

# Common Bond

## Vernacular Synagogue Architecture



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Volume



# Vernacular Synagogue Architecture

by Shari Goldberg

*In contrast to New York State's renown synagogue landmarks—such as Temple Emanu-El or the Eldridge Street Synagogue—its vernacular synagogues maintain a quiet, unsung presence in their neighborhoods.*

For much of Jewish history in Europe and the Middle East, most synagogues built could be called vernacular," Dr. Samuel Gruber, author of *Synagogues* and Director of the Jewish Heritage Research Center in Syracuse, NY, said in a recent interview. "We do not know who the architects were, and the style and material of the synagogues emerge largely from the local building tradition," Dr. Gruber explained. Thousands of synagogues fit this basic definition of the vernacular: built without significant architectural innovation, often by congregants, using local forms.

The term "vernacular" does not refer to one recognizable style, as "Moorish" or "Classical" does. Vernacular synagogues were constructed by builders or architects who looked to local buildings for design and local materials for



Congregation B'nai Joseph Anshe Brzezan on Stanton Street of Manhattan's Lower East Side (Architect unknown, 1913) exhibits a distinctive Classical facade, with a triangular pediment, pilasters, and strong cornice lines.

form. "Rather than develop new solutions to designing space," said Dr. Gruber, they built within the established, commonly available vocabulary of construction." Vernacular architects did not seek to invent new forms, but to adapt, reuse, and rearrange existing models. As a result, vernacular synagogues closely resemble the dominant architecture that surrounds them. Vernacular synagogues on Manhattan's Lower East Side bear similarities in size and materials to tenements, while those located in rural New York State utilize the building techniques of neighboring residential, commercial, and ecclesiastic structures.

Inside, vernacular synagogues are more homogenous, containing the liturgical requirements of a Jewish house of worship: an ark, the cabinet that holds the holy Torah scrolls, and a bimah, the platform and table for reading the Torah and leading services. Historically, the bimah was located in the center of the synagogue, facing the ark at the rear wall, and the congregants' seats were angled to surround the reader's platform and look to the ark. Tradition also holds that Jews should face Jerusalem while praying. Thus, noted Dr. Gruber, "For most European and American synagogues, the axis looking toward the ark is to the east." In Orthodox synagogues, where Jewish law is strictly followed, separate seating is required for men and women; women are usually seated in side galleries or on a balcony.



Ken M. Lustbader

Congregation Darech Amuno, on Charles Street in Manhattan's Greenwich Village Historic District (Architect unknown), was originally a rowhouse dating from 1868; between 1912 and 1917, the building was gutted and renovated as a two story synagogue.

## *The Lower East Side*

Vernacular structures can be built without large budgets or months of planning. They were thus a natural option for the thousands of European Jewish immigrants who arrived on Manhattan's Lower East Side between 1880 and 1915. Newly American congregations often purchased narrow lots on residential blocks, or even actual rowhouses, for their synagogue buildings. The typical 18'-25' lot size constrained the possibilities for synagogue design, as did the uniform height of surrounding mid-block buildings. Vernacular architects were challenged to create a sacred space among the tenements that could be read and recognized as a synagogue without disturbing the evenly built streetscape. They developed a



Ken M. Lustbader

The Star of David above the parapet of Congregation Ahavath Israel of Greenpoint, Brooklyn (Architect unknown, 1895) marks of the building's distinction as a synagogue on a residential block. To the left is another synagogue, built in 1887 (facade has been altered).

unique New York City vernacular synagogue style which used brick and stone to gently adapt slivers of land to popular synagogue forms.

The Lower East Side's vernacular synagogues incorporated New York's general synagogue style, established in the mid 1800s by the primarily German Jewish population. The style featured a tripartite facade, a central entrance, and corner towers. Each of these forms explained the interior layout: the central entrance led into the sanctuary, with the side sections and towers revealing the stairs and separate women's seating. Employing a decorative facade gave vernacular architects the opportunity to distinguish the synagogue from the buildings around it. "In some cases, a fully Classical or Beaux Arts facade was used, as an attempt to elevate the synagogues, to indicate that they meant something more than the other buildings on the street," said Dr. Gruber. Without introducing incongruous architecture, the builders wanted to make the synagogues seem more monumental than the location and interior of the structure would ordinarily suggest.

Kehila Kedosha Janina (cover image; Sidney Daub, 1925-1927), at 280 Broome Street on the Lower East Side, is representative of that area's vernacular synagogues. Surrounded by rowhouses, it displays the characteristics of early

20<sup>th</sup> century American synagogue architecture. The building features a tripartite facade with a central entrance; a peaked parapet crowned by Stars of David suggests the corner tower design. Other vernacular synagogues in Manhattan, such as Congregation B'nai Joseph Anshe Brzezan on Stanton Street on the Lower East Side (Architect unknown, 1913)

and Congregation Derech Amuno in Greenwich Village (Architect unknown, converted to a synagogue in 1917), also exhibit adaptations of the tripartite facade and corner towers. Congregation Ahavas Israel in Greenpoint, Brooklyn (Architect unknown, 1895) has lost its towers, but remains crowned with a large Jewish star on its roof, above the central entrance.

Kehila Kedosha Janina's longest walls are oriented to the north; as per custom, the ark is opposite the entrance—but it thus fails to face east (Jerusalem). In order to avoid that problem, larger New York City congregations like that of the Eldridge Street Synagogue purchased land on the east side of streets running north and south; smaller congregations could not afford such prominent property. Interestingly, Dr. Gruber indicated that Congregation Shearith Israel, on Manhattan's Upper West Side, lacked the appropriate real estate but still managed to point the ark and congregation east. "The congregation found itself on the wrong side of the street [facing west]—but managed to adjust for this by having the ark set against the inside of the [front] facade wall," he said. "This gives a good public face on the street and meets requirements, though it might require an abrupt about-face once inside. Ancient and medieval synagogue builders faced the same dilemma and used similar solutions."

*The Catskill Region, Sullivan and Ulster Counties*

Between 1900 and 1949, vernacular synagogues were also established among the farms and small towns of New York's mountainous Catskill region. Some of the first Southern and Eastern European Jewish immigrants to arrive in the area at the turn of the century were merchants and tradesmen. Others purchased land to farm, but agricultural ventures were only marginally successful and became an adjunct to the development of Jewish summer resorts. The earliest synagogues (c. 1900-1920) were built by merchants and tradesmen in small villages, and by bungalow and boarding-house proprietors in outlying areas. Later, the synagogues served the transient resort patrons as well.

The Jewish population in the Catskills diminished through the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the decline of the resort industry, and the vernacular synagogues have suffered. Their original members aged and relocated. The synagogues can barely survive on the negligible dues from individual families and dispersed members, which are paid mostly to maintain cemetery rights. Dr. Maurie Sacks, an anthropologist



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The synagogue of the Hebrew Congregation of Loch Sheldrake in Loch Sheldrake, NY (Builder: John Bullock, 1923-1924) incorporates a tall central arch, reflecting a new American interest in Middle Eastern-style synagogue architecture.

at Montclair State University in New Jersey, has catalyzed the preservation of these vernacular synagogues by documenting their architectural and social history. She recently worked with State Historic Preservation Officer Kathleen LaFrank to nominate nine synagogues to the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

All of the synagogues were constructed by congregants or local builders, who drew from their experience working on bungalow residences or commercial spaces. The synagogues' styles were also informed by the dominant church architecture of the area. "When you pass by one of these synagogues," said Dr. Sacks, "you can tell that it's a synagogue and not a church, although the communities made use of many of the conventions of churches. For example, they are all at right angles to the road [as are the local churches], and the entrance is always opposite the ark—which means that the ark is not always facing east." The Catskill synagogues exhibit other features of local Protestant churches: Gothic-arched windows, steep gabled roofs, and meeting-house plans are seen in almost every synagogue from the area. In addition, all of the synagogues utilized local building materials: wood, stucco, and, in one instance, bricks.

Some of the synagogues built after 1920 also adopted forms from local resort buildings—bungalow houses and hotels. Bikur Cholim B'nai Israel Synagogue in Sullivan county's Swan Lake (Builder: Sam Goodman, 1926-1927) is an excep-

tional example of a later vernacular synagogue that incorporated the bungalow style. The synagogue is domestic in scale, and features the stocked window moldings, turned balusters, and wooden folding chairs often found in nearby hotels. In fact, while 45 Jewish men from the area came together to build synagogue, it was designed by carpenter Sam Goodman, who also built bungalow colonies.

The plan of Agudas Achim Synagogue in Livingston Manor (Builder: Izzy Brooks, 1924) was derived from a synthesis of its builders' recollections of European Orthodox synagogues and their immediate built environment. The facade incorporates small symbolic corner towers, the interior is traditionally arranged, and colored glass is used for decoration. However, in contrast to the highly embellished interiors of European synagogues, the inside of Agudas Achim is stark and resembles that of a Protestant meetinghouse church. Another interesting aspect of this Orthodox synagogue—not uncommon in the Catskills—is the orientation of the ark. As Dr. Sacks pointed out, the Catskills synagogues were always at right angles to the road, and the congregations rejected the "abrupt about-face" plan described by Dr. Gruber. Instead,



© Benjamin Halpern 1996

Congregation Agudas Achim in Livingston Manor, NY (Izzy Brooks, 1924) exhibits Gothic style windows and a steeply peaked roof that were likely inspired by local churches.

the congregation of Agudas Achim has always watched the sun set behind the ark.

The design of Loch Sheldrake Synagogue in Loch Sheldrake (Builder: John Bullock, 1923-1924) draws from another recalled tradition, that of the congregants' former residency on the Lower East Side. All of its exterior decoration is limited to the front facade, as would have been necessary on a rowhouse-type building. In fact, the congregation could only afford a limited number of expensive, high-quality bricks; these were used for the front facade, while softer, less expensive bricks were used for the side and rear of the building.

Details like these reveal the essence of vernacular synagogues, placed so squarely in the eras when they were built. They lack the grandeur of great architectural synagogues, but they possess reflections of their original congregants in the very fabric of their construction. ■



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Far left: The Spanish Baroque-inspired parapet designs of Bikur Cholim B'nai Israel in Swan Lake, NY (Builder: Sam Goodman, 1926-1927) suggest some congregants' Sephardic (Southern European Jewish) origins. Left: Its interior features a *bimah* at the front of the synagogue, facing the ark. Wooden folding chairs, as would have been seen at nearby hotels, serve as pews.

FIRST WILSON CHALLENGE GRANTS AWARDED

The Sacred Sites Committee of the Landmarks Conservancy approved matching grants from the Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge totaling \$105,000 for four churches in New York State. In Manhattan, the Church of the Incarnation was awarded \$25,000 for dormer windows and roof repairs, and St. Michael's Episcopal Church was awarded \$25,000 for stained glass window restoration. Epworth Hall at the Silver Lake Institute in Castile Township was awarded \$30,000 for roofing and structural repairs. Finally, St. Thomas's Episcopal Church in Hamilton was awarded \$25,000 to support cedar shingle roof installation. Each church is undertaking a large-scale restoration project and is prepared to match the awarded funds.

Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge grants range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The next deadline for applications to the Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge is May 1, 2001. See **Financial and Technical Assistance** on page 19 for more information.



The congregation of St. Thomas's Church in Hamilton, NY was awarded \$25,000 to help replace its cedar shingle roof and repaint the building according to the architect's original design. *Courtesy of St. Thomas's Church*

SACRED SITES PROGRAM AWARDS \$106,400 FOR REPAIRS AND SURVEYS

This fall, the Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Committee awarded \$106,400 in matching grants to 18 religious institutions in New York. Ten institutions received Sacred Sites Fund grants, which support repair work; projects ranged from roof replacement at the Bethel A.M.E. church in Huntington, Long Island to stained glass window repairs at the Chapel of the Sacred Heart in Monroe. Eight grants were awarded from the Consulting Resources Exchange, which funds planning documents or services such as conditions surveys. Two grants were awarded in New York City, one on Long Island, and 15 to congregations in upstate New York.



Grace Memorial Chapel in Silver Bay, NY was awarded \$4,000 to fund half of an \$8,000 masonry repair project. *Courtesy of Grace Memorial Chapel*

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Working with congregations of all denominations, the Sacred Sites Program provides financial and technical assistance to preserve historic religious properties throughout New York State.

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### *Putting Energy into Stewardship*

With winter approaching, many congregations are thinking about the effect increased electricity, oil, and gas prices will have on their heating bills. They may want to check out *Putting Energy into Stewardship*, a brand new publication from the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The guidebook is part of an initiative, Energy Star for Congregations, which provides objective technical support to help congregations increase their energy efficiency. *Putting Energy into Stewardship* is practical and easy to refer to, with sections on Getting the Job Done and Technical Support. To order the book, or to learn more about Energy Star for Congregations' successes, call 1-888-STAR YES or visit their website at [www.epa.gov/congregations](http://www.epa.gov/congregations).

### *The Investigation of Buildings*

Don Friedman of LZA Technology has written a guide to inspecting and surveying buildings, *The Investigation of Buildings: A Guide for Architects, Engineers, and Owners* (published in September by W.W. Norton and Company). Mr. Friedman has had years of experience examining buildings. In his new book, he shares his knowledge about why, how, and when buildings should be inspected. He also explains common architectural and engineering terms, and delves into subjects such as distinguishing between serious masonry problems and cosmetic ones. The book is available in some Barnes & Nobles stores, and online at [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

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## FUNDRAISING FOR BRICKS AND MORTAR AND MORE: SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOPS UPSTATE

In October, the Sacred Sites Program coordinated two workshops on fundraising for capital campaigns with renown expert Joan Flanagan of Chicago. The Sacred Sites Program staff worked with the Preservation League of New York State on the October 19 workshop at the First Lutheran Church in Albany, NY, and with the Episcopal Diocese of New York on the October 21 workshop at Zion Episcopal Church in Wappingers Falls, NY.

Over 130 people participated in the two one-day workshops, representing religious institutions as well as nonprofit historical societies and libraries. After several hours of learning the basics of fundraising, participants got to try out their skills on each other; one woman in Albany walked away with a \$500 donation to her cause solicited from another participant! A special thank you from the Sacred Sites Program to our co-sponsors and hosts.



Participants at Fundraising for Bricks and Mortar and More in Zion Episcopal Church in Wappingers Falls, NY begin to make compelling cases to raise funds for their respective institutions.

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## COMMON BOND APPEAL

This fall, the Sacred Sites Program once again called upon *Common Bond* readers to help fund the production of *Common Bond*. We are pleased to report that we have received \$6,500 of our \$10,000 goal thus far—and that half of this year's donors are new! Thank you to those who continue to support the journal year after year, and to those who have made a new commitment in 2000. Your contributions are essential to the quality and consistency of our publication. We are planning articles for the coming year on cobblestone architecture, shared use arrangements, metal roofs, and more!

If you have not yet sent us your donation, please help us meet our goal. Our suggested gifts are as follows: \$15, Advocate; \$25, Sponsor; \$50, Patron, and \$100, Guardian. Call Shari Goldberg at (212) 995-5260 to charge a gift on your credit card, or send your check made out to the New York Landmarks Conservancy to 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.

Ken M. Lustbader

# Lightning Protection

by Susan De Vries

*A single bolt of lightning can destroy an older building within seconds. Historic houses of worship can be protected from potential strikes through the installation of a lightning protection system.*

**A**lthough lightning takes several forms, the most familiar and most destructive to historic structures is a cloud-to-ground flash. These flashes originate around 15,000 to 25,000 feet above sea level, and move downward until they encounter a good ground connection. Cloud-to-ground flashes often strike the tallest point in a given area, such as the roof or steeple of a house of worship.

The destructive impact of lightning on structures has been a problem throughout history. Benjamin Franklin's famous key and kite experiments were instrumental to the understanding of lightning as an electrical current. He recognized lightning's destructive power and hoped that his experiments would lead to knowledge which would "be of use to mankind, in preserving houses, churches, ships, etc., from the stroke of lightning."

*Protection Systems*  
Franklin invented one of the earliest and still used forms of lightning protection systems, the lightning rod. The basic concept behind Franklin's 1752 rod and today's sophisticated protection systems are the same – providing an alternate current flow for the lightning, away from a structure. Lightning protection systems typically consist of several elements.

## *Lightning Rods*

Also known as air terminals, today's lightning rods are slender vertical metal rods of copper or aluminum affixed to the building's tallest elements. In a house of worship this usually includes the steeple, tower, or the peak of the roof. Additional rods should also be installed at regular intervals along the roofline.

## *Conductors*

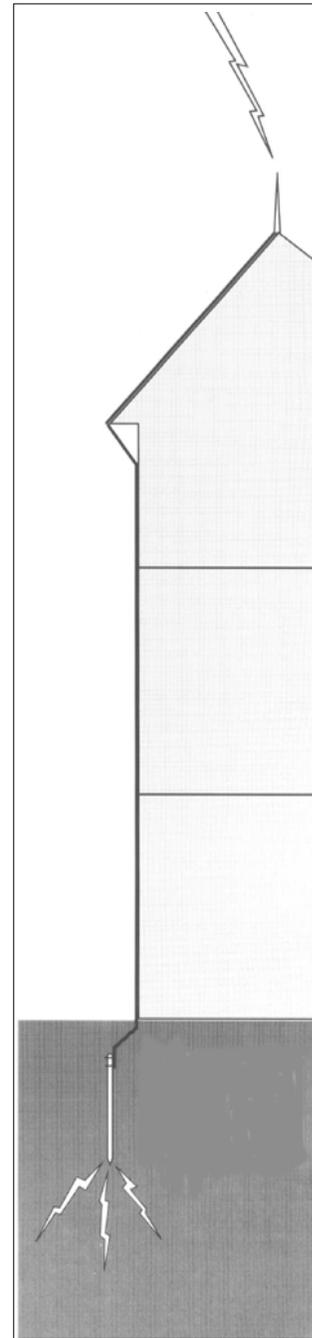
Heavy copper or aluminum cables are attached to the lightning rods and conduct the lightning's current away from the structure. On historic structures, these cables can be installed so that they are hidden behind downspouts or follow corners and leaders.

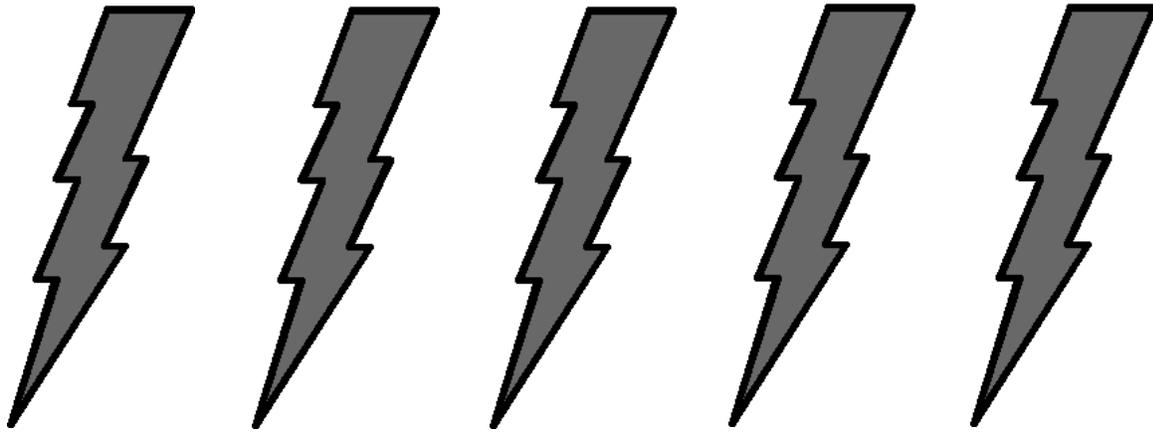
## *Ground Terminators*

The conductors lead the current to metal rods driven into the earth. These rods safely transfer the impact of the current into the ground. The depth of the terminators depends upon the type of soil, but are typically placed at least 10 feet below the earth.

## *Surge Protection*

In addition to exterior elements, lightning protection systems should also include measures to protect the building's electrical wiring, equipment, and other systems in case of a direct lightning strike or damage to an adjacent power line. Typically, surge protection systems arrest or suppress the current at the main panel box and at points of entry to major appliances.





### *Installation*

Perhaps surprisingly, lightning protection systems can be installed without detracting from the historic silhouette or the architectural features of a house of worship. Modern lightning rods are much less invasive than those of the past, and a professional installer can position conductors and cables in discreet locations to minimize their appearance. Permits may be required for lightning protection systems; congregations should contact local municipalities before beginning the installation process.

Protecting structures from lightning destruction is a technical discipline. Professional installers should be accredited by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), which monitors installations through random spot checks. All equipment should bear UL labels as well. Installation companies can be found in the local yellow pages, by calling lightning protection trade organizations, or through referrals from other building owners. Congregations should make sure that installers are familiar with and follow the National Fire Protection Association's standards for lightning protection systems. Installers should also carry adequate insurance and workman's compensation. Recent referrals

should be checked before hiring any installment company.

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### **Lightning protection systems can be installed without detracting from the architectural features of a house of worship**

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When installing a new system, the installer will first survey the site and discuss the building's needs (there may be a fee for this visit). Most installers will be able to design an appropriate system based on the building. They should take care to protect the whole structure by placing rods at intervals along the entire roof line, not just at the tallest point. The installer should also make a plan to prevent damage to any historic building materials on the roof. For example, the installer will want to avoid nailing a rod directly into slate shingles, which may crack.

If a congregation already has a lightning protection system, it may not be necessary to replace it, but it is a good idea to assess older systems periodically. A profes-

sional installer may be able to combine the older system with some new elements, without replacing all of the equipment. Before deciding whether to re-use portions of an existing system, congregations should consult a qualified professional to test the system elements for potential faults.

Lightning protection systems are commonly installed during a repair or restoration project, or while a fire safety system is being installed. An architect or engineer overseeing the project can coordinate the installation. During construction projects on steeples and roofs, which can potentially disrupt rods or conductors, a professional installer can take precautions to ensure that the system is not compromised.

It is recommended that the installer inspect the system every year. Some installers offer maintenance contracts. An annual system test is relatively inexpensive, frequently between \$100 and \$200, and is well worth the cost to ensure the protection of the historic structure. Often simple problems, such as broken connection between rods and conductors, can render a system useless. The installer can identify these problems with a simple resistance test. ■

# Understanding Contracts

by Shari Goldberg

**W**hen a contracting company is asked to bid on a project, it will submit a signed proposal outlining the work it proposes to do. This document becomes a contract if the congregation accepts and signs it. Proposals and contracts take different forms, but all should include some basic elements and must be fully understood by both parties. Read on to learn what building committees or congregational officers should look for in proposals and contracts, as well as when, how, and on what terms to accept them.

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## The elements of a fair and appropriate contract should be contained in even the most basic proposals

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Proposals can take many shapes, from a one-page letter or form to a 12-page standard agreement with subcontracts and schedules. An architect's proposal will be different from a contractor's proposal, and a contractor's proposal for a small job (like painting) will be different from a contractor's proposal for a large project (like a full slate roof replacement). Still, the elements of a fair and appropriate contract should be contained in even the most basic proposals. Proposals for small jobs—for instance, painting, minor masonry repairs, or asphalt shingle replacement—are a good starting point for understanding these elements. Usually, an archi-

tectural consultant is not used for these projects, and the congregation is responsible for evaluating and approving submitted proposals.

The process of procuring a good contract begins with the congregation's solicitation of proposals. When the congregation is ready to seek out contractors, the building committee or administration should write down a job description, specifying exactly what work needs to be done—including removal of deteriorated materials, if necessary, where on the building the work will take place, what kind of special materials should be used (if known), and when the work is slated to begin and end. "Never think that the contractor should help define the work to be done," advised Peter Siegrist, Director of Preservation Services of the Landmark Society of Western New York. "If [the job description] is too wide open, you get a wide range of prices that are hard to compare." A good job description might read: "We need to repaint the facade of the building. The deteriorating mortar must be removed and replaced with a mortar of similar color and chemical content, and the joints must match the original joints. We would like to begin the project as soon as possible."

One contact person should be nominated to communicate the congregation's needs with potential contractors, either by writing and sending out a Request for Proposals or by calling around to firms. Contractors should generally come recommended; neighbors, nonprofit preservation

organizations, or trusted architectural firms are good sources for referrals. The contact person should be prepared to meet with representatives from contracting companies, to show them the work that needs to be done, and to answer any questions.

After the contractor visits the site and assesses the existing conditions, s/he will submit a proposal for doing the work, with terms and conditions. The proposal will usually be signed by the contractor and will provide a space for the signature of the client, if it is accepted. Whether the proposal is a letter or a form, it must include the following: identification information (the name, address, and phone number of the contractor, prospective client, and the premises to be worked on), details on the job, price and payment schedule, and insurance policies. John Bero, Principal of Bero Associates Architects in Rochester, NY, also recommends that clients demand a time schedule with every proposal, defining when work is expected to commence and end, and that the contractor understand the kind of schedule a religious institution demands—canceling a day for a funeral, for example.

The section detailing the job description requires the most attention. Larry Burda, President of Burda Construction Corp. in Brooklyn, NY, explained his perspective: "The information should be as specific as possible to make the client aware of what will be done. The contractor should spell out all the aspects; the client shouldn't just sign

THIS AGREEMENT IS BETWEEN

CONTRACTOR

Preservation Contractor, Licensed and Insured  
123 Main Street  
Brooklyn, New York  
Telephone: (718) 555-5555 Fax: (718) 555-5555

AND

OWNER

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

RE: PROJECT:

\_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (according to plans and specifications, including materials and equipment to be used or installed):

Contractor will furnish all labor, materials, and equipment to perform in a good workmanlike manner:

\_\_\_\_\_

WORK TO BE PERFORMED AT:

\_\_\_\_\_

TIME FOR COMPLETION: The work to be performed by Contractor pursuant to this Agreement shall be substantially completed within \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) days, or approximately on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date): \_\_\_\_\_ (month and day), \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

PAYMENT: This is a cash transaction. Owner agrees to pay Contractor a total cash price of \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars (\$\_\_\_\_\_).

DOWN PAYMENT: (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Dollars (\$\_\_\_\_\_).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_

INTEREST: Overdue payments will bear interest at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ percent per month.

OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Owner's Signature) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Contractor's Signature) (Date)

without understanding the work that will be done." The building committee should look for descriptions of each task to be performed and detailed descriptions of the materials or tools to be used.

Ascertaining whether the contractor's proposal is adequate or appropriate may seem daunting, especially if building committee members are inexperienced with restoration work. Mr. Siegrist suggests that the congregation retain an adviser to read over the contract. "Find a congregant, friend, or consultant to serve as an advocate. It should be someone who understands the work well enough to converse about it," he said. The advocate can point out which elements need clarification and express those concerns to the contractor. A knowledgeable acquaintance or organizational representative can serve as an informal adviser as well. For example, David Chase, Chairman of West Henrietta Baptist Church's Board of Trustees, called a friend who worked for a building supply company to review two contractors' proposals for roof replacement work. He also shared the proposals with Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program staff, who helped by suggesting minor adjustments to the proposal that was finally selected.

The advocate can also be helpful in reviewing the contractor's price. Although price negotiation is not always expected, questions are. The committee should not be afraid to ask—or have an advocate ask—why a specific material costs as much as it does, what the hourly rates are, or how many workers will be involved with the job. "Rarely do contractors know exactly what something will cost or how long it will take," stated Mr. Seagrist. The committee or advocate can communicate concerns verbally; if the contrac-

tor is willing to negotiate a new price, the proposal should be revised or adjusted. In general, any negotiated changes to the proposal must be in writing.

The Reverend Norman Teed of the First Assembly of God Church in Seneca Falls, New York negotiated price changes when the congregation decided to adjust its work priorities for a repointing job. “We had requested a proposal for repointing the entire building, divided up by how much each side of the building would cost,” he said. “But when we evaluated the work to be done, we realized that it was most important to repair the parts of the building directly over the walkways. Because we hadn’t received an estimate for that specific job, we called the contractor and requested it. The new job description and cost were changed in the proposal before we signed it.”

Mr. Chase was less successful at negotiating a new price for a roof replacement contract. He remarked, “We felt that the price for the bell tower was high, since it was so little square footage compared with the rest of the roof. But the contractor didn’t agree, so we were stuck with the quoted price.”

Typically, the price will be combined with a payment schedule; for example: “The above work will be completed for the sum of \$10,000. \$1,500 is due as a down payment; \$3,500 is due when the left half of the facade has been repointed; \$5,000 is due after the job’s completion.” While this type of payment schedule—a down payment, a payment once work has begun, and a completion payment—is common, Mr. Burda cautioned against firms that require significant deposits: “Unless there are very costly materials involved, the contractor must be financially sound enough to bring the job to the first payment. Sometimes the

contractor gets paid and then disappears or puts off starting. I prefer payment after completion or as the job progresses.” In addition to three phased payments, monthly payments or two phased payments are also common, depending on the job.

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### Although price negotiation is not always expected, questions are

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The proposal should also outline what type of insurance the contractor carries. “It is very important that the contractor has both liability insurance and workers’ compensation in case someone is hurt,” Mr. Burda pointed out. The religious institution may be responsible for fire or other natural disaster insurance.

Both Mr. Chase and Pastor Teed recommended calling a contractor’s references and looking over local work on historic buildings that the company has done before signing a proposal. Pastor Teed also suggested calling a contracting company’s suppliers to ensure that it has paid its bills regularly.

When the building committee determines that a proposal’s work description, price, payment schedule, and insurance plans are clear, understood, and satisfactory, a congregational representative may sign the proposal and return it to the chosen contractor (keeping copies for the institution’s records, of course). At the same time, one person to oversee the execution of the contract should be appointed. The contact person from the proposal phase may be selected, but s/he must now take responsibility for supervising the work of the

contractor. Mr. Bero noted, “It is very important that there be only one person who talks to the contractor, and from whom the contractor takes orders, especially since various people are in a religious building everyday and the lines of authority may not be clear to the contractor.” Mr. Bero also cautioned against allowing non-contracted “favors” to be requested of the contractor. Potential resentment or disagreement can be avoided by strictly adhering to the contract and making sure the contractor verifies instructions from anyone other than the primary overseer.

Sometimes the scope or details of the contract must be adjusted after the work has begun. For example, the contractor may discover unexpected conditions that require extra materials, or the congregation may decide to repoint not only the front facade but the rear of the building as well. In these cases, a written change order is issued as a supplement to the contract. Either party may initiate the change order, but both parties must sign it.

When the contractor has completed the job, or nearly completed it, s/he will survey the work with the primary overseer. The overseer should then record any work that is not yet satisfactory or remains to be done in what is called a *punch list*. Once the contractor has completed those items and the congregation issues the final payment, the contract is considered fulfilled. In the event that there is a dispute over some item—whether the work has been fulfilled as set out, or whether all payments have been received, for instance—the contractor and overseer should first try to settle it themselves. If the dispute is not reconciled, arbitration with a neutral, professional arbitrator is appropriate. Legal intervention is the third, final, most costly, and most time-consuming step, and should therefore be avoided if at all possible. ■

# All About the State and National Registers of Historic Places

by Susan De Vries and Shari Goldberg

*Religious institutions are among the thousands of properties that have benefited from being listed on the State and National Registers. Register listing offers prestige, eligibility for certain preservation grant programs, and the opportunity to learn about the history of a religious building and its congregation.*

In a sophisticated online database system, housed at a building on North Capitol Street in Washington D.C., are records on more than 75,000 properties considered worthy of preservation by the federal government of the United States. These files make up the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings, districts, bridges, and monuments are included; each of them has been recognized as significant to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineer-

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**This prestigious list is *not* maintained to regulate the sale, development, or alteration of historic properties**

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ing, or culture. This prestigious list is *not* maintained in order to regulate the sale, development, or alteration of historic properties. Rather, it provides a means to document a property's history and to recommend its value to the nation's notice.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's National Parks Service maintains the National Register. The Parks Service is assisted by each state's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which main-

tains a State Register of Historic Places. The SHPO works to help properties in its state achieve listing on the State Register. Once a property has been approved for the State Register, the SHPO passes its application on to the Park Service for National Register approval. Nominations to both registers are thus made through one comprehensive application process.

Nominations to the State and National Registers can be made by individual property owners, other interested individuals, preservation organizations, and, sometimes, by the SHPO. The party sponsoring the nomination will probably depend on the type of property being nominated. Eligible properties include structures, buildings, sites, and objects, as well as districts. Individual nominations for one building (such as a church) or a few related buildings (such as a church and a parsonage) are usually made by the property owner. District nominations, for a several different properties of equivalent significance in one area, are often made by neighborhood associations, or by a group



Ken M. Lustbader

Hy Genee and Leonard Colchamiro of Kehila Kedosha Janina in Manhattan work with New York State Historic Preservation Office Field Representative Kathleen Howe to find information for the synagogue's State and National Register nomination form.

of building owners. National Register Historic Districts may include properties as diverse as a church, courthouse, and several residences.

Religious institutions planning to preserve their buildings have much to gain by seeking State and National Register designation. Because National Register listing is more honorific than regulatory, much of the research undertaken for designation is aimed at discovering the social, architectural, or cultural history of the property. That information can be incorporated into a religious institution's programming, building the congregation's appreciation for its religious home. In addition, the history of the building will inform the congregation about the best way to restore it. It is therefore a valuable tool for attracting donors

for repair or restoration projects, both within the community and on a broader scale. In fact, certain nonprofit and government preservation grant programs require that applicants are listed on the National Register, or have been determined eligible (after completing preliminary forms) for such listing. In New York, these include the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program and some New York State grant programs.

*State and National Register Status*  
All nominations to the National Register are made with the property owner's consent. Contrary to popular misconception, the

Register is not regulatory in nature. State and National Register listing should not be confused with local landmark ordinances, which necessitate a review of proposed work to historic structures. Such ordinances are meant to safeguard and stabilize the historical character of the municipality; only buildings that are locally designated landmarks or located within a locally designated historic district must follow the regulations.

Elizabeth Holland, President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association, recently worked to nominate The First Hungarian Reformed Church of New York City to the State and

National Register. "The recognition gives pride to the church and to the block. It's a lovely block, and the church is really the centerpiece." The Reverend George Cseh, pastor of the church, agreed. He noted that although the congregation was concerned about the regulations stemming from local landmark designation, they were in favor of being recognized on the State and National Register and are currently planning a party to celebrate their nomination.

Properties listed on the State and National Register, or properties which are eligible for listing, also receive protection. According to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, they must be considered during the planning of projects sponsored, licensed, or financially assisted by a federal or state agency. The state is responsible for evaluating whether the proposed project will cause a change in the quality of surrounding historic properties. For example, if a state-sponsored roadway project is being constructed adjacent to a listed house of worship, the impact of the construction on the historical integrity of the building must be assessed. This process is commonly called a "Section 106 Review."

Owners of income-producing properties listed on the National Register additionally qualify for a 20% investment tax credit for rehabilitation projects. An Historic Preservation Certification Application must be submitted to the Secretary of the Interior and the project must be certified to receive the credit.

*Nomination Process*

The SHPO administers clear, step-by-step procedures for National Register nominations. To begin, a representative from the party sponsoring the nomination—for religious institutions, this is

The image shows a 'BUILDING STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM' from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation. The form is divided into several sections:
 

- FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:** Fields for UNIQUE SITE NO., QUAD, SERIES, and REG. NO.
- PERSONAL INFORMATION:** YOUR NAME, DATE, YOUR ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, and ORGANIZATION (if any).
- IDENTIFICATION:**
  - 1. BUILDING NAME(S)
  - 2. CORNER, TOWN/CITY, VILLAGE
  - 3. STREET LOCATION
  - 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public, b. private
  - 5. PRESENT OWNER, ADDRESS, PHONE
  - 6. USE: Original, Present
  - 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Entrance visible from public road? Yes/No; Entrance accessible: Explain.
- DESCRIPTION:**
  - 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard, b. stone, c. brick, d. board and batten, e. cobblestone, f. shingles, g. stucco, other.
  - 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM (if known): a. wood frame with interlocking joints, b. wood frame with light members, c. masonry load-bearing walls, d. steel truss/rafters, e. other.
  - 10. CONDITION: a. excellent, b. good, c. fair, d. deteriorated
  - 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site, b. moved, c. if relocated?
- 12. PHOTO** and **13. MAP** sections.

A blue form (printed here in white) is the first step to determining whether a property is eligible for the State and National Registers. Nomination sponsors complete basic descriptive information about the property and make a brief case for its significance.

usually the congregation or a local neighborhood organization—should contact the SHPO office. The SHPO’s office is split into geographic areas, with Field Representatives assigned to each area. The appropriate Field Representative will assist the congregation in the nomination process.

The first step is the determination of eligibility. The sponsor submits two simple forms to prove that its property meets the National Register’s criteria for significance and is therefore eligible for listing. If the Field Representative finds that the property meets the criteria, the sponsor will be

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### **Nominations to both the State and the National Registers are made through one comprehensive application process**

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directed (usually within one month) to proceed with the full nomination by completing the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. This comprehensive document will further the argument for the building’s significance, and will detail its congregational and architectural history.

The first eligibility form is a Building Structure Inventory Form—commonly referred to as a blue form, as per the color paper on which it is printed. The blue form serves as a preliminary inventory of structures within the historic property. The form asks for specific information about the building, such as its location, ownership, building materials, structural system, condition, and integrity. A photo of the premises

and map must be included. The form also has a section called “Historical and Architectural Importance” where reasons for the building’s eligibility are established. The property must be shown to meet at least one criterion from the list below. While the history of the property will be more thoroughly detailed in the Registration Form, the blue form is an opportunity to succinctly prove the building’s significance.

#### *National Register Criteria for Evaluation*

According to the National Parks Service, “The National Register’s standards for evaluating the significance of properties were developed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a significant contribution to our country’s history and heritage.” Nominated properties must prove their significance based on general historic patterns, connections to important people or events, architectural value, or value to the study of history. The official criteria identifies districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects as follows:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

It is important to note that nominated religious properties must be

shown to have significance to the community, state, or country as a whole and not only to the members of a religious group. Most houses of worship qualify under criteria A and/or criteria C. In order to qualify under criteria A, a house of worship must contribute to the greater understanding or appreciation of historical events. For instance, the Foster Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Tarrytown was determined significant for playing an instrumental role during the Civil War by aiding escaping slaves. The nomination included information about how the church served as an important religious and cultural center for the African-American community. This significant historical role was found to contribute to the local community’s understanding of its history as well as to the broader history of the state and nation.

To qualify for criteria C, houses of worship are frequently cited as outstanding examples of an architectural style or significant examples of an architect’s work. The Church of the Holy Cross in Troy, for example, is a Gothic Revival stone church that was designed by renowned architect Alexander Jackson Davis in 1843. The building was altered by Richard Upjohn, who is well known for his religious architecture. The church significantly contributes to the understanding of the work of both of these important American architects.

The second form for determining eligibility is an application sheet. It provides the SHPO with the name of sponsor as well as contact information. The form also requires the applicant to explain why the nomination is being sought.

Once the Field Representative has reviewed the blue forms and application form, s/he may request a site visit. This will be an opportunity for the representative

to see the building, judge its integrity, and discuss the nomination process with members of the congregation. The SHPO is not required to attain the property owner's consent to determine that it is eligible for listing.

If the property is determined eligible, the Field Representative will advise the congregation on proceeding with the full nomination by completing the Registration Form. The Registration Form requires a detailed written history of the building. The sponsor must undertake research and documentation of the history of the property, its integrity, and its significance. Some historical information may be available within the house of worship itself—often congregations have published commemorative booklets or kept historical records that will establish the significant history of the building and congregation. Current and former members of the congregation can also provide historical knowledge. Still, a trip to the local buildings department, library, or town archives is usually necessary as well.

In order to complete the nomination for the First Hungarian Reformed Church, Ms. Holland formed a block committee and did research on the Hungarian community in New York and on Emery Roth, the church's architect. "We went to the library and put it together," she commented. "We did a lot of research. You just have to have people who care and who have interest. It's an easy process when you get cooperation."

The full nomination is sent to the SHPO office, but it is not officially accepted until all of the information is found to be complete and accurate. Ms. Holland reported that Kathy Howe, the New York City Field Representative, found her first nomination form adequate and sent it through for

**Nominations to the Registers can include buildings, structures, districts, sites, and objects. These categories are defined as:**

**Structure:** a functional construction used for a purpose other than shelter, such as bridges, tunnels, and canals.

**Site:** the location of a significant event, activity, or occupation such as ceremonial and funerary sites.

**Objects:** primarily artistic in nature and include sculptures, fountains, and monuments.

**Districts:** reserved for properties that have a number of structures that are equally important, such as a neighborhood, or for large areas of land that contain a variety of structures, such as farms or estates.

**Buildings:** architecture constructed for inhabitation and use such as houses, courthouses, city halls, social halls, schools, stores, and churches.

—National Parks Service

approval at the State and National levels. It is not uncommon for the Field Representative to send drafts back to the congregation for clarification or further research. The Field Representative will be specific about the additional information needed, and will continue to review drafts of the nomination until it is satisfactory. Because this process requires some proficiency with historical research, many congregations choose to hire a preservation consultant to complete the full nomination. Using a consultant who has worked on other nominations can considerably speed up the process of completing the form.

Once the full nomination is accepted by the Field Representative, the SHPO will seek the comments and approval of the owner(s) and appropriate local officials. The nomination is then reviewed by the State Board for Historic Preservation. After review, the nomination is passed to the state's Commissioner of

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation along with the Board's recommendations. This process of comment and review typically takes a minimum of 90 days. If the nomination is approved by the Commissioner, the property is listed on the State Register and forwarded to the National Park Service for review. Once submitted, a decision on National Register listing is made within 45 days.

When a house of worship is finally listed on the National Register, it will be there for the remainder of its existence. The prestige, eligibility for grant programs, and protection from government-financed projects will continue to benefit the congregation and its property. Moreover, the congregation will have an enduring comprehensive record of the building's and the congregation's history and significance. The nomination form may be referred to by generations to come, as they explore their congregation's roots and work to preserve their house of worship. ■

# Cemetery Advocacy: Case Studies from Around the Country

by Shari Goldberg with George Lyons

Cemeteries are, in a sense, community archives. The rows of headstones can read like a register of births and deaths; illustrations or epitaphs reveal individual or family histories. Unfortunately, many cemeteries have fallen into disrepair as they change ownership or cease to be active burial grounds. Overgrown vegetation, animal homes, and debris crowd once tidy plots. Yet certain communities have not been discouraged by the daunting task of cemetery restoration. Cemetery advocates have gained local support for restoration projects, and have begun to transform older cemeteries into tourist sites, history museums, parks, or active burial grounds. By utilizing local resources, these advocates have achieved remarkable change in the preservation and rebuilding of their cemeteries.

## *Jamaica, New York*

The landmarked site of Prospect Cemetery in Jamaica, NY is not only one of the city's oldest cemeteries, it is also one of the

largest. The cemetery represents a significant part of United States history—it dates back to 1668 and contains the graves of many Revolutionary War heroes—yet much of its four acres have become overgrown with dense vegetation. Hundreds of headstones are in need of major repairs, and the landscape requires serious attention. To begin a serious restoration initiative, the Prospect Cemetery Association (PCA) has formed a partnership with the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. In May 2000, the Conservancy provided the cemetery with a \$15,000 grant to stabilize the 1857 fieldstone Chapel of the Three Sisters. The partnership went on to secure a \$41,600 green space grant from the Urban Resources Partnership, which will support a vegetation management plan, and a \$7,000 grant from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Fund for a land survey. Most recently, the New York Community Trust has made a grant to assist the PCA with grassroots capacity building and to enable the

organization to hire an administrator. PCA President Cate Ludlam, whose own ancestors are buried at the cemetery, has worked diligently for over ten years, utilizing volunteer groups like the Boy Scouts to fight back the onslaught of

weeds, trees, and brush. As the general area of Jamaica, Queens undergoes unprecedented revitalization, the PCA will likely succeed in continuing to build support for the creation of a green space open to the public.

## *Troy, New York*

Oakwood Cemetery in Troy, NY, is spread over almost one square mile of green space, making it the third largest rural cemetery in the United States. It was designed in 1848 by Philadelphia engineer J.C. Sidney and opened in 1850. In 1890, a private family built the Gardner Earl Chapel and Crematorium in association with the cemetery; it was then the only crematorium for hundreds of miles. In the 1970s, crematoria were built in many other towns, including Newburgh, Glens Falls, Schenectady, and Albany. The competition from the newer facilities drove the Gardner Earl out of business, and the cemetery severely deteriorated as a result. Today, a nonprofit organization has been formed to oversee the cemetery, and the new board of trustees, made up largely of local activists, is taking positive steps towards revitalization. The cemetery has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes it eligible for various grant programs. It was recently awarded a \$4,700 matching grant from the Sacred Sites Fund to support emergency roof repairs to the crematorium, and a \$7,900 grant for a historic landscape report from Preserve New York, a joint program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts. The organization has also received pro-bono services from



Ken Lusbacher

Ainsley Caldwell, David Bloniarz, and Matt Arnn, all of whom work with the Urban Resources Partnership, talk with Cate Ludlam, President of the Prospect Cemetery Association (left to right) about the best way to undertake a land conditions survey of the property.

local preservationists. Marilyn Kaplan, a preservation architect from Valatie, NY, William Foulks, a preservation consultant from Petersburg, NY, and David Biggs of Ryan & Biggs Engineering in Troy have all provided free assistance to

Oakwood. The cemetery organization also held a community celebration to mark its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 15, 2000.

*Newburgh, New York*

Newburgh, New York is home to the Old Town Cemetery, which is undergoing restoration with the support of several local organizations. The Newburgh Preservation Association has formed The Friends of Old Town Cemetery, a fundraising and educational group. The Friends are dedicated to the “ongoing research and preservation, restoration, landscaping, care and celebration of the cemetery, as both an historic resource and an urban strolling park.” The Friends’ first newsletter came out in March 2000, highlighting work that is taking place (for example, stone restoration), and providing interesting facts about the cemetery’s history. The Friends have also established a membership circle which provides its participants with genealogical information from the latest projects. The Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Newburgh Public Library have additionally aided restoration by making cemetery-related historical resources available for easy public access.

*Brunswick, New York*

Forrest Park Cemetery in Rensselaer County has a history of instability that may finally take a long-term turn for the better. The 200-acre cemetery was built as a private business venture in 1897. It



The Friends of Old Town Cemetery in Newburgh, NY, formed in 1999, publish the Old Town Cemetery Newsletter, which includes updates on gravestone restoration projects, a biography of a “Notable Occupant,” and information on Friends membership.

Friends of Old Town Cemetery

cultural tourist sites. As a result, the cemeteries have begun to generate a profit. The money is being reinvested for maintenance and restoration.

*Lynchburg, Virginia  
Lynchburg, Virginia’s “Old*

City Cemetery” was closed to burials in 1965 and spent the next 30 years that way. Without continued use, the condition of the cemetery began to decline. In 1996 the Lynchburg City Council reopened portions of the cemetery. One section was to be used for the spreading of ashes, and another to serve as a “New Potter’s Field.” Through a combination of public and private funds, as well as income generated through recent use, the cemetery has been able to make a comeback. Today the cemetery has a large volunteer base and a “Cemetery Center,” which prints publications and curates exhibits to interpret the history and horticulture of the cemetery.

Cemeteries are a cross between town records and parks, with stones, crypts, and overgrown trees all revealing bits of history. Their richness deserves community attention, and it seems as if they are beginning to receive it. Clearly, cemetery restoration requires energetic and committed individuals. Creative and flexible thinking has allowed several cemetery organizations to engage their local communities. Yet there are few absolutes for galvanizing support for cemeteries. Each of the cemeteries above has a unique history, location, and relationship with its surrounding communities, and advocacy efforts have been accordingly varied. As advocates achieve change, the restorations will be distinctive as well, reflecting the contemporary community as well as the history preserved. ■

was designed by Garnet Baltimore, believed to be the first African American graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnical Institute. Unfortunately, the cemetery did not yield a profit, and it was closed by 1914. The cemetery reopened in 1918 with new investors, only to fail again during the Great Depression. Municipal law required the township to take responsibility for the property in 1990. Still, local support for its upkeep has been difficult to generate, as most of the people buried in the cemetery were not from the immediate area. At this time, approximately 180 acres of the site have been absorbed by the Troy Country Club. Nevertheless, advocates are planning a \$100,000 landscaping and stone restoration project, and have already secured a \$30,000 grant from New York State.

*New Orleans, Louisiana*

In New Orleans, cemeteries were built above the ground to avoid possible damage from the area’s frequent floods. They were designed as tightly packed, crypt-filled yards, which earned them the nickname “Cities of the Dead.” These “cities” have inspired folklore about voodoo and zombies, along with stories about the passions and unrequited loves of the buried dead. Rather than fear the stigma of superstition, the city of New Orleans has embraced the spooky tales. The city has successfully promoted the cemeteries by marketing them with more traditional historic and

# Resources

## Vernacular Synagogue Architecture

Dr. Samuel Gruber's book, *Synagogues* (New York: MetroBooks, 1999), contains text and photographs on hundreds of synagogues throughout the world, dating from ancient times to the present. Dr. Gruber's International Survey of Jewish Monuments, which is available at [www.isjm.org](http://www.isjm.org), includes further information about historical Jewish sites, art, and architecture. Rachel Wischnitzer's *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), Oscar Israelowitz's *Synagogues of New York City: A Pictorial Survey in 123 Photographs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1982) and Brian de Breffny's *The Synagogue* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1978) are other basic texts about synagogue architecture.

More specific books on synagogue architecture are Gerald Wolf's *The Synagogues of New York's Lower East Side* (New York: New York University Press, 1978; currently out of print), Lauren Weingarten Rader's *Synagogue Architecture in Illinois*, from the exhibit at the Spertus Museum of Chicago in 1976 entitled "Faith and Form: Synagogue Architecture in Illinois," and Lee Shai Weissbach's *The Synagogues of Kentucky: History and Architecture* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), all of which are interesting from a statewide and national perspective. Rochelle Berger Elstein's Michigan State University Dissertation (1986), *Synagogue Architecture in Michigan and the Midwest: Material Culture and the Dynamics of Jewish Accommodation, 1865-1945* is another good resource (available through UMI).

## Lightning Protection

Several organizations provide comprehensive information on lightning protection. The Lightning Protection Institute is a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that people and structures are protected from the harmful effects of lightning; information is available at [www.lightning.org](http://www.lightning.org). The Institute also provides information on risk assessment and maintains a listing of certified lightning protection dealers and contractors. The National Lightning Safety Institute is an independent, nonprofit consulting, education, and research organization that advocates a pro-active risk management approach to lightning hazard mitigation. Its website, [www.lightningsafety.com](http://www.lightningsafety.com), contains lightning facts and safety tips, including education tools. The United Lightning Protection Association (ULPA) is made up of lightning protection installers, manufacturers, and engineers; the organization hosts an annual conference and provides publications. Contact ULPA at 800-668-ULPA, or [www.ulpa.org](http://www.ulpa.org).

## State and National Register

The New York State Office of Parks and Recreation provides information about the State and National Registers and preservation grant programs in New York State. Contact the Office at (518) 237-8643, or check out its website, <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/field/>, which includes a directory of Field Representatives.

The National Register of Historic Places website, [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/), contains information on the nomination process, a searchable database of listed sites, sample nominations, and downloadable copies of informational bulletins, including #15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*; #16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*; and #39, *How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations/Researching a Historic Property*. Guidelines on the selection of a consultant are also available. For more information, contact the National Register offices at (202)343-9536.

## Cemeteries

Contact information on any of the cemeteries discussed is available from the Shari Goldberg at the Sacred Sites Program, by phone (800) 880-6952 or (212) 995-5260, email [sharigoldberg@nylandmarks.org](mailto:sharigoldberg@nylandmarks.org), or post 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010.

# Financial and Technical Assistance

The **New York Landmarks Conservancy** is pleased to announce the **Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge**, a program that will award matching grants of \$25,000 to \$50,000 for significant historic church restoration projects. To be eligible to apply, a property must be owned by a religious institution, actively used for worship, and either locally designated a landmark or listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The next deadline for applications is May 1, 2001. For more information or an application, contact Ken M. Lustbader, Director, Sacred Sites Program, at the New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; tel: (212) 995-5260 or (800)880-6952; web: [www.nylandmarks.org](http://www.nylandmarks.org).

The **Sacred Sites Program** of the **Landmarks Conservancy** offers technical and financial assistance to historic houses of worship located in New York State. Eligible properties for funding must be owned by a religious institution and be a designated local landmark, located in an historic district, or listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places. Three grant programs are available. The **Sacred Sites Grant Program** funds the implementation of restoration work; maximum grant award is \$10,000 (average grant is \$4,500). Priority is given to essential repairs to houses of worship. A completed application with supporting materials must be postmarked by one of the two application deadlines: May 1 and November 1. The **Consulting Resources Exchange** provides congregations with funds for retaining professional services for the planning stage of preservation projects. Projects that will be considered for funding include: conditions surveys, specification writing, engineering reports, stained glass surveys, laboratory testing, and energy audits. There are no application deadlines. The **Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge** provides grants for comprehensive church restoration projects (see complete description above). To discuss possible projects and obtain an application and guidelines, contact the Sacred Sites Program, New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; tel: (212) 995-5260 or (800)880-6952; web: [www.nylandmarks.org](http://www.nylandmarks.org).

The **Historic Properties Fund**, administered by the **Landmarks Conservancy**, is a revolving loan fund to help finance restoration work to historic religious properties located in New York City. The Fund has provided over \$10 million in loans with interest rates as low as three percent. For information, contact Andrea Goldwyn or James J. Mahoney, New York Landmarks Conservancy, 141 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; tel: (212) 995-5260 or (800)880-6952; web: [www.nylandmarks.org](http://www.nylandmarks.org).

The **Preservation Services Fund** (deadline February 1, 2001), **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund** (deadline February 1, 2001), and the **Johanna Favrot Fund** (deadline February 1, 2001) of the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** offer grants to nonprofit organizations. In New York and New England, contact the Northeast Regional Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Seven Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02109; tel: (617) 523-0885. Direct other requests to Bob Blais, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; tel: (202) 588-6197; web: [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

The **Interfaith Coalition on Energy (ICE)** assists religious institutions in the Philadelphia area in reducing energy costs through workshops, technical information, and energy audits. ICE publishes *Comfort & Light (ICE Melter Newsletter)*, which provides information and guidelines for energy conservation, and has produced a short motivational video to help maintenance personnel reduce energy costs. Contact Project Coordinator Andrew Rudin, Interfaith Coalition on Energy (ICE), 7217 Oak Avenue, Melrose Park, PA 19027; tel: (215) 635-1122.

The **Preservation League of New York State** is dedicated to the protection of New York's diverse and rich heritage of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes. The League offers several different grant programs; religious institutions may be eligible for the **Rural New York Historic Grant Program**. For more information, contact Tania Werbizky, Director of Technical Services, Preservation League of New York State, 44 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12206; tel: (518) 462-5658; email: [info@preservenys.org](mailto:info@preservenys.org).

**Chardon Press**, a publishing house and website, produces "resources for social change"—books, newsletters, and an advice column about grass roots fundraising. Chardon's newsletter, *The Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, can be accessed online or ordered for mail delivery. Among the company's recent publications of interest is *Ask and You Shall Receive*, editor Kim Klein's latest book on fundraising for religious institutions. For more information or to order books or the newsletter, contact Chardon Press at (888) 458-8588 or [www.chardonpress.com](http://www.chardonpress.com).



Ken M. Lusbacher

## Cover: Kehila Kedosha Janina, Manhattan

The synagogue of Kehila Kedosha Janina (Sidney Daub, 1925-1927) sits mid-block on Broome Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side. It humbly houses a fascinating congregation, a small, relatively unknown group of Greek Jews. Oral tradition holds that Jews first settled in Ioannina (Janina), Greece in the year 70 following the destruction of the Second Temple. They were on a slave ship bound from

Jerusalem to Rome when a shipwreck landed them in Albania. The prisoners fled and settled in Ioannina, developing a set of rites and traditions called Romaniote that combined Greek and Hebrew customs. About 1,800 years later, Ioannian Jews left their town, seeking economic opportunity in Constantinople, Athens, Alexandria, Palestine, and New York. The Lower East Side congregation of Kehila Kedosha Janina was founded in 1906, and the synagogue was built between 1925 and 1927. Today, Kehila Kedosha Janina is the only remaining Romaniote Synagogue in the western hemisphere. In the early 1990s, Kehila Kedosha Janina decided to share its history and heritage. The congregation developed a museum with artifacts from the Romaniote heritage, including Romaniote costumes, Jewish texts in Greek, amulets, and Torah decorations.

In order to maintain the synagogue center, the congregation has been working with the Lower East Side Conservancy and the Sacred Sites Program to obtain National Register listing and financial assistance. To date, Kehila Kedosha Janina has received pledges for \$60,000 in matching grants for restoration, \$10,000 from the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program and \$50,000 from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. These funds will help the congregation repair the roof and facades. The congregation is currently working to fundraise in order to claim the grants.

The Kehila Kedosha Janina museum is open from 11-4 on Sundays and by appointment. The synagogue holds services each Saturday at 9 am and on all holidays. For more information, call (212) 431-1619 and direct correspondence to Cooper Station, P.O. Box 72, New York, New York 10276.

For additional information about the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites Program, or to subscribe to *Common Bond*, call us at (800) 880-NYLC (6952) or visit our website at [nylandmarks.org](http://nylandmarks.org).

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