

**Exterior**

Ohev Sholem Synagogue faces south close to the street and close to its neighbors in a dense neighborhood just west of downtown New London. The 40' x 67' building is sited on a plot of 53' x 89', a close fit. The surrounding area developed as a late-19th-century residential area. Commercial inroads have occurred.

The synagogue is a two-story Neo-Classical Revival/Colonial Revival building in red brick with white trim. The brick is laid in Flemish bond. A flight of wide steps leads up from the sidewalk to two round-arched double doors which are separated by an engaged column. Above the doors is a large round window, which originally may have been glazed in a Magen David pattern. The roof line is in the shape of a stepped segmental pediment flanked by small low towers that terminate in truncated-pyramid pinnacles. A central rectangular panel at the top of the pediment may have been the location of a Decalogue. (Photograph 23)

On the side elevations the lights in the 4-over-4 windows are elongated rectangles, taller for their width than usual.

**Interior**

On the interior, the foyer or narthex at the front of the synagogue is four feet wider than the main block of the building. Stairways rise to right and left, lighted by

Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, CT

the narrow windows seen in the facade. The sanctuary is a two-story space with galleries on three sides. It appears that the walls above the gallery fronts are an alteration for the purpose of converting the balconies to office space. (Photograph 24) Whether the front stairways to the (now) offices are original is uncertain. The central chandelier may be original. The arched space in the rear wall was the location of the ark and other Judaic symbols and objects. The round outline in the wall may mark the location of an original window and, if so, the window probably was filled with a Magen David pattern.

Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, 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>ca.1920 1945</u>	<u>ca.1920</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Architectural Significance

Ohev Sholem Synagogue is significant architecturally because it is a good example of the Neo-Classical Revival/Colonial Revival style adapted for synagogue use. The basic design of broad steps leading up to multiple round-arched doors is a continuation of late-19th-century Romanesque Revival practice commonly found in historic Connecticut synagogues. The small windows flanking the central entrance at first and second floors and the finials on piers above them at the roof line create a vertical thrust reminiscent of the traditional flanking towers capped by domes.

The red brick with white trim and the segmental pediment, on the other hand, reflect

Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, CT

the 20th-century preference for the Neo-Classical Revival/Colonial Revival. The elongated panes of the sash also are a Colonial Revival feature, clearly identifying the building with the years following World War I.

The masonry details are well-executed and are of design interest. The Flemish bond of the brickwork is perhaps unique in Historic Synagogues of Connecticut. The use of headers only within the arch is distinctive. The entranceway is notable for the single engaged column between the doors; flanking columns to left and right, normally expected, are not there.

The interior space is relatively plain and its original appearance unconfirmed.

### Historical Background

Ohev Sholem Synagogue is associated with an early Jewish congregation which has now lost its identity. New London Land Records show that Ella Hudson Crocker Atwood on September 9, 1916, sold the land and buildings at this address to the Ohev Cholom (spelling varies) Sick Benefit Society, indicating the earlier existence of an organization pre-dating the congregation. In the schedule of priorities that existed for a group struggling to establish itself, it was not unusual for immigrants first to organize to care for the sick and to provide burial arrangements, before forming a congregation for public worship.

Although the land was purchased in 1916, Congregation Ohev Sholem does not appear in the New London directories until 1921; presumably it took several years to finance and construct the building.

In 1974, the Ohave Cholom Society, Inc., merged with Congregation Beth El, Inc., Beth El being the surviving organization. At that time the Blinman Street property was sold to Spanish-American Cultural Real Estate, Inc., with the help of a mortgage that was released in 1976. That corporation continues to be the owner, operating under the name - Centro De-La-Comunidad.

### Registration Requirements

Ohev Sholem 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

Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, CT

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic and Architectural Resource Survey of Downtown New London, Statewide  
Historic Resource Inventory, Form #197, Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, nd.

New London Assessor's records.

New London City Directories, 1921-1979.

New London Land Records, volume 114, page 340; 127/322, September  
9, 1916; 368/104, April 24, 1974; 368/105, April 18, 1974.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Ohev Sholem Synagogue, New London, CT

████████████████████

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4581600</u>	<u>742640</u>	B	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
C	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	D	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
E	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	F	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the New London Land Records at volume 368, pages 104, 105.

Boundary Justification:

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

████████████████████  
11. FORM PREPARED BY

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

Org.: Connecticut Historical Commission

Date: August 26, 1994

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