

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Free Synagogue of Flushing

other name/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 41-60 Kissena Boulevard not for publication

city or town Flushing N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Queens code 081 zip code 11355

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard Perpoint ASARO 8/31/09
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation masonry

walls synagogue: masonry; Mann residence: wood

Roof synagogue: copper; Mann residence: asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Free Synagogue of Flushing
Queens County, New York

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DESCRIPTION

The Free Synagogue of Flushing is located at 41-60 Kissena Boulevard, at the northwest corner of Sanford Avenue, in the Flushing neighborhood of the borough of Queens in New York City. The boundaries of the property are described as Queens Tax Block 5043, Lot 32. The lot includes two adjoining related properties: a house at 136-23 Sanford Avenue and a small (non-contributing) attached school building at 41-50 Kissena Boulevard. The Free Synagogue of Flushing was built in 1927 to designs by architect Maurice Courland. It adjoins a late-nineteenth century mansion (formerly known as the S. Vernon Mann residence) acquired by the synagogue in 1921, used for services in its early years and is now connected to the new synagogue building via a basement corridor.

On Kissena Boulevard, the synagogue is flanked by its attached school building and a parking lot. Across the street, on Kissena Boulevard, are a number of small commercial buildings. Adjoining the older building on Sanford Avenue is a six-story apartment building. Across Sanford Avenue are more six-story apartment buildings and further east is the Flushing Post Office (NR listed in 1988). Today, the Free Synagogue of Flushing is an early surviving Queens synagogue that continues to function as such. Its design is typical of 1920s American synagogues, combining classical detailing with Jewish symbols.

Former Mann Residence: Exterior

The former Mann residence is a two-and-one-half-story frame house with a low mansard roof, with a projecting gabled portico on its main (south) elevation. The portico is supported by four giant fluted columns which are missing their capitals. These stand on tall bases and carry an entablature and a pediment within which is a window in the shape of a lunette. The elevation directly behind the portico, at the first story, has a wide central entrance with a double door set in an Adamesque entrance surround, including an Adamesque fanlight. The entrance is approached by a flight of steps set between the two innermost columns of the portico. At either side, there is a large, multi-light, round-arched Palladian window. At the second story, above each round-arched window is an equally wide, square-headed window with a pair of double-hung sash. Each window has a slightly projecting sill and lintel. There is a similar, but narrower, single double-hung window directly above the main entrance and to its east (to the right as one faces the house) a similar window that breaks the façade's symmetry and may be a later addition. The elevation is framed by double-height pilasters at either end, supporting a denticulated cornice.

The rear (north) elevation is also framed by double-story pilasters supporting a denticulated cornice. A brick chimney rises on the western side (to the right facing the elevation). There is a projecting, slightly off-center two-story extension with three asymmetrically placed windows. To the east (to the left facing the elevation), there is a single, wide window at both the first and second story, each with a pair of double-hung windows. To the west, between the extension and the chimney, each story has a single double-hung window. In the mansard roof, there are two short dormer windows. The chimney occupies the space where a third such window might have been located. The west elevation has a slightly projecting window bay at the first story, and individual double-hung windows at the second story, as well as a Palladian window closer to the front elevation and a two-story metal fire-escape has been added. The east elevation has a projecting section at the first story with a porch

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at the second story, connected to a metal fire-escape. It also has square-headed double-hung windows and dormer windows in the mansard roof.

Former Mann Residence: Interior

The former Mann residence has two stories plus a basement. The basement is a utilitarian space with no architectural features of note. The first story has been divided into classrooms. Some original architectural detail survives, notably: a round-arched opening leading from the main entrance into the main hall; the paneled ceiling in the entrance hall and classrooms; some wall paneling; and a grand staircase with an ornamental balustrade leading from the main hall to the second story. At the staircase landing on the second floor, there is a large, multi-light Palladian window. The second story has been divided into classrooms. The only architectural features surviving are the window surrounds.

Flushing Free Synagogue: Exterior

Sitting on a rise, the two-story-and-basement domed synagogue is dramatically sited at the top of a broad flight of steps. Its main façade is faced in brick with a colonnaded stone temple-front projecting in front of it. The temple front bears a striking resemblance to the temple front of the adjoining Mann residence. It is comprised of four Corinthian columns supporting an architrave and pediment. The frieze within the architrave is inscribed: "For mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people – Isaiah LVI-VII." A Corinthian pilaster on the brick wall mirrors each of the outermost columns. The wall extends somewhat beyond those pilasters, so that it appears wider than the cast-stone temple-front. Slightly recessed but projecting out still further to either side are the ends of the building's side facades. Each of these is adorned with a square-headed window in an aedicular surround, topped by a triangular pediment and with ornamental leaded-glass sash. The broad flight of steps does not extend past either end of the temple front. The brick walls of the façade continue down to the basement level where there are secondary entrances. On either side of the broad staircase, is a tall bronze light in the shape of a *menorah* in front of the temple-front.

The four columns of the temple front effectively divide the façade into three bays, each with an entrance. The central entrance is taller than those on either side. It includes ornamentally paneled double doors (each door with eight panels) topped by a transom with leaded glass. The glass includes geometric patterning focusing on a central *magen david* inscribed within a circle. The doors are set within a cast-stone frame composed of a Corinthian pier on either side supporting an entablature with the frieze inscribed with the words "Free Synagogue of Flushing." Above this is an elaborately carved cast-stone lunette, filled with ornamental carved grape vines surrounding a representation of the Tablets of the Law (inscribed with the Hebrew letters traditionally identifying each of the Ten Commandments). The slightly smaller entrances to either side of the central entrance have similar pairs of doors, though instead of eight ornamental panels per door, there are only four. Each also has a leaded glass transom with a similar geometric pattern, but without the central *magen david*. Rather than being topped by a lunette, each has a triangular pediment with ornamental sculpture focused on a *menorah*. A narrow band course runs across the upper part of the façade, just touching the lunette above the central entrance. Sitting on the band course, centered above each of the three entrances, are three small, round-arched windows, with footed sills. The ornament of the leaded glass in each window focuses on a *magen david*.

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The south-Sanford Avenue elevation continues the Neo-Georgian design. Although it does not have a stone-faced temple front, the brick façade echoes the design of the main elevation. Four square brick piers support an entablature. The central two piers support a triangular pediment. The four piers create three inner bays and an outer bay at either side. The central bay features an enormous round-arched leaded-glass window with ornamental elements that include such Jewish symbols as a *magen david* and a Torah scroll held by two lions and another *menorah*. The narrower round-arched windows to either side include geometric forms and a *magen david*. The two short windows at either end include a *menorah* inscribed in a circle in the upper sash. The basement level, more visible here than at the main façade, is faced in the same red brick as the rest of the building, but with a projecting course of brick every six courses. Windows with simple patterned-brick lintels have been boarded up. At the far west end, the basement continues further than the main wall and connects to the former Mann residence.

The north elevation, which faces an internal parking lot, mirrors the design of the Sanford Avenue elevation. The west elevation, facing the former Mann residence, is plain, with several square-headed windows and several blind windows. Rising above all four elevations is the synagogue's broad dome, with a skylight at its center.

Flushing Free Synagogue: Interior

The entrances of the synagogue on the main façade lead into a narrow entrance vestibule, with a staircase to the basement at either end and three entrances to the sanctuary opposite the entrances from the main façade. The entrances from the main façade have wooden surrounds. The leaded glass transoms visible outside are more visible inside the vestibule. The central entrance is topped by an ornamental cartouche. The three doors opposite leading to the sanctuary repeat the arrangement of the slightly larger and more elaborate central entrance with simpler side entrances. The central entrance is through double doors and the side entrances each have a single door. The central entrance is topped by a triangular pediment with an ornamental *menorah* in its center. Each of the wooden doors is paneled, with a central panel filled with ornamental leaded glass. There is now a suspended acoustical-tile ceiling, from which hang three small ornamental chandeliers. The two staircases have ornamental metal railings. The walls are hung with a number of memorial plaques.

Inside, the sanctuary is a single large domed space without a separate gallery to serve as a women's section, reflecting the egalitarian theological position of the Reform movement. The detailing continues the Neo-Georgian classicism of the exterior, with a similar cross between classical ornament and Jewish themes. The sanctuary walls are plaster and a curving apse is in the front. The sanctuary has three tall, almost floor-to-ceiling leaded glass windows on either side, flanked by a smaller window at either end of the wall. The three tall windows are filled with ornamental polychromatic leaded glass. Each window is set within a round arch and is flanked on either side by a fluted pilaster rising to an ornate capital that appears to support the ceiling. The tall, central windows on either side are identical in design. The main section of each features an image of two lions holding a Torah scroll and two *magen david* images, each inscribed in a circle at the top of the arch among other polychromatic designs. The four narrower windows each have a *magen david* set in a roundel near the top of the arch, but have slightly different ornamental features. The window on the north wall farther from the ark (on the right as one faces front) and the window on the south wall nearer to the ark show a pair of hands in the position of the priestly blessing ("birkhat ha-kohanim") below the *magen david*. The other two narrower windows in

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place of the pair of hands display an image of an antelope-like figure. The small windows at either end of the wall and at either end of the front wall, as well are set in aedicular frames. A sculpted menorah is in the triangular pediments. The windows are double-hung. In the upper sash of each one is a symbol inscribed in a circle, e.g., one shows a torah scroll inscribed with the three words "Torat (followed by an unpronounceable Biblical name for God), Temimah" ("תורת ״ תמימה ״ "God's Torah is perfect"), another shows a *menorah* and a third appears to represent the bush that burnt but was not consumed, in which God first appeared to Moses.

At the front of the sanctuary, plain wall surfaces at either side each have a doorway and window and flank the central apse, defined by four *scagliola* (faux marble) pilasters (mirroring the pilasters on the exterior portico) forming three bays, each with an arch. The central arch houses the ark. Within the apse, the walls are a faux travertine plaster. Each of the three arches has a metallic choir screen in its upper part. The ornament in the outer two choir screens combines classical swags and shells with a *menorah*. In front of the center arch, the ark (the receptacle for the Torah scrolls) is set between a combination *scagliola* (faux marble) Corinthian column and pilaster on either side. The columns support a broken pediment, within which is a representation of the Tablets of the Law inscribed with the Hebrew words representing the Ten Commandments. Set between the columns is an ornamental square-headed opening with a pair of ornamental bronze doors. Furniture in this area includes a number of ornamental wooden seats as well as a reader's desk and table for the Torah scroll.

At the rear of the sanctuary, two pilasters similar to those on the other walls, appear to support the ceiling and divide the rear wall into three sections. The sections on either side have a square-headed window similar to the windows on the other walls and the three entrances from the entrance vestibule. A number of memorial plaques are affixed to the wall. The crowning shallow dome that covers most of the space rises to a leaded-glass skylight with a *magen david* in its center.

Social hall: Staircases from the entrance vestibule lead down to a similar narrow vestibule that gives access to the social hall. This is a large space with a stage, directly beneath the sanctuary. The ceiling is new. Both the space and its entrance vestibule are devoid of architectural detail.

In general, the Free Synagogue of Flushing retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It has been continuously maintained as a synagogue since its construction in 1927. Alterations primarily affect the minor spaces of the social hall and its vestibule. The main façade, main sanctuary, and entrance vestibule of the synagogue all survive largely intact. The interior of the adjoining Mann residence has lost much of its original detailing, but retains its large, ornamental central staircase. The adjoining school building is not a contributing feature of the site.

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Name of Property

Queens County, New York
County and State

8. Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Ethnic History: Jewish

Architecture

Period of Significance

1921-1927

Significant Dates

1891, 1921

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

synagogue: Maurice Courland

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Free Synagogue of Flushing

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Free Synagogue of Flushing is historically significant under Criterion A in the areas of ethnic history and religion as one of the few early twentieth-century synagogues surviving in Queens. In addition to serving a rapidly growing Jewish population in Queens, it was part of the "free synagogue" movement that had its origins in New York City in the early-twentieth century. The synagogue is also significant under Criterion C and Criterion Consideration A for architecture as an outstanding example of an early-twentieth century Neo-Classical style synagogue that continues to serve the local community.

Criterion A: Constructed in 1927, the Free Synagogue of Flushing housed a congregation founded in 1917 on the model of the new Free Synagogue in Manhattan created by Rabbi Stephen Wise. Rabbi Wise's assistant, Rabbi Sidney Goldstein, initially encouraged the community to create the synagogue and Rabbis Wise and Goldstein preached for the new congregation until it could hire its own rabbi. The Free Synagogue includes two buildings: a late-nineteenth century mansion that the synagogue acquired in 1921 and used for services in its early years, and an adjoining new, purpose-built synagogue constructed in 1927. The older building (Mann mansion) is also significant under Criterion A as a representation of an earlier time in Flushing's history as a surviving example of a late-nineteenth century mansion, its adaptive reuse as a synagogue, and now a school.

Criterion C and Criteria Consideration A: The synagogue/house of worship is architecturally significant as an example of an intact 1920s Neo-Classic Revival style synagogue in Queens with a high-style design by noted synagogue architect Maurice Courland. The synagogue reflected Courland's training at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* and was one of several buildings designed for the Jewish community throughout his long career (1919-1957). As such, the Free Synagogue survives today as a distinctive architectural, cultural and religious landmark of the Jewish community of New York City. Though Queens today is home to a sizable Jewish population with hundreds of synagogues large and small, the Free Synagogue is one of the oldest, surviving from a time when the Jewish population of Queens was quite small.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: The Development of Flushing¹

One of the oldest settlements in what is now the City of New York, Flushing (together with Newtown and Jamaica) was one of the three colonial settlements now comprising the borough of Queens. Flushing traced its roots to English settlers who received a patent in 1654 from Peter Stuyvesant, governor general of the Dutch colony. Early in the town's history, Flushing residents stood together in support of a local Quaker community against the religious intolerance of Governor Stuyvesant. They lost the immediate battle, but their "Flushing Remonstrance" of 1657 remained as one of the earliest published defenses of religious freedom in the United States.

¹The section on general Flushing history is taken almost in its entirety from the New York Landmarks Commission's *Fitzgerald/Ginsberg Mansion designation report* (LP-2160; New York: City of New York, 2005), prepared by the author of this nomination. For general information on Flushing, see Benjamin Thompson, *History of Long Island from its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time* (FIX 1918, rpt. Port Washington, N.Y., 1962), 538 ff; and "Astoria," by Vincent Seyfried, in the *Encyclopedia of New York City*.

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During the seventeenth century, Flushing developed as a major center for horticulture, an industry brought to the town by French Huguenots who imported fruit trees not native to the country. William Prince established Flushing's first profitable nursery as early as 1737. In 1838, Samuel Parsons established a nursery that introduced to the United States such plants as the Asiatic rhododendron, the Japanese maple, the Valencia orange, and the weeping beech. Parsons' nursery also provided trees for the city's first public parks, among them including Central Park and Prospect Park.

As in the rest of Queens County, Flushing's fortunes evolved with improvements in transportation. The introduction of regular train service to New York City in 1854 led to a post-Civil War boom in luxury house construction for wealthy New Yorkers. The extension of trolley lines into Flushing from 1888 to 1899 and the electrification of the Long Island Rail Road, helped turn Flushing into a commuter suburb. With the consolidation of Greater New York in 1898, Flushing became part of the new Borough of Queens. From the 1890s until the outbreak of World War I, Flushing saw its estates divided up into new suburban developments including Ingleside, Murray Hill, Broadway-Flushing, Bowne Park, Kissena, and Queensborough Hill.² Perhaps the biggest impetus to the growth of Flushing in particular and Queens in general was the opening in 1909 of the Queensboro Bridge that connected Queens with midtown Manhattan. Also significant was the extension of the IRT into the borough during the late 1910s. Over the next two decades, the population of Queens mushroomed by 750%.³ The boom continued well into the 1920s.⁴

Flushing participated heavily in the borough's growth, developing as a series of suburban neighborhoods surrounding a town center on Northern Boulevard.⁵ In 1910, just a year after the opening of the Queensborough Bridge, the Business Men's Association of Flushing published *Flushing: The Premier Suburban Colony of the City of New York*, a typical booster book touting the suburban advantages of Flushing life. The book stated:⁶

Flushing has long waited to come into its own. Thousands of people who have enjoyed the luxuries of living in a community like this, where the home life, the social life, and the religious life are at their best, where rowing, yachting, fishing, tennis, golfing, baseball, driving, motoring, and other outdoor amusements are easy at hand and universally indulged in, have in the past found homes in Flushing, regardless of its inaccessibility to Manhattan. These people have preferred to put up with the annoyance, loss of time, and trouble in getting to and from their homes rather than suffer the inconveniences and disadvantages of a home in Manhattan or Brooklyn.

² Seyfried.

³ Jeffrey A. Kroessler, *Building Queens: The Urbanization of New York's Largest Borough* (PhD dissertation, CUNY 1991), pp. iv, 333.

⁴ Kroessler, p. 378: "The economic boom of the 1920s... was nowhere more evident than in Queens, and like the rest of the boom, the real estate explosion in Queens was built on credit. The result was an extraordinary period of construction. In the five years between 1924 and 1929, the city issued 73, 656 permits for 1- and 2-family homes in Queens, providing housing for 93,000 families, or an estimated 400,000 persons."

⁵ A large number of these residences and businesses are part of the Broadway-Flushing Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

⁶ George Van De Griff, *Flushing: The Premier Suburban Colony of the City of New York* (Flushing, N.Y.: Business Men's Association of Flushing; printed by the Nation Press, c1910).

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Now that the Pennsylvania Tunnels are completed, and a resident of Flushing can go from his home to Herald Square in sixteen minutes, and without change of cars, now that the great Queensboro Bridge is open to traffic, and a Flushing resident can go for a single five-cent fare by trolley in the finest cars in New York over this bridge in thirty minutes, and with the prospect of the Steinway Tunnel being quickly opened, tens of thousands of New York City's increasing population will take advantage of and enjoy the same invaluable privileges that have previously been the privilege of only thousands.⁷

The book extolled the neighborhood's advantages in healthfulness, openness, good schools, water supply, and churches, and focused on its character as "a Colony of Homes":

Flushing is distinctly and pre-eminently a residence place. It is and always has been a colony of homes - homes of detached houses, homes with broad lawns, large gardens, shrubs, trees, flowers, and abundance of God's pure, fresh air and sunshine. It has no apartment houses, neither has it any of the settlements which are characteristic of other places where there is much manufacturing. Flushing is clean, wholesome, and restful to a degree possibly not equaled in any other suburb of New York.⁸

The Jewish population of Flushing was part of the much larger Jewish population of New York City. Following a major wave of immigration from Eastern Europe (beginning in the 1880s and reaching its peak in the early decades of the twentieth century), New York City became home to an enormous Eastern European Jewish immigrant community. From about 1880 up until World War I, some two million Jews (roughly one third of all the Jews in Europe) arrived in the United States.⁹ The vast majority first settled in New York City. The Jewish immigrants created an enormous Yiddish-speaking community. In this city within a city, Jewish immigrants were able to find kosher food, Yiddish-language newspapers, and mutual aid societies. Major Jewish immigration to the Lower East Side stopped only with the passage in 1924 of new immigration laws.

Though the city's Jewish population was enormous, the pre-World War I Jewish population of Queens was quite small. In 1913, just four years before the founding of the Flushing Free Synagogue, New York City's Jewish population was estimated at 1,330,000. Of that number, only 23,000 lived in Queens.¹⁰ Synagogues played a major role in the life of New York's Jewish population. New York's 1918 Jewish population, estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million, was served by 700 synagogues. In that year, West Queens had just one synagogue, in one building, while East Queens (east of Flushing Avenue) had 18 synagogues, only five of which had their own buildings. Flushing's first synagogue was most likely the Temple Gates of Prayer, established in 1902 on Locust Street (now 38th Avenue) just opposite St. George's Church. The Flushing Free Synagogue was the neighborhood's second.¹¹

⁷ Van De Griff, p. 5.

⁸ Van De Griff, p. 19.

⁹ Moses Rischin, *The Promised Land: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (New York, 1970), p.20, cited in Dolkart.

¹⁰ *The Jewish Communal Register of New York City 1917-1918* (New York: Kehillah [Jewish Community], 1918), p.86.

¹¹ Driscoll, p.59

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The Free Synagogue of Flushing

The Flushing synagogue took its name from the Free Synagogue founded by Rabbi Stephen Wise in Manhattan. In 1905, Rabbi Wise was approached to become the rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, perhaps New York's wealthiest and most prominent Reform congregation, but had run afoul of the congregation's leaders by giving trial sermons on social justice and various Progressive causes that directly challenged the thinking and doings of several prominent members. In the negotiations that followed, Wise insisted that if he took the pulpit, he would be free to speak his mind. The answer he received, "...the pulpit of Emanu-el has always been and is subject to and under the control of the Board of Trustees," meant that he could not accept the position, but he had already decided to create a new kind of synagogue, a "free synagogue."¹²

In 1906, in an interview with the *New York Tribune*, Rabbi Wise explained what he meant by a "free synagogue":

The free synagogue Judaism will be based upon the idea that the Jewish religion was not a single act, or even a series of steps, but a never ending process, a never ceasing development.

For one thing, the Free Synagogue will stand for progress and prophetic Judaism. In the next place, it will be free in so far as, unlike most congregations, it will be supported by voluntary contributions. The pew system, morally, is a bit of medievalism and will have no place in the Free Synagogue, which is to be dedicated to the high ideals of the essential democratic teachings of the house of Israel.

The Free Synagogue will, as its name implies, be free in so far as its pulpit will be free and untrammelled, free to voice without fear or scruple the high moral and spiritual teachings of the synagogue. It will thus do much to regain the moral support, which church and synagogue alike, alas! are losing or have lost.¹³

Rabbi Wise intended to reach out to unaffiliated Jews and envisioned his Free Synagogue as a place of moral instruction for Jews but also for Christians. His approach to the service included significant changes, such as the elimination of the Torah reading (central to traditional Jewish Sabbath services) and the scheduling of Sabbath services on Sunday to supplement those traditionally held on Friday evening and Saturday morning. But to Wise's mind, the most important aspect of the Free Synagogue would be its devotion to the cause of ethical teaching and social justice. Rabbi Wise's first paid professional assistant, Rabbi Sidney E. Goldstein, developed the Free Synagogue's "Social Service Department."

Rabbi Wise's Free Synagogue met in various Manhattan locations before finding a permanent home (now the Stephen S. Wise Free Synagogue) on West 68th Street. From the start, however, he envisioned the Free Synagogue not as just a single congregation, but as the beginning of a larger movement. Rabbi Wise maintained an association with a settlement house called Clinton Hall on the Lower East Side. Soon it became known as the

¹² Robert David Shapiro, *A Reform Rabbi in the Progressive Era: The Early Career of Stephen S. Wise* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1984), pp. 125-126.

¹³ "Want Free Synagogue: Dr. Wise Here to Establish New Form of Judaism," *New-York Tribune*, 10/20/1906, p.7; cited in Shapiro.

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"Downtown Branch of the Free Synagogue," established at the request of Lillian Wald at the Henry Street Settlement. Several other "Free Synagogues" followed.

The Flushing Free Synagogue was founded in 1917 with the direct participation of the "mother Synagogue." A letter went out on October 31, 1917 from the Hebrew Woman's Aid Society of Flushing, asking recipients to attend a meeting to discuss the creation of a new school:

Having in view the establishment of a Jewish Sabbath (or Sunday) School, we submitted our idea to Dr. Goldstein, the Associate of Dr. Stephen Wise, of the Free Synagogue, N.Y., requesting his advice and cooperation, we are happy to say that he is willing to give us the benefit of his experience and able counsel, so that we may start, even if in a small way, a school, which it is hoped may develop into a Jewish centre, of which all Jews can be proud.

This school is to be conducted on liberal lines, to make bigger Jews and better Americans. Its purpose will be to teach not only the doctrines of our noble and ancient religion, but the laws of an ideal creed and the history of a people who have withstood the persecution of the world for twenty centuries...Dr. Goldstein has consented to attend our meeting to be held Sunday evening, November 11th, at 8 P.M., at Odd Fellows' Hall... and will be good enough to address us on this or any subject he deems advisable and of benefit to us.¹⁴

The dedication booklet for the new building in 1927 recounted what followed:

We had the great good fortune of first meeting Dr. Sidney E. Goldstein as he delivered a talk on a religious theme (in which we were deeply interested) at the Congregational Church in Flushing. His subject was, "Why I Am a Jew."

It was at the time when a small body of earnest Jewish women in Flushing decided to establish a religious school for children coming from homes of the Liberal Jewish Faith.

We had interviews with a number of gentlemen occupying advance Jewish pulpits, but as we saw and heard this kindly gentleman we were so impressed by his scholarly attainments, his sincerity of principles and honesty of purpose that we unhesitatingly accepted Dr. Goldstein as our leader. We then requested his help.

At a meeting with Dr. Goldstein:

He told us we might require \$500.00 to conduct a school for the first year. Then the plate (figuratively speaking) was passed around among our little group – with the result (as you know) \$1,500.00 was raised.

¹⁴ Letter in possession of the congregation.

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"You have enough for a school and a Congregation, now start your services at once. Send your religion through your new Synagogue into your homes and let your school bring the Congregational teachings into the hearts of your children." Those were the words of Dr. Goldstein.¹⁵

At first, Rabbi Goldstein and Rabbi Wise agreed "...to supply the pulpit of the newly formed congregation. On many occasions, in all kinds of weather, they made the journey to Flushing and their presence in the pulpit attracted large numbers of Jews and Christians. Upon their recommendation, Rabbi Abraham Feldman, then a recent graduate of the Hebrew Union College, was invited to serve as the first regular minister."¹⁶ In the synagogue's 1917 dedication booklet, a page was devoted "To Our Mentor and Guide, Dr. Stephen S. Wise."

Can we ever fully recognize what this man has done for the betterment of the world and the salvation of our people?...It must fill the hearts of every member of this Congregation with joy and pride to stand in the radiance of the everlasting light of his personality, his sincerity, his untiring energy...This thought of a free pulpit enunciating a fair interpretation of Old Testament ideas and ideals is his, and to build on this foundation a great religious institution, his ideal. The first great good fortune of this Congregation – was to have had the benefit of Dr. Wise's great help. May we hope that he will use this beautiful building, whose altar we so happily place at his disposal, to continue his teaching of world brotherhood.¹⁷

Twenty-five years after its founding, the synagogue looked back on its history as part of the Free Synagogue movement:

The Free Synagogue of Flushing, drawing its inspiration from the Free Synagogue of New York, has adopted the principles of the mother Synagogue. These principles are (1) no assigned pews – a democratic arrangement which recognizes the equality of all worshippers and does not discriminate in favor of position or wealth; (2) no fixed dues – the Synagogue is supported by voluntary contributions, each member being expected to contribute generously in accordance with his means, and (3) a free pulpit – the occupant of the pulpit, regular or visiting, has complete freedom of speech and assumes sole responsibility for his utterances, the congregation, on the other hand, having the right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, the message delivered. In a word, the Synagogue, in its spirit and organization, is free, democratic and liberal.¹⁸

The congregation first met at the Odd Fellow's Hall in Flushing, in 1918.¹⁹ In 1921, the congregation acquired "...the S. Vernon Mann property on the northwest corner of Sanford and Jamaica avenues... Immediate plans call for remodeling the first floor of the homestead...so that the building can be used temporarily as a place of

¹⁵ *Free Synagogue of Flushing Dedication, September 16-17-18, 1927* (n.p.).

¹⁶ *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Free Synagogue of Flushing, 1917-1942*, May 2, 1942, "Introduction" (n.p.).

¹⁷ *Free Synagogue of Flushing Dedication*.

¹⁸ *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Free Synagogue of Flushing, 1917-1942*, "Introduction."

¹⁹ "Agreement – The Pacific Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows – with – Free Synagogue of Flushing," January 8th, 1918; in possession of the congregation.

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worship. When the entire first floor is entirely cleared it will be transformed into a large auditorium with seating capacity for at least three hundred people.”²⁰

The Mann property included a large house, parts of which dated back to c. 1859, but much of the building appeared to have been remodeled in the 1890s. Based on the evidence from historic maps, a frame house with a mansard roof, two-and-one-half-stories tall, was built on this site in 1859-60 for Flushing merchant Robert B. Carter.²¹ It was purchased in 1870 by Mary M. Hoffman, the wife of attorney and jurist Murray Hoffman (1791-1878) who served as Assistant Vice-Chancellor for New York State from 1839 to 1843, Superior Court judge from 1853 to 1861 and public administrator from 1865. Hoffman wrote influential scholarly treatises on equity, municipal, and canon law in New York State and was best known for the Hoffman Rule, an 1866 decision that created a formula regarding lot values, still used by real estate appraisers. In 1888, the house was bought by Harriet S. Mott Onderdonk (1820-1904), widow of attorney William H. Onderdonk. Three years later, in 1891, it passed to S. Vernon Mann, husband of Onderdonks' daughter Harriet Cogswell Mann, who had died in 1881.

Mann, a prominent currency broker, collected eighteenth century furniture, so it was probably at this time that the Colonial Revival style alterations to the house were made. These included the addition of a gabled portico supported by giant fluted columns, an Adamesque entrance surround, Palladian windows, denticulated cornices and corner pilasters. In 1921, when Mann sold the house, the *New York Times* reported on the sale, describing the house as "...the fifteen-room house at the northwest corner of Sanford and Jamaica Avenues, Flushing... The house is considered one of the best examples of Southern colonial architecture on Long Island.”²² The *Flushing Evening Journal* reported more extensively on the transaction:

To Build Synagogue on Site of Old Mann House in Flushing – Old Homestead to be Renovated for Temporary Use – Plans Provide for Building of \$100,000 Synagogue

Immediate plans call for remodeling the first floor of the homestead...so that the building can be used temporarily as a place of worship. When the entire first floor is entirely cleared it will be transformed into a large auditorium with seating capacity for at least three hundred people.

Plans for the handsome synagogue which is to be erected on the site by the Free Synagogue at a cost of nearly \$100,000 were exhibited.... The plans provide for a large stone edifice, with a mammoth auditorium, capable of seating nearly a thousand people. The tentative plans call for the erection of this building immediately back of the Mann homestead fronting on Jamaica avenue, and the homestead will be used as a Sunday School building and auxiliary quarters for the congregation. The architect for the new synagogue is a Mr. Abramson, of Manhattan, who will also make the plans for the alterations to the Mann homestead.

...The Mann homestead was erected over a quarter of a century ago for the late S. Vernon Mann.

²⁰ "To Build Synagogue on Site of Old Mann House in Flushing," *Flushing Evening Journal*, April 28, 1921, p. 1.

²¹ Information about the Mann house is based on research conducted by Gale Harris of the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's research department; supporting documents are in their files.

²² "Flushing Home Buyers," *New York Times*, April 19, 1921, p.35.

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Plans for the building were made by McKim, Mead & White, the well known architects, of Manhattan, and the Mann family occupied the house for a number of years.²³

The attribution to McKim, Mead & White cannot be substantiated.²⁴ The "Mr. Abramson" referenced in the article was likely Louis Allen Abramson, designer of many synagogues in Queens and Brooklyn in the same years. While Abramson may have designed the alterations to the Mann homestead, the new building was eventually designed instead by Maurice Courland, another experienced synagogue architect.

A letter from the congregation's president, Harold R. Zeamans, went out to the congregation explaining the need for a new building:

As a member of the congregation you undoubtedly recognized at the last Holy Day service, and since then, the need for larger quarters. At those services there were present 330 people while our present building only seats 120. Even on Friday evenings often there have not been enough seats to accommodate our members. The Sunday School fills every nook and corner of the building to overflowing, not alone as to seats but standing as well. So much so that our Rabbi has announced that no more children may be registered as they cannot be accommodated. If every one of our members would come down on Sunday morning and see the joyful crowd of childish faces singing in Assembly, crowded on the pulpit, in the aisles, on the window sills and in the hallway, everyone would with one voice exclaim:

"Let us build at once!"

The letter announced the formation of a building committee, which

...visited all existing synagogues of modest size in the Metropolitan area, Westchester and Long Island and where a building seemed at all desirable, obtained the cost of it and its furnishings. After the sub-committees reported, the whole committee visited those buildings which seemed most suitable. From these inspections the committee learned of an architect who had designed and supervised the erection of three new synagogues, one just nearing completion, all of which buildings seemed to contain the features necessary for our needs; and further, all such buildings had been erected at very moderate cost considering the size and exterior and interior appearance.

The Committee thereupon requested the architect whose name is Maurice Courland to prepare a sketch and floor plans of a building embodying the ideas gleaned from the examination and study of the many synagogues visited. This work the architect willingly did, entirely without charge or obligation on our part.... The plan and sketch have by now been seen by nearly every one of our

²³ "To Build Synagogue on Site of Old Mann House in Flushing."

²⁴ The house does not appear in the most comprehensive listing of the firm's commissions (including alterations to houses), Leland Roth's *The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1870-1920: A Building List* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978); that book closely examined billing records and other archival materials. Its author, however, notes that the listings can't be considered absolutely conclusive. The house predates the creation of the Queens Building Department (formed in 1898), so its records cannot help determine the architect of the renovations, or the earlier history of the building.

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members but for those who have not seen them we will summarize them by saying the building is approximately square, 70 x 80, with a domed roof and beautiful exterior. The ground floor will house from 400 to 500 children in a Sunday School and when the partitions are rolled up will seat 600 for an entertainment or other performance...

The Auditorium proper is reached by a flight of exterior stairs and is approximately square with a full, vaulted domed roof illuminated from a central stained glass skylight making a most beautiful ensemble. The Altar is in the north westerly portion and faces south east, and has a suitable curved back to send out the sound of both preacher and choir. The main floor seats 668 and the balcony 160, making a total of 828 seats in all...

The committee estimated the cost of the new building as approximately \$165,000 to \$175,000, "including furnishings." It was considered necessary to move the existing building to the west to make room for the new structure:

This plan contemplates building a new foundation for the old building at the extreme westerly portion of the lot; i.e. furthest from Jamaica Avenue [now Kissena Boulevard] and making it heavy enough to hold a brick and steel structure if in the future we wish so to use it... The new building will then be located just about where the present building stands.

The congregation held a special meeting on December 21, 1925, to approve the building project.²⁵

Maurice Courland According to his obituary in the *New York Times*, Maurice Courland (1892-1957) was a native of Palestine who was educated at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and at the City College in New York.²⁶ The obituary continued:

Following his graduation he practiced in Buenos Aires and in the United States... He established his office here in 1919... Mr. Courland was well-known as an architect of synagogues and schools. He designed more than sixty such structures in the eastern United States. He also designed hospitals, apartment houses, commercial and industrial structures.

Among the synagogues Courland designed were "...the East Midwood Jewish Center in Brooklyn²⁷, the Flatbush Jewish Center new Educational Institute in Brooklyn, Temple Beth El in Rockaway Park, Queens, and its new school and center, and was engaged at his death in the design of Public School 28, 155th Street at Broadway; Temple Gates of Hope, 711 West 179th Street, and Temple B'nai Israel, Freeport, L.I." He also

²⁵ "Notice of Special Meeting of Flushing Free Synagogue," Harold R. Zeamans, President; in the congregation's possession.

²⁶ Information about Maurice Courland was compiled from the following sources: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Upper West Side / Central Park West Historic District Designation Report (LP- 1647)* (New York: City of New York, 1990), Architects' Appendix; Maurice Courland obituary, *New York Times* (11/18/57), p. 31; Norval White and Elliot Willensky, *AIA Guide to New York City* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), p. 851; *American Architects Directory*, George S. Koyl, ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1962), p. 138.

²⁷ This synagogue has also been attributed to Louis Allen Abramson. Documentation is not sufficient to make a final determination.

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designed the Magen David synagogue, 2017 67th Street, Brooklyn, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. Courland's expertise in synagogue design led to his being a member of the "...Panel of Architects for the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Unions of Jewish Congregations."²⁸ Later in his life, Courland joined with his son Raphael in the firm of Maurice Courland & Son, which is still active.

The Design of the Flushing Free Synagogue: The history of New York synagogues extends back to the construction in 1729 of the original "Shearith Israel" or Mill Street synagogue (no longer extant). In the intervening three centuries, synagogue architecture has gone through many forms as evidenced by surviving New York synagogues that included a number of distinct types, ranging from "stieblach," (store-front synagogues) and vernacular "tenement synagogues" of long narrow structures suited to the 100x20 foot lots typical of the Lower East Side (e.g. the Stanton Street Shul, NR listed in 2002) to the grand, high-style "cathedral" synagogues (e.g. the Central Synagogue, NR listed in 1970). The first few decades of the twentieth century saw the development of classically-inspired synagogue designs. These reflected national architectural trends, but as they were synagogues, their architects incorporated Judaic motifs into the designs.

According to an article in *The American Jewish Yearbook* for 5687 (1926-1927) discussing the architecture of the synagogue:

Many exotic styles of architecture have been employed in the attempt to achieve a distinctive type, -among them the Moorish, the Assyrian and the Egyptian, but these fortunately have generally been abandoned when they were found to be inelastic and unsuited to dissimilar climatic conditions and to different building materials. In going over the field of recent endeavor, it would seem that the styles selected by architects have narrowed down to only two - a free interpretation of the classic, or some form of the Byzantine.²⁹

The Flushing Free Synagogue was a handsome Neo-Classical Revival style building, a typically 1920s design that was dramatically sited at the top of a broad flight of steps. Its colonnaded stone temple-front, situated at a prominent intersection of a major avenue, created a strong visual presence in downtown Flushing. The temple front also bore a striking resemblance to the temple front of the adjoining late-nineteenth century former Mann residence. The façade's classical details were adorned with specifically Jewish motifs, including a seven-branched *menorah* (a reference to the seven-branched light that burned in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem) in the pediment above each of the side doors and the two Tablets of the Law (inscribed with Hebrew letters that are abbreviations for each of the Ten Commandments) in the lunette above the main entrance. Other Jewish symbols included a *magen david* (shield or "star" of David) in the leaded glass transom above the main entrance and in the frieze above the colonnade, the English inscription, "For mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people - Isaiah LVI-VII," a quotation particularly appropriate for the mission of the Free Synagogue. The Sanford Avenue side of the building continued the Neo-Classic design and was particularly notable for the leaded-glass windows including such Jewish symbols as a Torah scroll held by two lions and another *menorah*.

²⁸ "Maurice Courland, Architect, Dies at 65; Expert on Synagogue and School Design," *New York Times*, 11/18/1957, p.31.

²⁹ William G. Tachau, "The Architecture of the Synagogue," *American Jewish Yearbook - 5687 [1926-27]*, pp. 191-2.

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Inside, the sanctuary was a single large domed space, but without a separate gallery to serve as a women's section, reflecting the egalitarian theological position of the Reform movement. The detailing in the interior continued the classicism of the exterior. The blend of classical ornament and Jewish themes was continued in the ark (the receptacle for the Torah scrolls) that was set between two classical columns supporting a broken pediment. The pediment contained another representation of the Tablets of the Law, while metal grilles in the walls above the ark combined classical swags with the *menorah*. The leaded-glass windows on Jewish themes added light to the space, while the crowning shallow dome that covered most of the space had a leaded-glass skylight with a *magen david* in its center.

Courland completed the Temple Beth-El of Bel-Harbor synagogue shortly before beginning work in Flushing. According to a typescript history of the Free Synagogue in the congregation's possession, the building was completed by "architect Maurice Courland, only one year after his Temple Beth-El of Bel-Harbor. It differs from the latter mainly in the addition of an entrance stairway and the substitution of a central skylighted dome for the double-pitched roof."³⁰ When the synagogue opened, Rabbi Stephen Wise himself was the "principal speaker of the afternoon."³¹ The local press described the building as follows:

The temple...is one of the most handsome places of worship on the north shore. The main auditorium seats more than 700 persons. A hall beneath the auditorium is designed for social functions and decorated accordingly. The exterior of the temple is brick built after Roman style. The roof is a hemispherical dome of stained glass which is illuminated inside and out. Stained glass windows of rich appearance line both sides of the building. A broad 25-foot staircase leads to an imposing marble entrance of medieval design. A spacious pulpit is at the head of the auditorium which is specially constructed to afford desirable acoustic effects. A Moller organ, one of the best known for good quality, has been installed.³²

Conclusion:

Up through the 1950s, Flushing still had a large Jewish presence. Rabbi Charles Agin, who served the congregation from 1958 to 1995, recalls that when he arrived at the synagogue the membership included more than 500 people. Flushing had many Jewish-owned businesses, as well as delicatessens and kosher butchers. In recent decades, however, while the Jewish population of Queens has grown enormously, the Jewish population of Flushing has declined significantly. Today the congregation includes members who live outside the confines of the neighborhood, but in fact, that was the case even in the 1950s.³³

³⁰ "A Brief History of the Free Synagogue of Flushing," edited by Dr. Charles Agin (undated, unpaginated).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "New Synagogue in Flushing Opens Tonight," *Flushing Evening Journal* (undated clipping in possession of the congregation), p. 1 ff.

³³ Jeffrey Gottlieb, interview of resident and former Free Synagogue president Florence Boyer (interviewed June 24, 2009): "She states that...many Main Street, Flushing businesses were Jewish-owned.... These were merchandise, not food stores. Nat Waygard had a small department store, including draperies. Jews owned a leather goods store on Roosevelt Avenue. Peck's Stationery was Jewish-owned. There were a couple of Jewish delis and kosher butcher shops 'here and there.' Demographic changes in the neighborhood did away with these Jewish foot prints. The Free Synagogue of Flushing had a congregation that was 'far flung' The temple attracted a congregation that was Queens-wide, it was not a neighborhood shul."

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Throughout its history, the Free Synagogue has maintained its distinctly liberal point of view:

In the early 1960s, the synagogue hosted Adam Clayton Powell who gave an address from the rabbi's bimah, or pulpit, accompanied by the Abyssinian Baptist Church choir. The church [sic] also advocated for the withdrawal of United States troops from Vietnam in the late '60s. In recent years, the synagogue commemorated Martin Luther King's birthday with representatives from the entire community in attendance.³⁴

In an interview, Rabbi Agin described that activist point of view, citing various congregational efforts at political activism and community service.³⁵

As the population in Flushing evolved, and the Jewish community shrank, the Free Synagogue worked to adapt to a changing environment. A 1990 article in *Newsday*, citing the façade inscription, "for mine house shall be a house of prayer for all people," noted:

According to the synagogue's rabbi, Charles Agin, "all people" should not be limited by race, ethnic background or even in some cases, religion. He credits this "open door policy" with helping to breathe new life into a synagogue threatened a decade ago by flagging membership and dwindling dollars.

The idea of being open to people of other religions harkens back to one of Rabbi Wise's original conceptions for a "Free Synagogue." The article continued:

"Free synagogue has met the challenges of an ethnically changing community and a rising intermarriage rate," [Rabbi Agin] said. The growing ethnic mix in Flushing has led to an increasing number of "mixed" marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish partners. Agin estimates that 10 percent of the members are involved in a marriage with a non-Jewish partner. Like many Reform temples, the Free Synagogue accepts as Jews the children of such unions, regardless of whether the nonjewish parent had converted.... The policy has helped revitalize a membership that had been growing older, said 17-year member and former president Bert Goldblatt. "It has brought a significant number of children into our religious school and some adults," agreed Agin.... While in the mid-60's the synagogue's afternoon religious school had close to 500 elementary school children, enrollment had shrunk to about 50 a decade ago. Today numbers hover at about 100....³⁶

³⁴ "Synagogue Meeting Needs of Its Changing Community," *Newsday*, January 3, 1992.

³⁵ Jeff Gottlieb, President of the Queens Jewish Historical Society, interview with Rabbi Agin (interviewed June 17, 2009): "When Rabbi Agin became temple spiritual leader, the congregation was over 500 people. The Free Synagogue of Flushing was 'always a vital Jewish presence in the Queens Jewish community.' Among its liberal outreach during the Agin years were protests against the Vietnam War; calls for fairness in resolving the Forest Hills low income housing dispute; the establishment of free eye examination of poor children at the center; the first Flushing food pantry; the giving of space for free counseling which was offered by Queens Counseling Services; use by Gamblers Anonymous (only Queens synagogue to offer space) and Alcoholics Anonymous; guest speaker policy led by Ed Koch, John Lindsay, 'First female rabbi' Sally Priesand, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and Sargent Shriver...."

³⁶ "Queens Closeup: Synagogue Opens Its Doors to Community," *Newsday*, January 15, 1990, p.21.

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Today, the Free Synagogue remains a vibrant Reform congregation, drawing congregants from many parts of the borough. Its handsome Neo-Georgian design by Maurice Courland makes it an important architectural resource. The synagogue reflects the history of Jews in Queens in the twentieth century, especially the history of the Reform movement, and Rabbi Stephen Wise's "Free Synagogue" movement and now also the history of Queens Jews at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Free Synagogue remains a vital part of the living history of its neighborhood and of its city, and is intent on being part of the neighborhood's future.

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Free Synagogue of Flushing
Name of Property

Queens County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 598947 4512469
Zone Easting Northing

2 18
Zone Easting Northing

3 18
Zone Easting Northing

4 18
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia L. Bartos, Ph.D., Historic Preservation Program Analyst
organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation date 17 June 2009
street & number PO Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white **photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Free Synagogue Flushing
street & number 41-60 Kissena Boulevard telephone (718) 961-0030
city or town Flushing state NY zip code 11355

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

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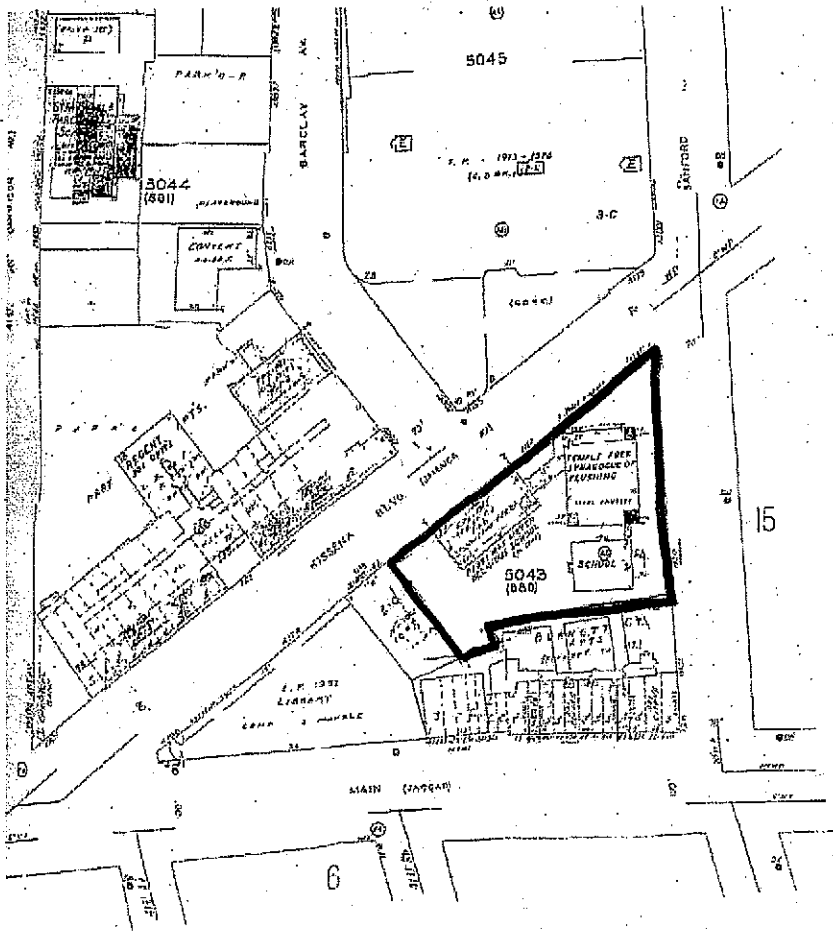
Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

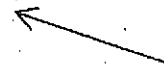
The property has an irregular shaped boundary that encompasses 40,000 square feet on a triangular shaped section of Queens where Sanford Avenue and Kissena Boulevard intersect. The property is identified as Block 5043, Lot 32 in the borough of Queens, New York as illustrated on the attached map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Property boundary is the same as during the period of significance.



NORTH



Free Synagogue of Flushing

136-23 Sanford Avenue

Queens County, New York

Source: The Sanborn Building & Property Atlas of Queens, New York. Volume 11, Plate 7.

First American Real Estate Solutions, 2006. Scale: 60 feet to 1 inch.

NR Boundary: —

Free Synagogue of Flushing
Queens County, New York

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Description (section 7) and Statement of Significance (Section 8) prepared by:

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Free Synagogue of Flushing
Queens County, New York

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PHOTOGRAPH LIST

Free Synagogue of Flushing, 41-60 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing NY (Queens County)

Digital photographs taken by Anthony W. Robins on 12 February 2009. Copy of images on disk on file in the offices of the Field Services Bureau of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Peebles Island State Park, Waterford, New York.

Photo #1: Kissena Boulevard elevation, looking west

Photo #2: Sanford Avenue elevation, looking northwest

Photo #3: Inner parking lot elevation, looking southeast

Photo #4: Interior view, entrance vestibule

Photo #5: Interior view, main sanctuary, looking to the rear

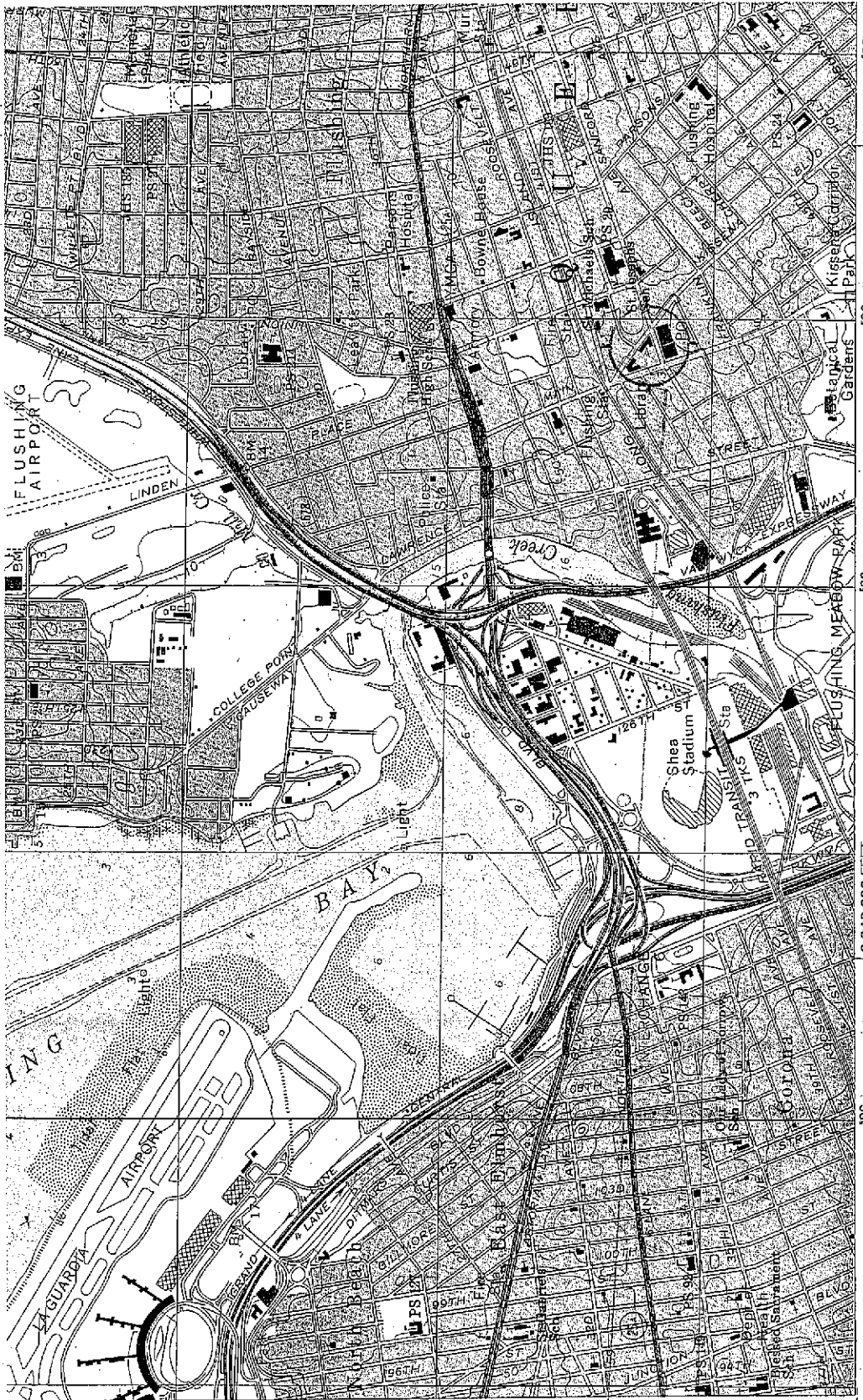
Photo #6: Main sanctuary, front area with ark

Photo #7: Main sanctuary, ceiling skylight detail

Photo #8: Main sanctuary, window

Photo #9: Mann Residence, Sanford Avenue elevation looking north

Photo #10: Non-contributing school building, Kissena Boulevard elevation

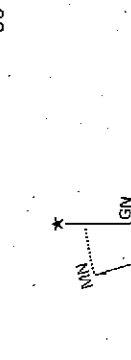
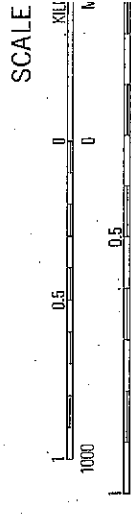


200 000 FEET
4514

see Synagogue of Flushing
Flushing, Queens County NY
Flushing NY Quad
TM reference:
8592441E/451414N

40°45'4
73°52'30"

2 040 000 FEET



13.4°
240 MILLS

0°47'
14 MILLS

UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

CONTOUR IN NATIONAL GEODETIC TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEAN RANGE OF THE

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1966. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1977 and other sources. Photoinsppected using imagery dated 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1967. Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1999

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 223 (1967) and 226 (1967). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks; New York coordinate system, Long Island zone (transverse Mercator)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours





