

SUMMARY OF NOMINATION INFORMATION IN ONJH FILES

NAME Chab Shalom Synagogue / Metropolitan Baptist Church
 COUNTY Essex
 MUNICIPALITY Newark City

TYPE:

Individual x
 Historic District
 Multiple Property
 Documentation Form

NOMINATION FORM

ONJH FILES

- Nomination form (If there are continuation sheets, please indicate number) /
- First page (#1-6) / CS:
- Description (#7) / CS: 3
- Significance (#8) / CS: 3
- Last page (#9-11) / CS: 1
- SHPO Signatures /
- USGS Map /
- Site plan
- Tax map /
- Floorplan
- Photo index map
- Other maps
- Photographs (Indicate number) /
- Exterior 2
- Interior 1
- Streetscapes
- Outbuildings
- Historical
- Negatives
- Contact Sheet

DATE OF LISTING

State Register 1/16/90
 National Register 9/20/90

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

N.J.H.S.I. # Draft Nomination
 Newspaper/Magazine Articles Correspondence /
 HABS Contextual Data
 Other (Please specify)

STAFF MEMBER Barn G. Johnson DATE 7/1/91
 UPDATES: STAFF 0 DATE
 STAFF DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER SUBMISSION SUMMARY SHEET/CROSS INDEX TO OTHER FILES

NAME Ohel Shalom Synagogue / Metropolitan Baptist Church

MUNICIPALITY Newark COUNTY Essex

DATE SENT TO WASHINGTON _____

***photo copy noted as PC

	<u>Sent to Washington</u>	<u>NJ File</u>
NOMINATION FORM:		
- Signed nomination form	✓	✓
- U.S.G.S. Map	✓	✓
- Site plan		
- Tax map	✓	✓
- Floorplan		
- Photo index map		
- Other maps (indicate type)		
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION:		
- Intent to nominate letters		09/15/89
- General Public Notice		
- Owner list		
- Certification of owners		
PUBLIC COMMENTS:		
- Notarized owner objection letters (Indicate #)		0
- Other comments (Indicate #)		2
PHOTOGRAPHS: (Indicate #. Indicate if OCES photos differ from photos sent to Washington)		
- Exterior	6	6
- Interior	7	7
- Streetscapes		
- Outbuildings		
- Historical		
- Negatives		
- Contact Sheet		

Staff Member Lucy P...

Date 1/11/90

Let's protect our earth



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF PARKS AND FORESTRY

OFFICE OF NEW JERSEY HERITAGE

CN 404

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0404

(609)292-2023

ONJH-I90-45

September 11, 1990

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

The Oheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark, Essex County, New Jersey was entered onto the National Register on August 3, 1990. It has since come to our attention that the property should more properly have been submitted for a Determination of Eligibility due to owner objection rather than registration. (See enclosed letter.) We now request that the status of the Oheb Shalom Synagogue be changed accordingly.

We regret the inconvenience this may cause and would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Sincerely,


Nancy L. Zerbe
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

NLZ/rw

Let's protect our earth



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF PARKS AND FORESTRY

OFFICE OF NEW JERSEY HERITAGE

CN 404

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0404

(609)292-2023

July 2, 1990

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

I am pleased to nominate the Oheb Shalom Synagogue Building, Newark, Essex County, New Jersey to the National Register.

This application has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Nancy L. Zerbe'.

Nancy L. Zerbe
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

NLZ/rw

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

AUG 08 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

OFFICE OF N.J. HERITAGE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oheb Shalom synagogue
other names/site number Metropolitan Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 32 Prince Street N/A not for publication
city, town Newark N/A vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Essex code 013 zip code 07103

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

John C. Scieszka 1/16/90
Signature of certifying official Date
Acting Commissioner, DEP/DSHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure
(synagogue)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure
(church)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Exotic Revival/Islamic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick/brownstone

walls brick/brownstone

roof asphalt

other stained glass windows

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Metropolitan Baptist Church, located at 32 Prince Street, Newark, is a 2 1/2 story, rectangular plan, free-standing, brick and brownstone former synagogue building, designed in the Islamic mode. Located in the University Heights area of Newark's Central Ward, west of the Central Business District, the building was originally constructed for the Jewish congregation, Oheb Shalom, in 1884. Although vernacular gothicizing features ornament the building, the polychromatic masonry structure exhibits Moslem influences in its use of horseshoe-shaped windows and decorative cornices, and twin finial-topped domes.

The plan of the synagogue is regulated by its narrow urban lot. Rectangular in shape, the building is 60' wide and 75' deep. The symmetrically composed, gabled entrance (west) facade is flanked by set back wings containing the side aisles and the second floor galleries.

The butter-joint laid brick entrance facade is composed of three vertical bays delineated by projecting brick piers. The center bay, containing the entrance to the structure, is approached by a podium of ten steps flanked by metal railings. The entrance itself consists of a pair of modern glass replacement doors set within the original polychromed round arch surround. Below the round arch is a carved wooden lunette containing several bands of stylized floral ornament around a rosette oculus. The entire surround is set within a trabeated brick arch with corbelled entablature, created by the protruding vertical piers. Above the simply moulded cornice of the entrance entablature is a smaller trabeated arch within which is a rose window with a polychromed circular surround. The stained glass rose window depicts the Star of David. This arch also features a corbel-supported entablature, which in turn is surmounted by a pressed metal entablature featuring a dentillated architrave, a horseshoe-shaped arcade in the frieze, and a simply moulded cornice.

The flanking bays are ornamented with second story horseshoe-shaped

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 2

windows below which are stone rondels and square plaques. The corners of the facade consist of brick piers featuring a rusticated polychromatic ground floor with a brownstone base and cap, and a panelled second story pier ending in elaborate detailing of billeted brick panels and a dentillated cornice. Above these square piers, continuous from the side bays, is a pressed metal entablature featuring inset Star of David oculi within square panels, finished by multi-tiered finial-topped metal domes. The elevated basement level has a rusticated and polychromatic facade.

The single bay flanking wings are set back ten feet from the main facade. Textural quality is achieved by the use of vertical corner piers connected below the entablature by a course of billeting, and below the blind masonry oculus with another similar belt course. A simple pressed metal entablature with a dentillated architrave surmounts both wings. Paired windows with a common lintel occupy the basement level.

The side facades are articulated into five bays by vertical piers. Between these piers are located the windows which provide most of the illumination for the interior of the building. The basement level consists of paired double hung windows with common polychromed lintels. After a brief span of brick, the first through attic stories are fenestrated by an interesting combination of triple windows. The first floor windows are rectangular with transoms. These are divided from the ogee arched windows of the second floor by wooden spandrels. Above the ogee arched windows is another set of transom windows immediately below the eaves. Originally these windows were stained glass; most of them have been broken over time and replaced by plain glass panes. The existing original stained glass windows depict Jewish symbols such as the open Torah, Menorah and Star of David as well as secular motifs like fanciful scrolls and fleurs-de-lis.

The plain brick rear facade contains a single circular window in the gable apex. The gable roof is pierced by roof ventilators and two brick chimneys. A wrought iron fence spans the width of the property at the front of the building; a chain link fence surrounds the remaining yard.

Interior

The elevated basement contains offices, meeting rooms, a kitchen and restrooms. The basement is entered through a door in the south wall of the building which opens onto a wide corridor. Meeting rooms and offices are located off both sides of the hall. At the east end of the hall is the largest meeting room used by the Junior Church. The kitchen, rest rooms

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 3

and several small offices are located around the perimeter of this room.

The first floor contains a small vestibule at its west end with a staircase on either side leading to the upstairs galleries. Directly in line with the main entrance doors is a paired door set into a classicizing surround leading into the main auditorium. The barrel vaulted auditorium, with its elevated circular Baptist sanctuary, is an open space, broken up only by the marbelized square columns supporting the side and rear galleries. Behind the sanctuary is a recessed round arched opening containing five ogee arches filled with organ pipes and chimes. This recess is illuminated by means of continuous light bulbs attached to the underside of the arch. This space once housed the Ark of the Covenant, the traditional location for an Ark at the eastern end of a synagogue. The main entrance always faces westward. The bimah, the raised platform for the reading of the Torah, was located in front of the Ark, where the raised pulpit now stands.

On the second floor level, the side and rear galleries are supported by square columns and protected by a panelled wood parapet wall. Segmental arches, parallel with the gallery parapets, spring from the column capitals above the galleries, and are supported by an ornate multi-colored plaster bracket at the north and south walls. The wooden pews are arranged stadium style and the ceilings below the galleries on the first floor reflect this canted angle. The main floor and galleries seat 800.

The building has undergone little substantial change through the years. The congregation of Metropolitan Baptist Church purchased and installed the organ in 1941; they re-decorated the church a year later (History of Metropolitan Baptist Church, 1943: n.p.). New stained glass windows, depicting scenes from the life of Jesus Christ, have been installed in opposite window bays nearest the sanctuary.

Site

The site on which the synagogue is located is on the easterly side of Prince Street, Block 235, Lots 43, 44 and 45. The building dimensions are 60.0' wide by 75.0' deep. The property dimensions are 75.0' by 100.0'. The total area is .19 acre.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Ethnic Heritage (Black)
Religion

Period of Significance

1884
1939
1884-1911

Significant Dates

1884
1939
1884

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Metropolitan Baptist Church is significant architecturally as one of the best examples of the Islamic architectural influence used on a Jewish synagogue in Newark. The structure is also significant in the areas of Religion and Black Ethnic heritage as the former home of the second oldest Jewish congregation in Newark, Oheb Shalom, as well as the home of Metropolitan Baptist Church, one of the leading black Baptist churches in Newark today.

In both design and workmanship, the Metropolitan Baptist Church is indicative of the high quality of nineteenth century ecclesiastical architecture in Newark, and is the oldest synagogue structure still extant in the city. Although some gothicizing elements were employed, such as the the basic rectangular block plan with projecting tower base and the rose window, the materials of varied quality and texture, the contrasting stone to articulate wall surfaces, and the opulent detail, are more characteristic of the Islamic mode used for synagogue design in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

While the contemporary taste for the exotic was strong, the choice of the Islamic mode for this synagogue was probably influenced by memories of specific European prototypes built around the middle of the century (The Rose Art Museum 1976: 13). The synagogue built by Gottfried Semper at Dresden in 1839-1840, was the first synagogue building of the Oriental Revival movement. In the 1850s, this movement gained momentum with the Leopoldstadt synagogue in Vienna (1853-1858) and the Dohany utca synagogue in Budapest (1854-1859) both designed by Ludwig von Forster, and the Leipzig synagogue (1855) by Otto Simonson (de Breffny 1978: 159-160). The advocates of the Moorish Style "equated Moorish architecture with Jewish aesthetic and spiritual values and especially with the wonderful flowering

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetOheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJSection number 8 Page 2

of Judaic culture under the Moslem caliphate in Spain in the Middle Ages" (de Breffny 1978: 165). A rash of Moorish Revival synagogues followed in the 1860s throughout Hungary and Germany. By 1870, great Islamic style synagogues had been built in Cincinnati, New York and Philadelphia (The Rose Art Museum 1976: 13). Although synagogues were built in other styles in the 1870s and 1880s, the Moorish Revival held its own in both Europe and North America (de Breffny 1978: 169). Although the Islamic mode was most often built for German Jewish congregations, it was used in all varieties of Hebrew worship from Orthodox to Reform and was designed by Jewish and non-Jewish architects alike.

In the case of Oheb Shalom, its design was probably derived from some congregation member's recollection of his former house of worship in Bohemia. The axial plan of the basilica, which characterizes all Moorish synagogues, is used here, as well as the horseshoe arches and arcades, minaret-like towers with bulbous domes, alternating light and dark voussoirs and arabesque-ornamented cornices and interior brackets.

The Metropolitan Baptist Church is also significant in the areas of Religion and Black Ethnic heritage as the home of congregation Oheb Shalom, and as the home of Metropolitan Baptist Church.

Newark's Jewish history dates back to 1844, when Louis Trier arrived to found a tannery on New Jersey Rail Road Avenue. Others followed, many becoming peddlers on Newark streets or in outlying areas. They sold stockings, thread, needles and cheap crockery, quietly accumulating small savings in hopes of buying a horse and wagon or renting a small store. Before 1860, the leading drygoods stores in Newark were owned by Jews, a meteoric rise in fortune in less than fifteen years (Cunningham 1988: 137).

Most of Newark's Jews lived in boarding houses near Springfield Avenue and Prince Street on the western edge of town. In August of 1848, they organized Congregation B'Nai Jeshurun, the first Jewish congregation in New Jersey and worshipped in an attic in Catherine (now Arlington) Street. By 1858, members were affluent enough to build a synagogue at Washington and William Streets, the first in the city. The congregation was composed mostly of Germans and Bohemians. When increasing numbers of Polish Jews came to Newark, members of the original congregation aided the Poles in establishing Congregation B'Nai Abraham in 1853 (Cunningham 1988: 137).

Newark's third congregation began in 1860 when Oheb Shalom ("loving

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetOheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJSection number 8 Page 3

peace") split away from B'Nai Jeshurun to pursue the traditional form of worship (versus the Reform which was being adopted by many German congregations). Services were held in a home on the west side of Prince Street, between Springfield Avenue and South Orange Avenue (History of Oheb Shalom n.d.: 2), until a building could be constructed. The new synagogue, located on the east side of Prince Street was dedicated on September 14, 1884 (Urquhart 1913: 1010). Although an upstairs gallery was built, it was used only for overflow worshippers. Gradually, the congregation began to modernize. They gave up German as its official language and adopted the Jastrow Prayer Book. An organ was installed and congregational music was led by a professional hazan (History of Oheb Shalom n.d.: 4). In 1906, the congregation moved toward Conservative Judaism. The following year, a decision was made to move to larger quarters as the synagogue was overcrowded and much too small for the needs of the congregation. In 1911, a new synagogue was dedicated on High Street. The congregation remained in High Street until 1958 when it moved to suburban South Orange (History of Oheb Shalom n.d.: 12-14).

The Prince Street structure was sold to Congregation Adas Israel and Mishnayes, formed through a merger in 1911, and who remained until the late 1930s. Metropolitan Baptist Church, one of Newark's largest and most influential African-American congregations, bought the building in 1939 and moved into it the following year. Metropolitan Baptist Church was formed on January 20, 1938, when a small group of Baptists left Hopewell Baptist Church and founded a mission known as the Mt. Moriah Baptist Mission. Five months later, the trustees paid a deposit of \$1,000.00 on the former Oheb Shalom and the Permanent Council of the North Jersey Baptist Association officially recognized the congregation as Metropolitan Baptist Church. By 1942, membership had increased to 1,390 (History of Metropolitan Baptist Church 1943: n.p.). By 1964, church membership had swelled to more than 6,000 (Newark Evening News, February 5, 1963: n.p.). Under the leadership of the Rev. B.F. Johnson, pastor since 1943, Metropolitan Baptist Church continues to prosper as one of Newark's largest African-American congregations, and has plans to build a new church nearby.

This structure is the oldest extant synagogue in Newark and one of the last physical symbols of Newark's original Jewish community. For the last fifty years, its current congregation, Metropolitan Baptist Church, has strived to maintain this rare example of Moorish Revival architecture.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet 9.1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data: N/A
 State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property .19 acre Elizabeth, NJ Quad _____

UTM References

A 1,8 56,86,0,0 4,50,95,0,0
Zone Easting Northing
C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing
D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The site on which the synagogue is located is on the easterly side of Prince Street, Block 235, Lots 43,44 and 45. The property dimensions are 75.0' by 100.0'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated area includes land historically associated with the Oheb Shalom Synagogue.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ulana D. Zakalak, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee date August 2, 1989
street & number P.O. Box 1066 telephone (201) 622 - 4910
city or town Newark state New Jersey zip code 07101

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Oheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 1

9. Major Bibliographic References

Blake, Peter. An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow. New York:
Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1954.

Cunningham, John T. Newark. Newark, New Jersey: New Jersey Historical
Society, Revised and Expanded Edition, 1988.

deBreffny, Brian. The Synagogue. New York: The MacMillan Publishing Co.,
Inc., 1978.

The Rose Art Museum. Two Hundred Years of American Synagogue Architecture.
Waltham, Massachusetts: The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University,
1976. Copyright by the American Jewish Historical Society.

Urquhart, F.J. History of the City of Newark, New Jersey, 1666 - 1913.
3 volumes. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1913.

Newspapers

"Dedicating a New Synagogue; Ceremonies at the Edifice of the Congregation
Aheb Shalom." Newark Evening News, 15 September 1884.

"Oheb Shalom, Dedication of a New Tabernacle Yesterday." Newark Daily
Advertiser, 15 September 1884, p. 2.

"Reverend B. F. Johnson has 90th Birthday." New Jersey Afro-American,
13 December, 1986, p. 1.

"25th Anniversary, Baptist Church Sets Observance." Newark Evening
News, 5 February 1963, n.p.

Miscellaneous Documents

Congregation Oheb Shalom. "Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, Congregation Oheb
Shalom," Newark, New Jersey, 1935.

Congressional Record. "History of Oheb Shalom." Vol. 131, No. 138,
October 17, 1985.

Metropolitan Baptist Church. Souvenir Program of the 5th Anniversary of
Metropolitan Baptist Church. Newark, New Jersey: no pub., Jan. 1943.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Oheb Shalom Synagogue, Newark,
Essex County, NJ

Section number _____ Page _____ : PHOTOGRAPHS

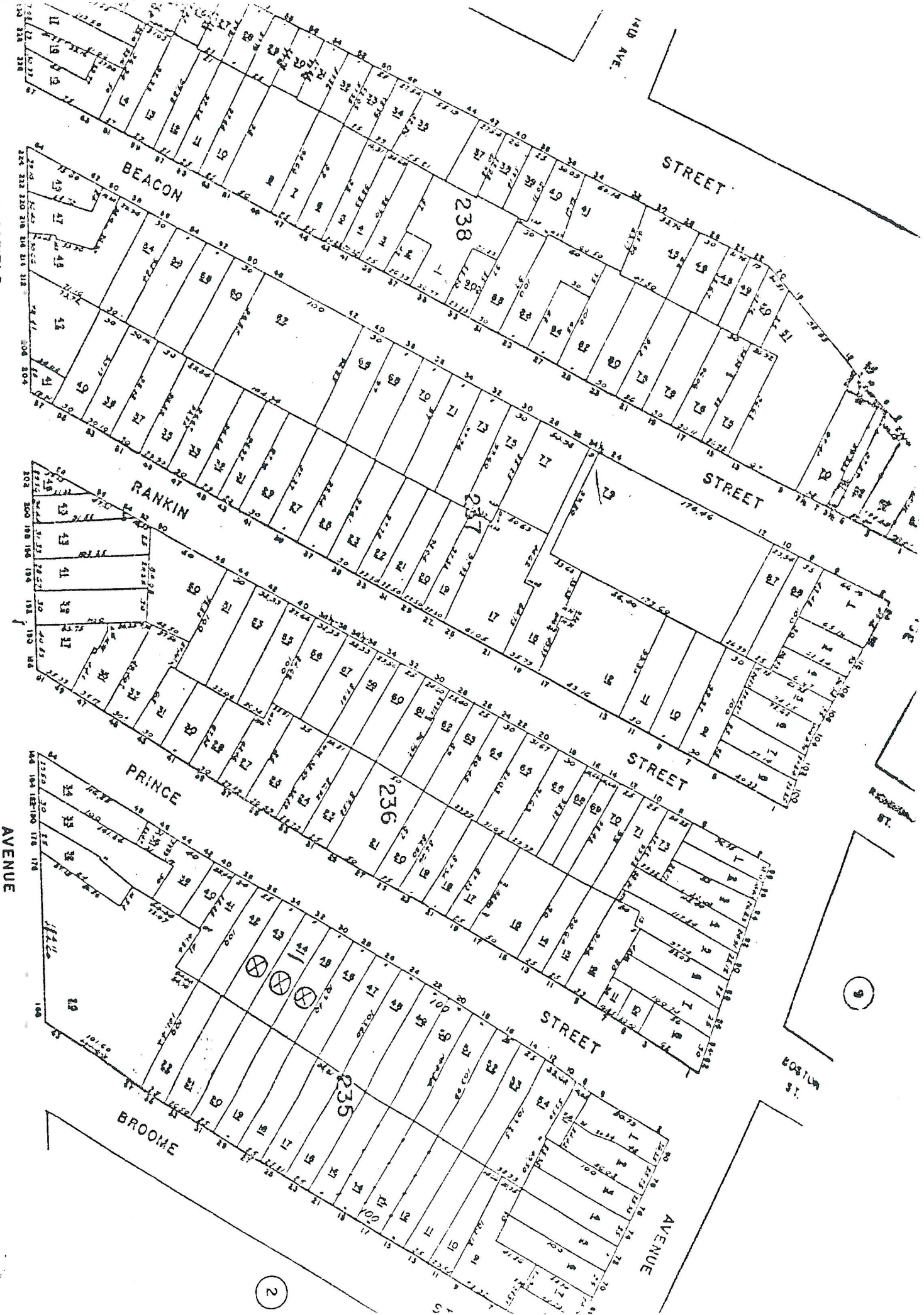
Photographs

The following information is the same for all of the photographs listed:

- 1) Name of property: Oheb Shalom synagogue, 32 Prince Street
- 2) City and state: Newark, New Jersey (Essex County)
- 3) Photo by: Ulana D. Zakalak
- 4) Photo taken: July 1989
- 5) Location of negative: Zakalak Associates
57 Cayuga Avenue
Oceanport, New Jersey 07757

6) & 7) Descriptions of views indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 13: West (main) facade, camera pointing east
Photo 2 of 13: West (main) facade, camera pointing northeast
Photo 3 of 13: West (main) facade, camera pointing southeast
Photo 4 of 13: North facade, camera pointing southeast
Photo 5 of 13: South facade, camera pointing east
Photo 6 of 13: Close-up of west facade, camera pointing east
Photo 7 of 13: Interior, camera pointing east
Photo 8 of 13: Interior, camera pointing east
Photo 9 of 13: Interior, camera pointing southwest
Photo 10 of 13: Interior, camera pointing northwest
Photo 11 of 13: Interior detail, original stained glass window,
camera pointing south
Photo 12 of 13: Interior detail, rose window, camera pointing west
Photo 13 of 13: Interior detail, wall bracket, camera pointing southwest



2

3

1