



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189
518-237-8643
www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson
Governor

Carol Ash
Commissioner

January 26, 2010

Rabbi Pesach Ackerman
Adas Yisroel Anshe Mezritch Synagogue
415 East 6th Street
New York, NY 10009-6301

RE: Congregation Mezritch Synagogue
415 East 6th Street
Manhattan, New York County, NY

Dear Rabbi Ackerman:

On September 2009 the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) submitted to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) a request to evaluate the Congregation Mezritch Synagogue at 415 East 6th Street to see if it is eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Based on the information provided by GVSHP, it is the opinion of the SHPO that the synagogue meets the criteria for listing to the Registers. I have attached a copy of our Resource Evaluation for your records.

In order for a building to be listed in the National Register the property owner must not be opposed to the proposed listing. It is the policy of the SHPO to work closely with owners to inform them of the potential benefits of listing. Not only is listing to the Registers a prestigious honor but it brings with it economic incentives. Not-for-profit owners of listed religious properties, for example, may apply for matching state historic preservation grants and Sacred Sites grants from the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

If you are interested in finding out more about these programs please contact me at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3266 or email me at kathy.howe@oprhp.state.ny.us.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Howe
Historic Preservation Specialist

enc.

cc: Andrew Berman, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
Ann Friedman, Sacred Sites



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RESOURCE EVALUATION

DATE: January 25, 2010

STAFF: Kathy Howe

PROPERTY: Congregation Mezritch Synagogue

MCD: Manhattan

ADDRESS: 415 East Sixth Street

COUNTY: New York Co.

USN: 06101.017064

- I. Property is individually listed on SR/NR:
name of listing:
- Property is a contributing component of a SR/NR district:
name of district:
- II. Property meets eligibility criteria.
- Property contributes to a district which appears to meet eligibility criteria.
- Pre SRB: Post SRB: SRB date

Criteria for Inclusion in the National Register:

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Adas Yisroel Anshe Mezritch Synagogue (Congregation Mezritch Synagogue) is located at 415 East 6th Street between First Avenue and Avenue A in the East Village. The structure was built as a dwelling and later converted to a synagogue by a congregation of Polish Jewish Orthodox immigrants in 1910 at a cost of \$15,000. The architect for the project was the German architect and civil engineer Herman Horenburger. The name *anshe Mezritch* means *people of Mezritch*; Mezritch is a town in Poland well-known for being a center of Jewish learning.

Congregation Mezritch Synagogue is historically significant under Criterion A in the areas of immigration, ethnic history, and religion as one of the few early 20th century "tenement synagogues" surviving in the East Village and Lower East Side. Though hundreds of similar synagogues large and small once flourished here, today's Congregation Mezritch Synagogue is one of a small number still functioning as a synagogue. The building is architecturally significant under Criterion C as an example of an intact vernacular synagogue in the East Village, one that adapted the religious and physical needs of a synagogue to the narrow lot dimensions (22' x 90') typical of the tenement blocks in which its congregants lived. The façade is an adaptation of forms popular for larger synagogues featuring a tripartite stone façade with Classical Revival ornamentation. Inside, the architect adapted the long, narrow proportions of the lot to the ritual requirements of the congregation: an ark at the far end to hold the Torah scrolls, a *bimah* from which services were led and the Torah scrolls read, and a gallery for women worshippers (who sat separately from men, in accordance with Orthodox Jewish practice). Traditionally, synagogues faced east so that congregations could pray in the direction of Jerusalem. Congregation Mezritch, like many small synagogues with limited budgets, had to make do with narrow lots facing north or south, and so was unable to have the sanctuary facing east.

Congregation Mezritch Synagogue retains an exceptionally high degree of period integrity, both inside and out. It survives today as a distinctive architectural, cultural and religious landmark of the immigrant Jewish community of New York City.



**Greenwich Village
Society for Historic Preservation**

232 East 11th Street
New York, New York 10003
(212) 475-9585
fax: (212) 475-9582
www.gvshp.org



E V C C
East Village Community Coalition
143 Ave B, simplex, NY, NY 10009
p:212.979.2344 f:212 979 2129
www.evccnyc.org

August 28, 2008

Ms. Kathy Howe
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Howe,

We write to request that the New York State Historic Preservation Office consider Adas Yisroel Anshe Mezritch Synagogue, located at 415 East Sixth Street in Manhattan, eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Congregation Mezritch Synagogue is significant not only as it relates to the history of New York City, but also as it relates to the greater American immigrant experience. Congregation Mezritch is the East Village and Lower East Side's last operating neoclassical "tenement synagogue", named so for the fact that it fits miraculously into a narrow mid-block lot (in this case 22" wide) which would likely have otherwise been filled by a 19th Century tenement. In the late-19th and early-20th Centuries, the areas now known as the East Village and Lower East Side of Manhattan were literally filled with synagogues of this kind. Sadly, hardly any survive today to remind us of what was perhaps the most significant Jewish community in American history. The fact that the Congregation Mezritch Synagogue has not only survived completely intact, but has also operated as a shul continuously since its formation, is both rare and remarkable.

The sophisticated, ornate façade of Congregation Mezritch Synagogue reflects the high aspirations of a congregation of simple means. Like many of the early tenement synagogues, Congregation Mezritch Synagogue was built as a dwelling and later converted to a synagogue. This conversion, which took place in 1910, cost \$15,000. It was performed by the German architect and civil engineer Herman Horenburger for the Polish Orthodox Congregation that was established in 1888 (*anshe Mezritch* means *people of Mezritch*; Mezritch is a town in Poland well-known for being a center of Jewish learning).

In altering the building, Horenburger converted it from 3 ½ to 2 ½ stories, and added a stone-and-brick neoclassical façade. The decorative features chosen demonstrate a desire by the congregation to embrace American values while maintaining a sense of tradition. Classical Revival elements, such as noble arches and stately pilasters, honor traditional Roman building forms typically found on ancient temples and therefore deemed religiously "honorable". The congregation likely took their cues from recent archaeological excavations which revealed

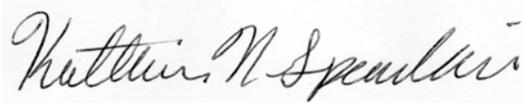
Jerusalem's Second Temple as being constructed in this style. Around the same time, the neoclassical style was becoming increasingly fashionable in America, so its use also demonstrates a willingness to embrace a new nationality. Moreover, the round sunburst counterpoint at the top of the building, typically found on other tenement buildings in the area, suggests an eagerness to be a part of the local community.

Listing on the State and National Registers would allow the building's owners access to tax credits for rehabilitation work, which would help ensure that the building remains an intact historic gem situated amidst a rapidly changing landscape. With this letter we are also submitting a photo and primary source documents that help define the significance of Congregation Mezritch Synagogue. It would be tragic to lose such a rare remnant of an enormously important time period. We hope you will expeditiously determine this vital and important piece of American history eligible for State and National Register Listing.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic
Preservation



Katherine R. Spaulding
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition



Block 434, L50 415 E. 6th Street

Block: 434
Lot: 50
Address: 415 East Sixth Street

Description:

This is a two story building plus raised basement, which is used as a synagogue.

Building Date: Unknown
Original Owner: Unknown
Original Use: Tenement
Original Architect: Unknown
Current Use: Synagogue

Year	Description	Source
1910	Architect Herman Horenburger filed on behalf of owner The Congregation of Edes Israel Anshei Mesrich to remove and rebuild front and rear walls, including construction of an extension, cutting new windows, removing all partitions and stairs and constructing a new stairway in order to convert the building from apartments to a synagogue.	ALT 480-10
1919	Jacob Fisher, the architect for the synagogue, filed to remove partitions and erect new ones to increase the stairway width.	ALT 32-19

Applicant must indicate the Building Line or Lines clearly and distinctly on the Drawings.

B 434
L 50

Office of the Borough President of the Borough of Manhattan,
In The City of New York.

THE BUREAU OF BUILDINGS FOR THE BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN,
Office, No. 220 FOURTH AVENUE,
S. W. Corner 18th Street.

Plan No. _____

APPLICATION TO ALTER, REPAIR, Etc.

Application is hereby made to the Superintendent of Buildings of The City of New York, for the Borough of Manhattan, for the approval of the detailed statement of the specifications and plans herewith submitted for the alteration or repairs of the building herein described. All provisions of the Law shall be complied with in the alteration or repair of said building, whether specified herein or not.

(Sign here) *Herman H. Rosenberg*

THE CITY OF NEW YORK, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN, June 7 1910

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PRESENT BUILDING.

1. State how many buildings to be altered one
2. What is the exact location thereof? (State on what street or avenue, the side thereof, the number of feet from the nearest street or avenue, and the name thereof)
N^o 415 E. 6th Street
3. How was the building occupied? dwelling
How is the building to be occupied? synagogue
4. Is the building on front or rear of lot? front Is there any other building erected on lot or permit granted for one? _____ Size _____ x _____; height _____ How occupied? _____ Give distance between same and proposed building _____ feet.
5. Size of lot? 22'0" feet front; 22'0" feet rear; 90'10" feet deep.
6. Size of building which it is proposed to alter or repair? 22'0" feet front; 22'0" feet rear; 85'10" feet deep. Number of stories in height? 3 1/2 Height from curb level to highest point? 40'0" above 4' below
7. Depth of foundation walls below curb level? 10'0" Material of foundation walls? stone Thickness of foundation walls? front 20" inches; rear 20" inches; side 20" inches; party _____ inches.
8. Material of upper walls? brick If ashlar, give kind and thickness _____
9. Thickness of upper walls:
Basement: front 12 inches; rear 12 inches; side 12 inches; party _____ inches.
1st story: " 12 " " 12 " " 12 " " " "
2d story: " 12 " " 12 " " 12 " " " "
3d story: " 12 " " 12 " " 12 " " " "
4th story: " _____ " " _____ " " _____ " " "
5th story: " _____ " " _____ " " _____ " " "
6th story: " _____ " " _____ " " _____ " " "
10. Is roof flat, peak or mansard? flat

If the Front, Rear or Side Walls, or any portion thereof, are to be taken out and rebuilt, give definite particulars, and state in what manner :

47. *It is proposed to remove entire front and rear walls and rebuild front wall, as shown. Rear wall to be taken down in order to build an Extension to rear. New windows to be cut in side wall and provided with brackets above sills as marked on plans.*

If altered internally, give definite particulars, and state how the building will be occupied :

48. *All partitions and stairs to be removed as shown on dotted lines and new partitions added for toilets. New stairways to be inserted on both sides of Ridge also stairs from sidewalk to Basement ^{2nd} 1st Story. All beams to be removed and replaced by new beams, sizes as shown on plans.*

The Building will be occupied as a Synagogue.

49. How much will the alteration cost? *\$ 15,000.00*

If the Building is to be occupied as a Flat, Apartment or Lodging House, give the following particulars :

50. Is any part of building to be used as a store or for any other business purpose, if so, state for what ?

	Cellar	Basement	1st Floor	2d Floor	3d Floor	4th Floor	5th Floor	6th Floor
51. How many families will occupy each ?								
52. Height of ceilings?								

53. How basement to be occupied? _____
How made water-tight? _____

54. Will cellar or basement ceiling be plastered? _____ How? _____

55. How will cellar stairs be enclosed? _____

56. How will cellar be occupied? _____
How made water-tight? _____

57. Will shafts be opened or covered with louvre skylights full size of shafts? _____

Size of each shaft? _____

58. Dimensions of water closet windows? _____
 Dimensions of windows for living rooms? _____
59. Of what materials will hall partitions be constructed? _____
60. Of what materials will hall floors be constructed? _____
61. How will hall ceilings and soffits of stairs be plastered? _____
62. Of what material will stairways be constructed? _____
 Give sizes of stair well holes? _____
63. If any other building on lot, give size; front _____; rear _____; deep _____;
 stories high _____; how occupied _____; on front or rear
 of lot _____; material _____.
 How much space between it and proposed building? _____
64. How will floors and sides of water closets to the height of 16 inches be made waterproof? _____
65. Number and location of water closets: Cellar _____; 1st floor _____; 2d floor _____;
 3d floor _____; 4th floor _____; 5th floor _____; 6th floor _____
66. This building will safely sustain per superficial foot upon the 1st floor _____ lbs.; upon 2d floor
 _____ lbs.; upon 3d floor _____ lbs.; upon 4th floor _____ lbs.; upon 5th floor
 _____ lbs.; upon 6th floor _____ lbs.; upon 7th floor _____ lbs.; upon 8th floor
 _____ lbs.
67. Is architect to supervise the alteration of the building or buildings mentioned herein? Yes
 Name _____
 Address _____
68. If not the architect, who is to superintend the alteration of the building or buildings described herein?
 Name Samuel Spector (Pres.)
 Address 199 E. 3rd St.

The Congregation of Ederet Leiviseal Anshei Mesevitz

Owner, Samuel Spector (Pres.) Address, 199 E. 3rd St.

Architect, _____ " _____

Superintendent, _____ " _____

Mason, _____ " _____

Carpenter _____ " _____

BUREAU OF BUILDINGS

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN, CITY OF NEW YORK

32
1919

NOTICE—This Application must be TYPEWRITTEN and filed in TRIPPLICATE, and ONE copy sworn to by Applicant. If Elevator or Plumbing Applications are filed herewith, ONE AFFIDAVIT is sufficient for all. Plans must be filed on tracing Linen or Cloth.

ALT. APPLICATION No. 32 191 9

LOCATION 415 E. 6th St. N.S. 178'-7" E. of 1st Ave. BLOCK 434 LOT 50

When properly signed by the Superintendent of Buildings of the Borough of Manhattan, this application becomes a PERMIT as required by the Building Code of The City of New York, to perform such work as is described in the foregoing statement and the attached plans and specifications which are a part hereof.

EXAMINED AND RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL ON February 6th 191 9

J. M. Bennett
Examiner

APPROVED FEB 7 - 1919 191

[Signature]
Superintendent of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan.

New York City, January 3, 191 9

To THE SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS:

Application is hereby made for approval of the plans and specifications herewith submitted, and made a part hereof, for the ALTERATION of the building therein described,—with the understanding that if no work is performed within one year from the time of issuance, this approval shall expire by limitation as provided by law; and the applicant agrees to comply with all the rules and regulations of the Bureau of Buildings for the Borough of Manhattan, all provisions of the Building Code of The City of New York, and with every other provision of law relating to this subject in effect at this date.

STATE, COUNTY AND }
CITY OF NEW YORK } SS.: Jacob Fisher
Typewrite Name of Applicant

being duly sworn, deposes and says: That he resides at Number 931 Fox Street
in the Borough of BRONX

in the City of New York, in the County of Bronx

in the State of New York, that he is Architect for Congregation

Edea Israel Anshel Mesrich.

owner in fee of all that certain lot, piece or parcel of land, shown on the diagram annexed hereto and made a part hereof, situate, lying and being in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York aforesaid, and known and designated as Number 415 E. 6th St. N.S. 178'-7" E. of 1st Ave.

and hereinafter more particularly described; that the work proposed to be done upon the said premises, in accordance with the accompanying detailed statement in writing of the specifications and plans of such proposed work, including all amendments to the same which may be filed hereafter—and also all Elevator and Plumbing work

BUREAU OF BUILDINGS

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN, CITY OF NEW YORK

NOTICE—This Application must be TYPEWRITTEN and filed in TRIPPLICATE.
 "SPECIFICATIONS—SHEET A" [Form 152] must be filed with EVERY Alteration Application.
 "SPECIFICATIONS—SHEET B" [Form 153] must be filed, in addition, in case the building is to be raised in height or occupancy changed so as to increase floor loads, or if building is to be enlarged on one side.

ALT. APPLICATION No. 191 9

LOCATION 415 East 6th St. N.S. 178'-7" E. of 1st Ave.

Examined 191

Examiner

SPECIFICATIONS—SHEET A

- (1) NUMBER OF BUILDINGS TO BE ALTERED ONE
 Any other building on lot or permit granted for one? NO
- (2) ESTIMATED COST OF ALTERATION: \$ 2000
- (3) OCCUPANCY (in detail):
 Of present building SYNAGOGUE
 Of building as altered SAME
- (4) SIZE OF EXISTING BUILDING:
- | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-----------|
| At street level | <u>22</u> | feet front | <u>82'-0"</u> | feet deep |
| At typical floor level | <u>22</u> | feet front | <u>82'-0"</u> | feet deep |
| Height | <u>2 1/2</u> | stories | <u>30'-0"</u> | feet |
- (5) SIZE OF BUILDING AS ALTERED:
- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| At street level | <u>SAME</u> | feet front | <u>SAME</u> | feet deep |
| At typical floor level | | feet front | | feet deep |
| Height | | stories | | feet |
- (6) CHARACTER OF CONSTRUCTION OF PRESENT BUILDING: Ordinary
[Frame, Ordinary or Fireproof]
- (7) STATE GENERALLY IN WHAT MANNER THE BUILDING WILL BE ALTERED:
 Remove partitions, erect new partitions, increase stairway in width as
AA shown on plans.

