



HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*** Note:** Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Yeshiva Gedolah Rabbinical Institute of New England
 Building Name (Historic) Young Israel of New Haven
 Street Address or Location 292 Norton Street
 Town/City New Haven Village _____ County New Haven
 Owner(s) Yeshiva Gedolah Rabbinical Institute of New England Public Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Education/Religious - School
 Historic Use: Religious - Synagogue

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? Yes No

Interior accessible? Yes No If yes, explain _____

Style of building Modernist - Post-modern Date of Construction 1958, 1978

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brick | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type <u>Cast-in-place and Block Masonry</u>) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type <u>Sandstone</u>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Structural System

- Wood Frame Post & Beam Balloon Load bearing masonry Structural iron or steel
 Other Precast Concrete Plank

Roof (Type)

- Gable Flat Mansard Monitor Sawtooth
 Gambrel Shed Hip Round Other _____

(Material)

- Wood Shingle Roll Asphalt Tin Slate Asphalt Shingle
 Built up Tile Other Rubber Membrane

Number of Stories: 1 and 2 Approximate Dimensions 60' x 165'

Structural Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Exterior Condition: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

Location Integrity: On original site Moved When? _____

Alterations? Yes No If yes, explain: _____

FOR OFFICE USE: Town # _____ Site # _____ UTM _____

District: S NR If NR, Specify: Actual Potential

PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

Barn Shed Garage Carriage House Shop Garden

Other landscape features or buildings: Copper beech tree pre-dating structure, lawn, asphalt drive, concrete walks

Surrounding Environment:

Open land Woodland Residential Commercial Industrial Rural

High building density Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

Located on west side of Norton Street close to the intersection with Whalley Avenue, a major commercial street. Norton Street to the north is a residential street of early 20th-century 1- and 2-family homes and apartment buildings. The site is a 96-foot wide lot, wider than the typical adjoining lots, and the building is set back farther than typical, behind a large copper beech tree.

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

See continuation sheet.

Architect Eben B. Woolley, 1958; Office of Frank Chapman - Builder Alpert Construction Company, 1958
Frank Chapman & Howard Phillips, 1978 Morton Alpert, 1978

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources: Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture & Urban Design*, Yale U. Press, New Haven, 1976.
Carley, Rachel D., *Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement* (Privately printed by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008.
City of New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Lot 333/0294/050, Building Department permit files.
City of New Haven Building Permits No. 58457 (1958) and No. 87078 (1977), Building Official's letter regarding fire in 1975.
Jews in New Haven, Volumes I-VII, Jewish Historical Society of New Haven, 1977-1997.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 8/29/2009

View East elevation (front) facing Norton Street Negative on File NHPT

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/14/2010

Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust

Address P.O. Box 1671, New Haven, CT 06507

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Threats to the building or site:

None known Highways Vandalism Developers Renewal Private

Deterioration Zoning Other change of use Explanation _____

• Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)

The building consists of a concrete masonry auditorium raised a half level above grade, with a full basement. This block is 50 feet wide by 100 feet deep and is set back approximately 100' from the sidewalk line. This is the oldest part of the building, constructed in 1958. Attached at the front is a 38' by 60' two-story block offset toward the north, creating an entry court on the south to the doorways of the main auditorium. This block was added in 1978, and contains a chapel, office, and additional spaces on the second floor.

The facade faces east to Norton Street. The facade and the entry court walls are red brick, while the remainder of the walls are painted concrete block masonry. A full height gateway to the entry court is formed by a high lintel which extends in the plane of the east facade. At the southeast corner, a brick pier supports the end of the lintel. The large opening is visually counterbalanced by a rectangular solid forming the front wall of the building. The plane of brick is broken only by four narrow metal framed slit windows, a recessed porch, and a square opening above – all clustered at the extreme right side of the composition. A bronze abstract relief sculpture hangs high on the wall near the entry gate.

At the rear of the entry court, entry to the auditorium is through triple narrow-stile metal framed glazed doors with glazed panels above and four-light sidelights on the lower and upper levels. Brick piers between the doors have ornamental light fixtures; a stone lintel carried the name of the synagogue, "Young Israel," but the lettering has been removed. A concrete porch and two risers stretch the full width of the court. The north wall of the court, which is the south wall of the front block, has metal-framed sliding windows on the first and second levels, which flank a trombe wall consisting of translucent glazing material behind which is an air space, then a black-painted concrete masonry wall to absorb solar heat. Small vents at the top and fans in the interior, control the distribution of the hot air for solar heating. Below the trombe wall are three basement windows.

The rear auditorium portion of the building is lit by basement and upper-level metal framed factory-type windows with awning and fixed sash. A parking area is located at the rear, and the front yard features a large and dramatic copper beech tree. The roof is flat except for a sloping area at the northeast corner that appears to cover a stair to the 2nd floor.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Prior to the urban renewal period of the late 1950s to the 1970s, most of New Haven's Jewish population was clustered in an area known as the Oak Street neighborhood, south and east of the New Haven Green. There were more than a dozen synagogues, located within walking distance of the members' homes.

When plans were made to demolish the Oak Street neighborhood and build CT Route 34 as a sunken highway, most of the synagogues were purchased through eminent domain and torn down. The eviction of the Jewish community from the area accelerated a movement that was already occurring as families were moving out of downtown into more suburban settings such as the Edgewood, Beaver Hills, and Westville neighborhoods of New Haven and to nearby suburban towns. At the same time, the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism were gaining popularity with some families. Permitted to drive on the Sabbath, this group had greater mobility than those who remained Orthodox. Using payments from the Redevelopment Agency's purchase of their old synagogue buildings, the congregations moved and built new facilities in other areas of the city (see Inventory forms for 74 West Prospect Street and 85 Harrison Street) and suburban towns.

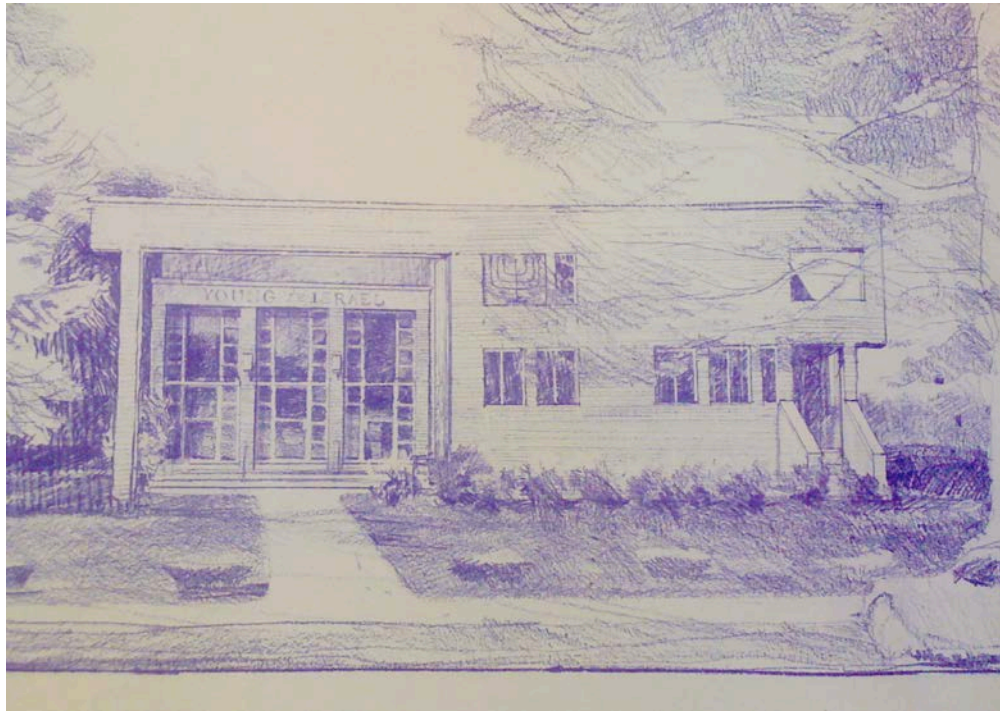
Young Israel, an Orthodox congregation, purchased a half-acre property at 292 Norton Street which had a house already in place. It appears that they constructed the auditorium in 1958 behind the house and the copper beech tree, and made use of the house. In 1975 the house burned, and two years later it was replaced by the front addition with its brick facade and trombe wall for solar heat. After the oil embargo of the early 1970s, alternative energy technology strategies became popular, although still experimental; Chapman and Phillips were proponents.



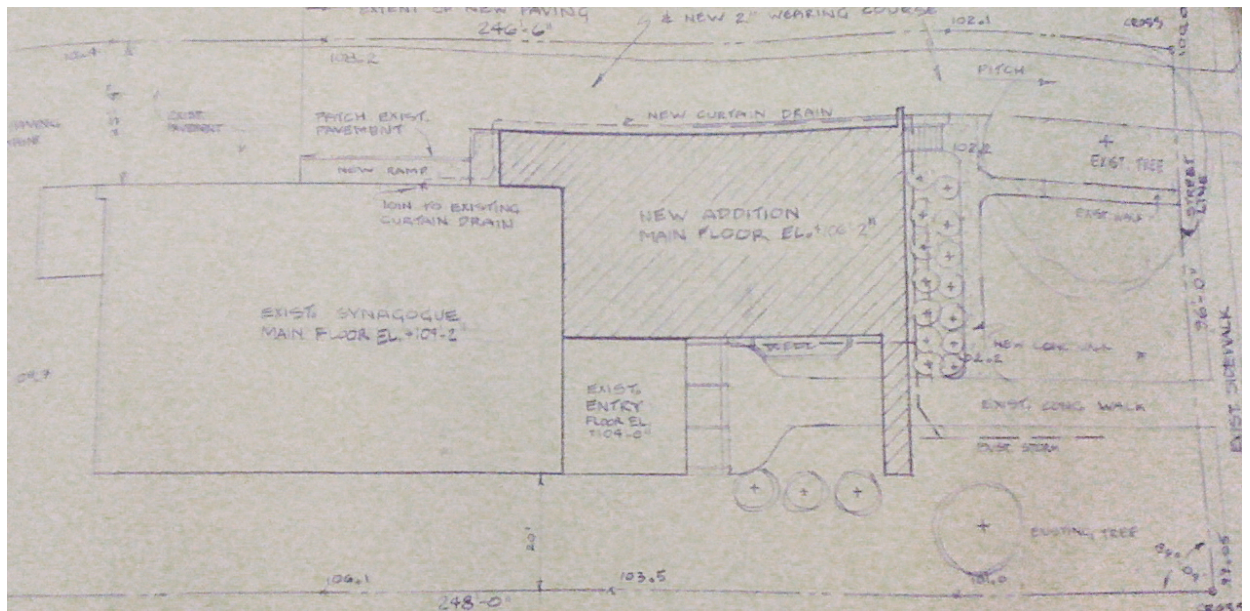
1. East facade – view from Norton Street, camera facing northwest.



2. Northeast view from Norton Street, camera facing southwest.



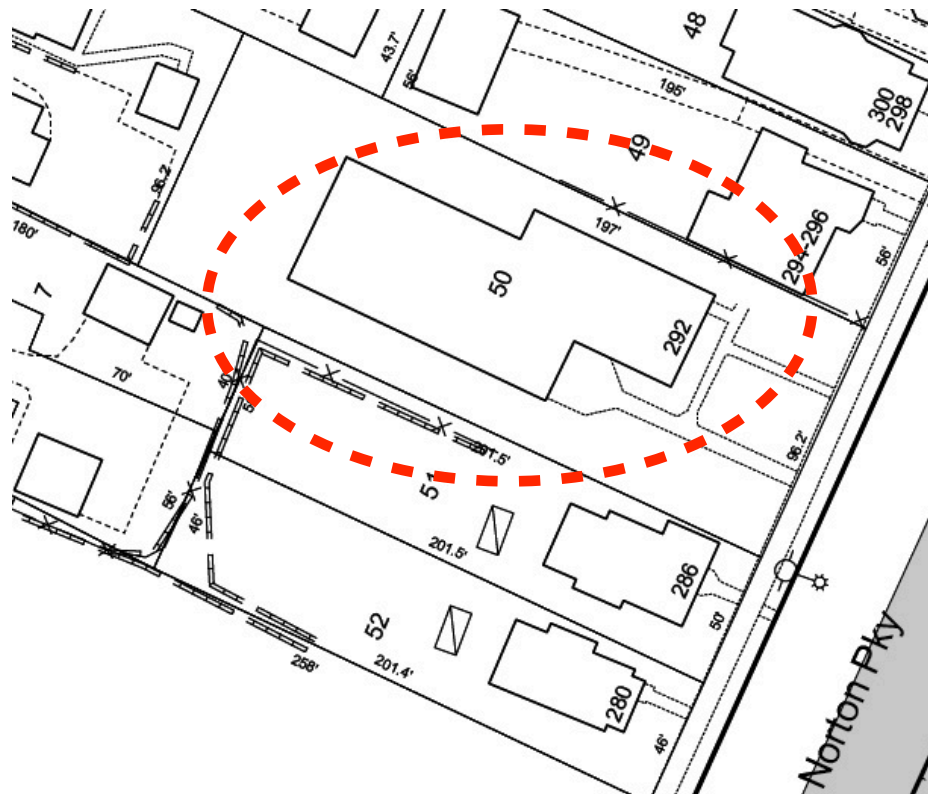
3. Architectural rendering of east elevation, Office of Frank Chapman. 1977.



4. Site plan, showing first and second phases of construction, existing tree, Office of Frank Chapman, 1977 building permit drawings.



3. Aerial View – Google Maps <http://maps.google.com/maps>, accessed 1/14/2010.



4. Site Plan – detail from City of New Haven Tax Map: 333/294/50, not to scale, North ↑.