

PH0675539

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 18 1979 JUN 19 1979  
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged

AND/OR COMMON  
New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
169 Davenport Avenue

CITY, TOWN  
New Haven

STATE  
Connecticut

VICINITY OF  
CODE  
09

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
3rd

COUNTY  
New Haven

CODE  
009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER  
169 Davenport Avenue

CITY, TOWN  
New Haven

VICINITY OF  
STATE  
Connecticut

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Office of City/Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER  
200 Orange Street

CITY, TOWN  
New Haven

STATE  
Connecticut

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
State Register of Historic Places (Connecticut)

DATE  
1978  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN  
Hartford

STATE  
CT

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged, erected in 1921-23, is a four-story brick and concrete structure located at the corner of Davenport Avenue and Asylum Street in an older residential area of New Haven known as the Hill. Its style is Beaux-Arts classical, with details reminiscent of 17th-century Italian palace architecture. A four-story rear wing of similar style and construction was added in 1950. In 1974-75 the building was more than doubled in size with the addition of a three-story steel-frame and brick-sheathed modern enlargement on the northeast side, extending to the corner of Davenport Avenue and Ward Street. The home now occupies more than one half a city block.

The 1921-23 building has a five bay facade and central main entrance on Davenport Avenue. The raised basement, friezes at the first and second floor and cornice levels, and corner quoins are concrete, and accent the essential divisions of the facade. The second, third and fourth bays project slightly for central emphasis. At the ground floor this projection is treated as a formal entranceway and the primary decorative feature of the structure. The three bays at this level are faced with cast concrete scored to simulate rusticated masonry and framed with two Tuscan pilasters. The entrance bay with arched entrance is again projected and framed with two Tuscan half columns. The whole triumphal arch-like centerpiece is crowned by a continuous entablature which carries the building title in a tablet over the entrance. The entrance bay is topped by a decorative central second-story window framed with cast concrete volutes and broken segmental pediment with a decorative crest in the center.

The first floor windows across the facade and along the Asylum Street side are arched. The openings are accented by concrete key- and impost-stones. In each the glass is set in iron glazing bars which form a circled Star of David in the center under each arch. The fourth first floor window on Asylum Street is blind; the fifth through eighth contain stain glass dating from the early 20th-century and carrying the donors' names together with symbols and scenes relating to Jewish history.

The front half of the 1921-23 building at the fourth story was originally an open roof garden, equipped with hammocks, swings and reclining chairs. In 1934 the present metal and glass solarium was erected to provide a year-round recreation area for the residents.

The rear wing added in 1950 extends the overall stylistic concept of the original building on the Asylum Street side in an abbreviated fashion: the cornice, frieze, fenestration levels and roofline are continuous with those of the original building but the detail is simpler and the first floor windows are rectangular rather than arched.

The 1974-75 addition was designed by New Haven architectural firm Orr, deCossy and Winder in a contemporary style intended to harmonize with the earlier structure in material and overall design. At the intersection of the two buildings on the facade is a small four-story tower. The size and levels of its windows match those of the original

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CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged New Haven, CT	seven	one

building, providing a transition between old and new. Adjacent to this a section containing the present main entrance and lobby (the original entrance is no longer used) is recessed, which serves to announce its entrance function and preserve something of the block-like quality of the adjacent 1921-23 structure. A continuous three-story mass, measured by recessed bays encompassing the first two stories and capped by a projecting, planar third story, extends along the remainder of the Davenport Avenue facade and around the corner along Ward Street. The resulting horizontal thrust was inspired by that of the cornice and attic story lines of the 1921-23 and 1950 wings.

Also in 1974-75 these older wings were entirely renovated inside. The resident rooms on the second and third floors were altered and refinished to match those of the new addition and interior spaces of the two sections are continuous. The fourth floor remains in its original form. Some original woodwork and fittings such as radiator covers remain in the meetingroom and front offices on the first floor, and the marble veneer of the original main hall walls is intact. The entrance porch inside the old front door is entirely original but the plaster in this area is deteriorated and in need of repair. It contains a chandelier taken from the old synagogue. The original synagogue on the first floor, containing three of the four stain glass windows on this side, has been altered and current plans call for converting this room into a day recreation and activities area. The corridor flanking the old synagogue contains original handrails for the residents and a series of bronze memorial tablets listing the names of residents who have passed away, each equipped with a small bulb lit annually on the anniversary of the person's death. The original stairhall and rear elevator are intact, although a newly installed front elevator is now used by the residents.

The 1974-75 wing is designed around an open courtyard, paved and planted with small trees and furnished with urban park-type benches. The walls of the courtyard are punctuated by balconies connected with the residents' rooms. The arrangement is intended to recreate a city park atmosphere in line with the predominantly urban and largely tenement house background of many of the inmates. A tall, windowless brick tower projecting from the northeast wall of the courtyard contains the new synagogue. The original ark, removed from the old synagogue in the 1921-23 building, is currently being restored and will be installed in the new space.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged New Haven, CT	seven	two

The solarium is no longer used by the residents and some of the original furnishings from the lower floors have been stored there since the 1974-75 renovation. Restoration, and possibly conversion of this area into a small community cafe is a long-range goal of the home contingent upon the availability of adequate funding.

SIGNIFICANCE eight

original Articles of Association contain a list of over five hundred subscribers, including only four men -- three of them local rabbis, and one a local businessman who handled the mortgages for the property. All of the original officers of the home, and its first five presidents (i.e., from 1915 to 1936) were women. The home therefore plays a part in the history of women's leadership and control of major social and community service projects in the New Haven area.

The home is also a landmark within its immediate urban context. It is located in one of the oldest centers of low-income and minority groups in the City of New Haven. Already by 1800 the area of high ground south of West Creek earned the title "Sodom Hill" for its record of indigence and crime. Because of its proximity to the docks and railroad, the area became an early immigrant neighborhood. It was first claimed by Irish and Germans (including German Jews from the mid 19th-century) followed by Italians and Russian Jews in the late 19th-century. The latter centered on Oak Street, a few blocks north-east of the present site of the home. Today the neighborhood is comprised largely of black and Puerto Rican families. The area is still plagued by poverty and crime. The home has always been a social cornerstone for this community, at first in connection with the Jewish segment (from the start its synagogue was available for important Jewish family and community functions), and more recently as a locus for neighborhood organizations regardless of ethnic or religious background. One such group is PAC (People Acting for Change) which utilizes the meeting and recreation facilities of the home. The home also actively supports local improvement groups such as Goodwill Industries and Cornerstone (the Yale psychiatric rehab group) and offers special employment opportunities to individuals sponsored by these organizations. Recently the home has served as a polling place for the Third Ward. Five years ago, proximity to the medical complex and neighborhood roots led the

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) women's history
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1921-23

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Brown and Von Beren

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged has made a significant contribution to the history of aged housing and health care facilities for minority groups in the State of Connecticut and has been a continuously critical factor in the social history of the Hill area in New Haven (Criteria A). Its building is a well-preserved and characteristic example of the urban institutional work of Brown and Von Beren, an important New Haven architectural firm in the early 20th-century (Criteria C).

The New Haven Jewish Home is the second major institution devoted to the housing and care of elderly Jews in the State of Connecticut. It was preceded by the Hebrew Home in Hartford, organized between 1901 and 1911, a smaller and more locally-oriented facility. The New Haven institution, established in 1914, operated in a converted residence on the present site at 169 Davenport Avenue, and expanded to include a second residence next door (the site of the present modern wing) in 1917. Initially, it drew supporters and residents from all over Connecticut and a significant number from New York City as well. The call for this kind of facility, distinct from local elderly homes run by other religious or non-sectarian groups, was from the first based on the need for Kosher meals and regular religious services in a legitimate synagogue among the large Orthodox Jewish immigrant population in Connecticut in the early 1900s.

The first concern of the home was elderly housing for destitute Jews. After the 1921-23 building was erected, the management turned their attention to medical care, and with the help of a local Jewish Physician's Club (Jewish staff members of the Yale/New Haven Hospital and the Yale Medical School) operated one of the most successful and efficient health care facilities based entirely on volunteer efforts in the New Haven area in this period. In later years this volunteer staff included a number of nationally prominent names in the medical field, such as Dr. Barnett Greenhouse, a pioneer in the treatment of diabetes (active at the home in the 1930s).

Another significant aspect of the home's early history is the fact that it was founded and initially managed and operated entirely by women. The home was conceived and established by a New Haven women's social service organization formed in 1908 called the Sisters of Zion. This was one of the first major women's community service organizations in the area which was not an auxiliary of a men's group, and did not include a list of nominal male officers as was customary at this time. The home's

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harvey N. Ladin. History of the New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged.  
New Haven: The New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged, 1975.

Interview with Harvey N. Ladin, President, Jewish Historical Society of  
New Haven, 5 November, 1978.

Rollin G. Osterwis. Three Centuries of New Haven. New Haven: Yale  
University Press, 1953.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.67

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 672480 4574160

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged occupies a city lot bounded on  
the southeast by Davenport Avenue, on the northeast by Ward Street, and

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE \*

Susan Ryan, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

6 November 1978

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I  
hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the  
criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE April 12, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 6.18.79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Bruce Van Duzee

DATE 6/18/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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**CONTINUATION SHEET**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**PAGE**

New Haven Jewish Home  
for the Aged  
New Haven, CT

eight

three

home to reject a proposal to move out of the deteriorated Hill area. The decision to remain and invest in new construction indicates an ongoing commitment to the neighborhood. The quality of relations between the institution and the community is also indicated by the fact that, despite the high crime rate in the area, vandalism to the building has been negligible throughout the history of the home.

The home is located in close proximity to New Haven's major medical complex, centering on Yale/New Haven Hospital on Howard Avenue between Davenport Avenue and Congress Street. This has been an asset to the quality of health care offered by the home, and availability of resources of area medical staff. In this sense the home is a part of the extended health care and medical schools and facilities located in this section of New Haven since 1826. The home, with its brick and concrete construction and late Renaissance style, is visually of a piece with the hospital and medical school buildings, such as Sterling Hall of Medicine, Institute of Human Relations and Brady Memorial Laboratory, all erected between 1917 and the 1920s a few blocks away on Cedar Street. This visual relationship between the home and the Yale/New Haven medical center was recognized by the officers and trustees of the home with the choice of architects for the 1974-75 addition; the firm of Orr, deCossy and Winder, together with the predecessor firm of Douglass Orr, Associates, designed or acted as consulting architects for a majority of the medical complex additions since 1951. The recent enlargement of the home bears a stylistic relationship with these modern additions to the neighboring complex. While the enlargement, and the accompanying interior renovations to the 1921-23/1950 building comprise major alterations which have affected the latter's historic architectural character, the new wing has on the other hand extended an important thematic characteristic of the home's architecture into the modern idiom.

The 1921-23 section of the home also possesses a modest degree of local architectural significance as a characteristic work of New Haven architectural firm Brown and Von Beren. The key figure in this firm at the turn of the century was Frederick Von Beren, who inherited the practice of David R. Brown, a former associate of New Haven's nationally-known mid 19th-century architect, Henry Austin. Like his predecessors, Von Beren was responsible for a number of important public buildings in New Haven in the 1890s through 1930s. The majority of these, especially his schools commercial buildings and apartment complexes, are late Renaissance in style and a part of the Beaux-Arts movement which gave downtown New Haven a considerable degree of visual continuity in the early 20th-century. Von Beren was a significant contributor to this trend, and the New Haven Jewish Home is a constituent part of his contribution.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

New Haven Jewish Home  
for the Aged  
New Haven, CT

nine

four

Interview with Howard Reitman, Executive Director, New Haven Jewish Home for the Aged, 18 October 1978.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ten

Verbal Boundary Description

on the southwest by Asylum Street. The northwestern boundary of the lot is a line beginning at a point on Asylum Street 381.06 feet northwest of Davenport Avenue, running northeast 114.88 feet, then turning southeast 40.42 feet, and again running northeast another 114.84 feet to a point on Ward Street 326.84 feet northwest of Davenport Avenue.