The Design of a Modern Synagogue: Percival Goodman's Beth-El in Providence, Rhode Island

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The third building constructed by Temple Beth-El, in Providence, Rhode Island, designed by Percival Goodman between 1947 and 1952, is noteworthy in several ways. The structure was one of the first modern synagogues in New England. When erected midway in his career, it helped Goodman launch his specialty as a synagogue designer. Over thirty years, he built more synagogues than any American and perhaps more than any architect.[1] The Beth-El design is also important because of its rich documentation. Numerous letters and oral history reminiscences show that a modern design was not initially sought by temple leaders and that the selection of an architect was perplexing.[2] Nearly forty years after its dedication, however, Beth-El remains a functional, beautiful, and much-admired building.

Rhode Island, of course, is famous for another synagogue design. Newport's Congregation Jeshuat Israel, better known as the Touro Synagogue, completed in 1763, is the oldest Jewish house of worship in North America.[3] It is also a masterpiece of the Georgian style. Planned by the eminent Newport architect Peter Harrison (1716–1775), Touro was based on contemporary English and earlier Palladian sources.[4] Harrison, the son of Quakers and an Episcopalian, may have been personally acquainted with London's Portuguese Synagogue (Bevis Marks), completed in 1701.

The Friendship Street Synagogue

Temple Beth-El, officially known as Congregation Sons of Israel and David, is Rhode Island's second-oldest Jewish congregation. Organized informally in the 1840s under the leadership of Solomon Pareira, Sons of Israel was chartered by the General Assembly in 1855.[5] Sons of David, chartered in 1871, merged with Sons of Israel in

The sanctuary of Temple Beth-El at the time of its dedication

(Courtesy Alexander Georges)

Rabbi William G. Braude

(1907-1988)

1874. The congregation's early members included Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Most were merchants who had gathered for worship in private residences before renting downtown halls for services and classrooms. One of the congregation's early homes was the former St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In 1877, Sons of Israel and David became one of the first congregations in New England to join the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.[6] Jacob Voorsanger, who served Sons of Israel and David between 1877 and 1878, was the congregation's first rabbi. Not until 1890, however, did Sons of Israel and David erect its own building. Located at Friendship and Foster Streets, it was known as the Friendship Street Synagogue. Designed by the local architect Wilmarth Colwell and costing approximately $14,000, it was built of brick, stone, and slate in a vaguely Romanesque style. It resembled many parish churches of its day, and in 1909 it was sold to the Swedish Baptist Church. The Friendship Street Synagogue seated 410 congregants on the main floor and 85 in the balcony, and included an organ and choir loft. When the new building was dedicated, there was a full day and evening of celebrations, attended by numerous dignitaries, including former governors, Supreme Court judges, city fathers, and Christian clergy. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the great shaper of the Reform movement in America, gave the major address. Only seventy years later, the building was demolished to make way for an interstate highway.

The Broad Street Temple

Less than fifteen years after its dedication, however, the Friendship Street Synagogue was inadequate for its congregational needs. Membership had grown to more than 250 families, and 130 children squeezed into the few Sunday School classrooms. The neighborhood in downtown Providence had also deteriorated. Rabbi Henry Englander, after being accosted by a prostitute, threatened to leave unless a new synagogue were built in a better neighborhood. In 1910, accepting a professorship at Hebrew Union College, he made good on his threat.

In 1911, Rabbi Englander returned to Providence to participate in the gala ceremonies marking the dedication of the congregation's sec-

ond home. He remained a close adviser to Sons of Israel and David, and was consulted many times regarding the selection of his successors. Englander was present in 1932 at the installation of his student William G. Braude (1907–1988), who served the congregation until his retirement in 1974, the longest tenure of any rabbi in Providence and one of the longest in New England.[7]

With the dedication of the brick, terra cotta, and concrete structure at the corner of Broad and Glenham Streets in the Elmwood neighborhood of Providence, Sons of Israel and David became known as Temple Beth-El. The new temple, designed by local architects Banning & Thornton, was built in a Classical Revival style, perhaps based on William Walker & Son's interpretation of Mount Zion Temple in St. Paul, Minnesota.[8] With its imposing portico of Corinthian columns and capitals supporting a pediment with cornices and moldings, the synagogue resembled a Roman temple or, at the very least, other symbols of civic authority, such as banks, libraries, and courthouses. Among Providence's churches, it was an architectural cousin to Hoppin & Field's First Church of Christ Scientist, erected on College Hill in 1913. Far larger than the Friendship Street Synagogue, Beth-El also had seating on its main floor and balcony. A choir loft and an organ flanked the white onyx ark, which was decorated in a Neoclassical style, imitating the Georgian vocabulary of Touro. Downstairs were a social hall, offices, and seven classrooms, as well as a library, which, until the establishment of Judaic studies at Brown University, was the best of its kind in Rhode Island. The new Beth-El cost $75,000.

Located on the south side of Providence, the temple occupied a religiously mixed neighborhood. Most of its members lived nearby, many within walking distance. Farther south was Willard Avenue, easily identifiable by its numerous Orthodox congregations, Jewish shops, and three-decker tenements. For new Americans and their children, Beth-El was a potent symbol of the established Jewish community.

Visions of a New Building

Providence was and remains a city of ethnic neighborhoods: Italian, Portuguese, French Canadian, Black, Jewish, and Yankee. The East

Side of Providence, only a few miles from City Hall and the central business district, was and is a prosperous neighborhood of single-family homes, including many mansions facing Blackstone Boulevard. Before the founding of Temple Emanu-El in 1924, a tiny number of Jews lived on the East Side. With the construction of the Conservative congregation's large, domed structure in 1927, on land previously owned by Brown University, the migration of Jews quickened.[9]

By the 1940s, it became necessary for Beth-El's leaders to think about a new and larger temple. The Elmwood neighborhood had begun to deteriorate, a pattern which accelerated. Approximately half of the congregation's members had already moved to the East Side, and many others dreamed of the possibility. Many Beth-El parents, not eager to send their children to religious or Hebrew school on Broad Street, enrolled them in satellite programs established at local public schools. Rabbi Braude, who had earned his doctorate at Brown and taught occasional courses there, moved near the campus when he was married in 1938 to a Pembroke College student.

During the Depression and the war years, though the need to build a third home for Sons of Israel and David was evident, the congregation lacked the financial resources. Though membership was stable and included a number of successful businessmen, particularly in retailing and jewelry manufacturing, the congregation was not wealthy. The tiny staff was modestly paid, and annual budgets were only miraculously balanced.

A new home for Sons of Israel and David moved beyond the realm of wishful thinking in January of 1942, with the death of John Jacob Rosenfeld. A journalist, lawyer, and Republican Party leader, Rosenfeld was the last surviving grandchild of Cantor Abraham Jacobs, who had led Sons of Israel in the 1860s. A widower and childless, he left his estate of approximately $200,000 to Beth-El in memory of his mother, Anna, and wife, Mary Elizabeth. The gift, intended for the construction of a religious school and known as the Rosenfeld Memorial, had been cultivated over many years by Rabbi Braude.

The Site

When the mortgage on the Broad Street Temple was paid off at the end of 1943, a search for a new property commenced. Though downtown Providence was the location of the First Baptist Meeting House (1775), Beneficent Congregational Church (1809), St. John's Episcopal Church (1810), and Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (1889), congregational leaders focused their efforts on the East Side. The suburbs south of Providence seemed remote and uninviting, and the Jewish community was still clustered within the city. The East Side offered quiet, tree-lined streets, good public schools, an easy commute to downtown, and an aura of upward mobility.[10]

In April of 1944, the Beth-El board approved the purchase of two adjacent sites, costing $46,000, at the northwest corner of Butler and Orchard Avenues, near the southern terminus of Blackstone Boulevard. A cottage built in 1839 for the Moses Brown farm was still in use.[11] The parcels comprised 90,000 square feet, abundant space to erect a new complex. A number of churches were located in the neighborhood. Immediately to the west of the site was St. Martin's Episcopal Church, an English Gothic Revival–style edifice, erected in 1916, but considerably older in appearance. In May of 1944, the vestry of St. Martin's wrote to the temple board, unanimously extending its welcome. There have been cordial relations between the two congregations ever since.

Questions of Style

Although he was a master of the written and spoken word, Rabbi Braude was never a student of the visual arts and architecture. He was aware, however, that the appearance of the new Beth-El would be symbolically important. Though he favored a handsome building set unobtrusively in its neighborhood, he otherwise seemed open to considerable possibilities. Most likely, Rabbi Braude was not aware of the emerging world of avant-garde architecture—there was not yet a single important modern building in Providence and only a few in Boston[12]—but he did appreciate the need to think seriously and systematically about alternatives. It is not clear that the temple's lay

leaders were as prepared to think in such theoretical or imaginative terms. Either curious himself or feeling personally responsible for the Rosenfeld Memorial, Rabbi Braude, a de facto member of the building plans committee, seized the initiative.

By April of 1944, he started to read about the strange world of modern architecture. He found a short bibliography, prepared by an art professor, George Downing, in the Brown library.[13] One of the references on the one-page sheet was the Museum of Modern Art's *What Is Modern Architecture?*, published in 1942. Other books on the bibliography were by Walter Gropius, the founder of Germany's celebrated but banished Bauhaus and the chair of architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design; Eliel Saarinen, the Finnish-born modernist who directed Michigan's Cranbrook Academy of Art; and Frank Lloyd Wright, Gropius's rival as the leading modernist in America and the director of his own Taliesin Fellowship in Wisconsin and Arizona. Wright had in fact spoken on the Brown campus in the fall of 1932.[14]

Rabbi Braude did not make notes on the bibliography, so it is not known whether he was even aware that Wright, at seventy-seven years of age, was not only active professionally but would have been a very logical and perceptive candidate for a synagogue commission. In 1953, Wright was approached by Congregation Beth Sholom in suburban Philadelphia, and the synagogue he designed is considered one of the outstanding religious buildings of the postwar era.[15] Indeed, Beth Sholom and Touro in Newport are the only two American synagogues represented through models in an exhibition of thirteen synagogues at Tel Aviv's Beth Hatefutsoth, the Museum of the Diaspora.[16]

In April of 1944, Rabbi Braude also began to seek advice from friends and colleagues who had recently constructed new buildings. Rabbi Abraham Feldman of Hartford recommended Charles Greco of Boston, who had designed Beth Israel in 1936 in a popular style based on Byzantine sources.[17] Greco had also designed "The Temple," Congregation Tifereth Israel in Cleveland, and the community building of Mishkan Tefila in Boston.[18] He responded to an inquiry from Rabbi Braude, pointing out his firm's experience with five other synagogue projects.[19] Braude's antennae even spread to the West Coast. Rabbi

Edgar Magnin invited him to visit the monumental and eclectic (Byzantine-Moorish-Gothic) Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles, completed in 1929, the heyday of Art Deco. Commenting on the temple's most unusual feature, figurative murals throughout the sanctuary, Rabbi Magnin explained that the services of a great artist would also be required. "Otherwise," he wrote, "it would be better to have none."[20]

In December of 1944, Rabbi Braude sought advice from the distinguished art and architectural historian, Professor Richard Krautheimer of Vassar College. One of the leading emigré scholars, Krautheimer (b. 1897) was a medievalist who later joined New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, one of the stellar art history faculties in this country. Writing that there was essentially no such thing as Jewish architecture, Krautheimer explained that synagogue designs always reflected the prevailing styles of a time and place.[21] Beyond the liturgical and ritual needs of an individual congregation, Krautheimer recommended a design that was "modern, simple and dignified."[22] Implicitly criticizing the work of Gropius, the Bauhaus, and the International style, Krautheimer remarked that "modern architecture need not give a religious building the looks of a factory." A modern synagogue, the historian theorized, "can be just as dignified and inspiring as the Altneuschul at Prague was in its time."

The Search for an Architect

Krautheimer seemed reluctant to recommend specific architects. He did mention Erich [Eric] Mendelsohn (1887–1953), a German modernist who had achieved critical and commercial success in Berlin in the 1920s and early 1930s, and afterwards built extensively in Palestine and England.[23] Mendelsohn, probably the leading avant-garde Jewish architect in the world, had emigrated to New York City in 1941. The year before he had already enjoyed an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Lacking other commissions, Mendelsohn was about to launch his American career as a specialist in synagogue design.

By July of 1945, Rabbi Braude was still pursuing possibilities. Less concerned with obtaining the names of suitable candidates, he was

sorting out the issues presented by the building itself. He wrote to Dr. Franz Landsberger (1883–1964), former director of Berlin's Jewish Museum and curator of Jewish art at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Rabbi Braude was considering two separate structures, a temple and a "school house," as well as several styles, such as Byzantine, New England Colonial, and "functional," which was his rubric for modern. Braude was also undecided as to the advantages of hiring a prominent architect from out-of-town or a local architect who would be readily available for consultation and supervision.

Dr. Landsberger, a consultant in synagogue architecture to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, eagerly offered his advice.[24] Though aware of Greco's work in Hartford and Cleveland, he clearly favored a modernist. Landsberger mentioned Mendelsohn, but he was unsure if his *landsmann* would be interested or available. Landsberger offered to contact Mendelsohn on Beth-El's behalf.

Not yet satisfied with the ideas presented to him, Rabbi Braude broadened his search, never mentioning in his correspondence the existence of a trustees' building committee. In December of 1945, he sought the advice of Professor Salo Baron of Columbia, who, in turn, recommended his distinguished colleague, Professor Meyer Schapiro (b. 1904) of the art history and archaeology department.[25]

A medievalist who was equally devoted to modernism, Schapiro acknowledged the difficulty of Braude's dilemma: finding an architect, preferably an American, who could seek some balance between tradition and innovation.[26] Schapiro recommended Percival Goodman, a New York architect whom he had known for fifteen years. Goodman later became his colleague as a professor in Columbia's School of Architecture. He seemed particularly well qualified because of the work he was undertaking for the Jewish Theological Seminary, transforming Mrs. Felix Schiff Warburg's Fifth Avenue mansion into a Jewish Museum.[27]

In December of 1945, Braude sought the advice of another emigré scholar, Rachel Wischnitzer (1885–1989), formerly the curator of Berlin's Jewish Museum, who later authored a comprehensive and perceptive study of American synagogue design.[28]

Dr. Wischnitzer explained that there were "very few architects familiar with Jewish history and art."[29] She suggested that a signifi-

cant design would be produced through the collaboration of a rabbi, an art historian, and an architect.[30] Dr. Wischnitzer recommended Fritz Nathan (1891–1960), the architect of various Jewish communal buildings in Germany, who was also living in New York.[31] She portrayed him as a moderate, who could interpret "older synagogue art with discrimination and taste."

Erich Mendelsohn

In the late fall of 1945 and early winter of 1946, Rabbi Braude began corresponding with Erich Mendelsohn, who had left New York City and was residing temporarily at Finney Farm, an artists' colony in Croton-on-Hudson, not far from Vassar College.[32] By this time, Mendelsohn was planning to relocate to San Francisco and establish a practice with John Dinwiddie. Writing in longhand on scraps of paper, Mendelsohn apologized several times to Braude for not being able to visit Providence. Evidently, Braude was more than politely interested in Mendelsohn's availability. Braude thought that Mendelsohn possessed a special insight into synagogue design. When Mendelsohn cleverly described himself as "a Jewish artist and practicing architect,"[33] Braude's curiosity was heightened.

By January of 1946, Mendelsohn was involved in the design of the first two of four American synagogues, all located in the Midwest.[34] The first commission, B'nai Amoona in St. Louis, resulted from a recommendation by a member of the congregation who had been a Mendelsohn client in Germany. The second commission, based on the strength of B'nai Amoona, was Cleveland's Park Synagogue, probably the fullest expression of his vision. The third synagogue commission was Emanu-El in Grand Rapids, and the fourth, completed after his death, was St. Paul's Mount Zion Temple.[35] While consulting with leaders in Cleveland, Mendelsohn offered to visit Providence to make a presentation.[36]

At the end of January of 1946, before Mendelsohn visited Beth-El, Rabbi Braude received a stirring letter of support from Gordon Washburn, the director of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design. (This position had been briefly held by a Jewish emigré scholar, Alexander Dorner, against the wishes of some of the museum's

key supporters.)[37] Washburn wrote, "Since learning of this possibility I have been unable to think of anything else inasmuch as it would be a contribution of major importance to the architectural history of New England and indeed of the whole Atlantic Coast."[38] The museum director prophesied that the new synagogue "will become known to everyone in the Western world who is interested in architecture." So overflowing with praise, the letter raises the question whether Mendelsohn or Braude had encouraged Washburn to impress the temple's trustees.

Albert Simonson, an architect and dean of the Rhode Island School of Design, also sent off a letter to Rabbi Braude in praise of the possible selection of Mendelsohn. Simonson said that he had seen examples of Mendelsohn's work in Germany and considered him "one of the greatest contemporary architects."[39]

Mendelsohn met with Beth-El's building committee in March of 1946. Unfortunately, there are no minutes of the meeting. Judging from Mendelsohn's letter to the committee's chairman, attorney Arthur Levy, the meeting was far from perfunctory. Most likely, the committee had still been considering a neo-Colonial style, which would have complemented the Grand Revival–style homes on Orchard Avenue. If not outraged by this line of thinking, Mendelsohn was hardly sympathetic. In his letter to Levy, Mendelsohn delivered a short but sharp dissertation on the inevitability of modernism.[40] It was a strong letter, somewhat sarcastic in tone, offering no basis for compromise.

No doubt, Mendelsohn had fought what he referred to as "the battle of the styles" all too many times, but much earlier in his career. If a client was attracted to Mendelsohn's work, it was on the basis of Mendelsohn's zealous embrace of the present and his decisive rejection of tradition. Mendelsohn probably thought that Providence was a city mired in its architectural history and that Beth-El's building committee, which did not include an architect or modern art collector, was a timid, if not provincial, group.

There is perhaps another reason why Mendelsohn's presentation must have been jolting and upsetting. Though not a practicing Jew, the architect had some strong ideas about Judaism. Like architecture, he saw it in ideal terms: as a fresh, vital, and powerful force that was

constantly evolving. Offering a critique of neo-Colonialism but also tossing a grenade at St. Martin's, Mendelsohn stated in his letter: "A Temple for you in harmony with the residential surroundings would mean not to erect a medieval fortress from which to enforce our faith, but rather to think of an open and flexible plan, an organic integration of all its different uses where Jehovah could truly reside *in our midst.*"[41] The word "organic" was of fundamental importance. Not only did it evoke the philosophy of Wright, one of Mendelsohn's heroes,[42] but it is a key to the ultimate success of the Beth-El design.

In his letter to Arthur Levy, Mendelsohn enclosed two recommendations. The first, in which he is described as "one of the outstanding figures in architecture today," was from the Detroit architect Albert Kahn (1869–1942), a world pioneer of industrial design.[43] The second recommendation, in which his gifts as "an artist and builder" are praised, was written by Tamar de Sola Pool, the national president of Hadassah, based on Mendelsohn's sweeping design of the medical center on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. Given the inescapable fact that his presentation had not been well received, Mendelsohn did not seem optimistic about the Beth-El commission. Closing his letter with an offer to help the building committee find "a contemporary decision," he seemed to acknowledge probable defeat.

One day after Mendelsohn's visit, Rabbi Braude wrote to Rabbi Alan Green of Congregation Emanu-El in Houston, asking why his temple's negotiations with Mendelsohn had broken down.[44] Personally disappointed that the negotiations had been unsuccessful, Rabbi Green sensed that the architect was a significant artist who was entitled to his egotism.[45] He explained that his building committee had been inflexible and inclined to hire a local architect.[46] Rabbi Green mentioned a friend living in New York who had heard about Mendelsohn's plans for Houston and reported that the ideas were "breathtaking" and "strikingly original."

At the end of March of 1946, Arthur Levy's building committee wrote a report to Beth-El's board of trustees.[47] Four architects had been interviewed: Robert Cohn, the designer of Temple Emanu-El in New York; Charles Greco, who designed the temples in Cleveland, Hartford, and later Worcester; and Benjamin Moscowitz, a consulting architect for Macy's then at work on the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital.

The fourth, Mendelsohn, was described by Levy as "one of the most noted architects in the world," whose work in St. Louis, Cleveland, and a possible temple in Washington, D.C., was mentioned. The selection of Mendelsohn, however, would commit Beth-El to "contemporary architecture," a decision that the committee felt reluctant to make. Levy's committee asked the board to decide whether the design should be contemporary, Byzantine, Moorish, or New England Colonial.

As a further indication of the building committee's indecisiveness, Levy explained that since one-fifth of an architect's preliminary fee had to be paid if his services were terminated, the cancellation of a contract might cost $5,000. On the assumption that the architect's fee would have been 6 percent to 10 percent of the building's cost, this makes it evident that the committee was envisioning a building that might cost $500,000 or more.

Rabbi Braude, in a memo to Levy, decided that the committee should retain only an architect with synagogue-building experience, which would rule out any local professionals.[48] Further, the authorities whom he had consulted—Krautheimer, Wischnitzer, and Landsberger—not only favored a contemporary style of architecture, but strongly recommended Mendelsohn; Goodman seemed a logical second choice to him because of Schapiro's recommendation.

The Search Continues

The minutes of the April meeting of the temple board do not reveal the depth of discussion, although a preference for a contemporary style was expressed. Without endorsing either Mendelsohn or Goodman, Levy's committee was advised to consider other possibilities.

Consequently, Levy invited Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950) of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and William Worster (1895–1972), dean of the School of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as consultants. Both declined. Saarinen's partner, J. Robert F. Swanson, replied that his firm was too busy to consider additional work and, further, a commission as far away as Providence might be burdensome.[49] Worster, explaining that he maintained a practice in San Francisco, was unwilling to take on a new project at such a distance.[50] He

did, however, recommend two other possibilities: Lawrence Anderson & Herbert Beckwith, professors at M.I.T., and The Architects Collaborative, the Cambridge firm led by Gropius of Harvard.[51]

To generate additional names, Levy turned to Albert Simonson, the dean of the Rhode Island School of Design, who had so favorably endorsed the selection of Mendelsohn. Not expressing disappointment over the committee's lack of enthusiasm for Mendelsohn, Simonson provided seven more possibilities.[52] Goodman was among the first group of four. Two other choices seem particularly interesting. The first was Richard Neutra (1892–1970), a Viennese-born architect who had come to America to study with Wright and then settled in Los Angeles. By 1929, he was considered one of the leading modernists in the world. Neutra, who was descended from a Jewish family, had submitted a plan for a synagogue in Vienna-Hietzing[53] and another for a synagogue while living in Chicago.[54] Though he built a number of churches later in his career, he never received a commission for a synagogue. A second possibility mentioned by Simonson was William Lescaze (1896–1969), a Philadelphia modernist, famous for the Savings Fund Office Tower, completed in 1932. Levy was indeed familiar with this architect, for he had apparently considered him for the design of his own home but had an "unpleasant experience."[55] Simonson's fourth suggestion was Walter Bogner, a Harvard professor The last three names were Providence architects—Philip Creer, Peter Geddes, and Albert Harkness—part of the local professional establishment. Harkness designed the East Side's Friends Meeting House, built in 1953.[56]

The UAHC Symposium

Another turn of events helped determine the outcome of the future temple. In late 1946 and early 1947, Beth-El became the beneficiary of a second bequest, even greater than John Rosenfeld's, which gave the building project enormous momentum. Alphone J. Lederer, a Providence native who ran a successful jewelry-manufacturing business based in New York City, was the grandson and great-nephew of Sons of Israel founders. In July of 1946, Lederer, who had never married and lived with his mother near Orchard Avenue, committed suicide.

When Lederer's mother, Julia, died six months later, his estate passed to the temple. Its ultimate value was more than $500,000. Lederer, like Rosenfeld, though not active in the congregation, had been befriended by Rabbi Braude.

Thus, in the spring of 1947, it appeared that without yet embarking on a capital fundraising campaign, Beth-El had among its assets more than $750,000. This amount was based on both the Rosenfeld and Lederer bequests and an estimated $50,000 from the sale of the Broad Street Temple.

Though perhaps exceptional in financial well-being, Beth-El was not unique in its need for architectural guidance. Responding to inquiries from dozens of congregations, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations sponsored a two-day symposium in New York City in June of 1947. "An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow" was a forum at which numerous architects, artists, and UAHC officials shared their ideas and optimism for the new buildings of the coming decades. None could have predicted that hundreds of synagogues and other Jewish communal buildings would indeed be constructed during the next twenty years.

Beth-El was represented in New York by A. Henry Klein, a member of the building committee and temple vice-president, as well as by Pearl Braude, the rabbi's young wife. A 1940 Phi Beta Kappa graduate, she was a devotee of the arts, particularly dance, music, and design.[57] Perhaps more than the members of the committee, she grasped that Beth-El stood on the threshold of a wonderful opportunity: to build in functional terms but also provide sensory stimulation and pleasure. At the symposium, she was particularly impressed by the presentation made by Percival Goodman and joined him and the distinguished sculptor Jacques Lipchitz (1801–1973) for lunch. Goodman and Lipchitz conversed in French, though Lipchitz, who had lived in New York during the war years, also spoke English. Most likely, Mrs. Braude thought, all three could have communicated, at least haltingly, in Yiddish.

Pearl Braude had known another member of Goodman's family. When the Braudes were married in the summer of 1938, they honeymooned near Rabbi Braude's brother, at a resort east of Chicago. The

freelance writer Paul Goodman, Percival's younger brother, would visit frequently, particularly at mealtimes.

Beth-El Makes Its Choice

In late May of 1947, Levy had already written to Goodman, inquiring as to his interest in the Beth-El commission.[58] The chairman of the building committee described the temple as "an old reformed Congregation" contemplating "a substantial enterprise," which would include a sanctuary, a school building, and a "community house." Levy further explained that his committee was inclined to follow a contemporary design "but nevertheless, with appropriate New England conservatism."

Goodman finally met with the building committee on July 21, 1947.[59] Most likely, he presented photographs of his work and spoke more generally about his philosophy of building. Up until this time, however, Goodman had not yet completed a synagogue, though he had three commissions in various stages. As a result of his moving presentation at the New York symposium, he had been approached by three congregations: Baltimore Hebrew, B'nai Israel in Millburn, New Jersey, and Beth Israel in Lima, Ohio.[60] Struggling in a general commercial practice, Goodman suddenly found new opportunities presented to him.

No doubt Goodman made a positive impression in Providence. Immediately after his visit, Levy began to check his references. Stephen Kayser, curator of New York's new Jewish Museum, supplied a glowing letter.[61] Under difficult circumstances, he explained, Goodman had skillfully remodeled the Warburg mansion. Kayser was impressed with Goodman's thoughts about synagogue design and also with his character and sense of responsibility. Having studied Mendelsohn's design for Park Synagogue, the curator thought that Goodman could do as well or better. Kayser, a German emigré, also believed that an American architect should be given an opportunity to express his own "interesting" and "fertile" ideas. "I am convinced," he wrote, "Goodman will do a splendid job." The next day Kayser sent Levy a list of thirteen references for Goodman, including former clients, such as Dr. Louis Finkelstein of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Goodman was now emerging as the front-runner in Beth-El's search. None of Dean Simonson's several candidates received further consideration, and Mendelsohn was not asked to give more detailed ideas nor provide drawings. Chairman Levy wrote to his committee in August of 1947 with one more suggestion, however. While on vacation near Burlington, Vermont, he had noticed a striking new church, built of brick and wood, and with little exterior decoration other than a simple cross placed over the main entrance.[62] He sent postcards of this unidentified church to his committee members, noting that its simplicity followed many of Goodman's ideas. Levy was probably not aware that St. Mark's Catholic Church, designed by Freeman, French, Freeman, had attracted national attention and was the subject of a five-page photo essay in the July 1944 issue of *Architectural Forum*.[63] In 1952, the Burlington architects built a new home for Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, a pioneering Vermont congregation.

In October of 1947, after three years of exploration, Beth-El's building committee unanimously recommended the employment of Percival Goodman to the full temple board.[64] Chairman Levy wrote that "contemporary is the style taught in substantially all schools of architecture in the United States today" and that at the symposium in New York sponsored by the Union, no other style had been considered or discussed. "Whether we are right or not," he concluded, "all the world seems to agree with us."

Levy then outlined Goodman's qualifications, identifying his age, forty-three, his teaching position at Columbia, and his recent experience, including the design of the Jewish Community Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Clearly another factor weighed heavily in Goodman's favor. Levy explained that the Beth-El commission is "the job which Mr. Goodman wants to do more than any other in his career and we believe he will give us not only all the services of a skilled and competent architect but all the enthusiasm which we could hope to get from any one."

Levy then reported on Goodman's fee, 6 percent of the total cost of the building, then calculated at $1 million, a schedule of payments, and a timeline for the preparation of working drawings and specifications. Levy estimated that construction could begin in about a year. Concluding his report, he commented that the success of the design

would depend both on the architect's skill and the amount of thought contributed by his client.

At its November meeting, the temple board approved the committee's recommendation. Goodman gladly accepted the offer, replying in his letter, "I honestly think that we are going to make some history on this building."

Percival Goodman

Though Goodman seemed not only a logical but a highly attractive choice as Beth-El's architect, the board did not know how the architect himself had been led to the commission. Until the Jewish Museum experience, Goodman had been a largely disappointed and frustrated designer who had few ties with the organized Jewish community and little personal interest in spirituality. Even more than the temple leaders who had retained him, he was searching for a new and deeper form of expression.

Born in New York City in 1904, Goodman had a difficult and troubled childhood.[66] His father, Barnet Shatz, was an auctioneer of estate goods, such as antique furniture and furs. His mother, Augusta Goodman, was descended from a Dutch Jewish family that had settled in New York in about 1808. When Percival was seven years old, his parents divorced. Barnet ran off with an actress to South America and was never heard from again. Percival, his older sister, Alice, and his younger brothers, Paul and Arnold, lived precariously, moving to a different apartment at least once a year.

At thirteen years of age, refusing to take money from his mother, Percival left home. Though an avid reader, he had already dropped out of school. Goodman began working (for $6 a week) as an office boy in the architectural office of his uncle, Benjamin Levitan. At first a floor sweeper and then a copier of blueprints, he soon learned the fundamentals of drafting.

A precocious and ambitious architectural student, he was hired as a draftsman by Grunenberg & Reichstag, a firm which built tenements in the Bronx. By deleting such details as fire escapes, Goodman made mundane structures look pretty on paper. He continued his studies at New York's Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, which was

modeled after the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where many of his instructors had studied. Thus, Goodman, trained in the Beaux Arts style, was unaware of the emerging avant-garde either in America or Europe. Goodman embraced academic art and architecture when another employer, John Peterkin, encouraged him to study at the Fontainebleau Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he spent three summers, beginning in 1920. At eighteen years of age, Goodman was married to an American, and he soon became a father. Goodman was widowed at age twenty, and his infant son, George, was reared by his wife's family.

Goodman planned to live in France as long as possible. In New York, he twice competed for the Paris Prize, a scholarship awarded by the Beaux-Arts Institute. In 1924, he was eliminated in the early rounds of the competition. The next year, determined to win, he advanced to the final round of required drawings over a three-month period. He defeated three finalists, including Louis Kahn (1901–1974), who at the height of his career and following his death has been hailed as one of the modern period's greatest architects. One of Goodman's four presentation drawings, a virtuoso display of draftsmanship on the subject of "A Summer Capitol for the United States," was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and shown in 1988 in an exhibition of recent acquisitions.

A Francophile, Goodman remained in Paris three years. Though he did not consider himself an expatriate, he hoped to remain indefinitely. He met many famous writers and artists, such as Cocteau, Hemingway, and Man Ray, but thought little of it. More importantly, while abroad he was exposed to the International style of architecture. Though largely oblivious to Gropius's Bauhaus and its impact, Goodman was deeply impressed by the work of Le Corbusier (1887–1965), particularly his drawings entered in the competition for a Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva. Goodman saw much of the simplicity of modernism as a reflection and an outgrowth of classical tradition.

He returned to New York in 1928 and established a partnership with Jay Whitman, an American friend from Paris. Specializing in interior design for retail businesses, their firm was an immediate commercial success, employing a staff of thirty in its offices on West

57th Street. By 1932, when Goodman saw the exhibition on the International style organized by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson for the Museum of Modern Art, Goodman knew that he had become a modernist. He claimed, however, that he was never purely interested in style, but in style as a means of expressing a larger idea.

Goodman survived the early years of the Depression largely due to his clients' optimism. If success was measured by impressive drawings, he was emerging as a leading modernist. Although Goodman won national recognition in key competitions of the late 1930s—an art center for Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, and a National Gallery for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.[67]—-he still felt grateful for an occasional laundry or garage. Gradually, he became bitter, losing interest in commercial work because of its ceaseless demands to build as cheaply and quickly as possible. During World War II, when hired to design camouflage for factories and trains, he felt, rightly so, that his abilities—and government funds—were being wasted. Goodman, moreover, espoused pacifism.

Teaching architecture was a creative outlet. Goodman began at New York University, then moved to Columbia, where he taught three afternoons a week from 1945 until 1973.

Another creative avenue was writing. Largely through coincidence, Goodman and his brother, Paul, a leader of the New Left and counterculture of the 1950s and 1960s, discovered that they shared similar ideas about cities and their chaos. Percival had developed some of his ideas about planning for the Otis Elevator pavilion, an unbuilt project for the New York World's Fair of 1939.[68] Paul had graduated with highest honors from City College of New York and pursued doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. He was a philosopher and lecturer as well as a lay psychotherapist. When Paul proposed a book on cities of the future, Percival eagerly accepted. With a text by Paul and illustrations by Percival, *Communitas* was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1947. A bold manifesto on public and private ownership of property and means of production, the book became a classic of utopian thinking. Though widely read and taught, its ideas have been consistently ignored by builders.[69]

Paul had been a Bar Mitzvah, but Percival had received no religious education. He had worked in Jewish firms and had mostly Jewish clients, but was in few other ways associated with Jews. The persistent anti-Semitism he encountered in France was his closest identification with Judaism.

Percival Goodman's desire to grow Jewishly occurred as a result of the Holocaust and Israeli statehood. When he was hired by the Jewish Theological Seminary to build the Jewish Museum, he reached a personal turning point. Goodman felt embarrassed by his ignorance but challenged to express architectural ideas conducive to Judaism. Ironically, when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was organizing its symposium on synagogue design in 1947, Goodman was invited to attend as a Jewish architect. He accepted the invitation with the provision that he could lecture.[70] Convinced that Judaism celebrated the written word at the expense of visual imagery, his lecture on "The Holiness of Beauty" was pivotal: it transformed his career and, through his work, the postwar American synagogue became enriched and ennobled.

Goodman's Plan

In November of 1947, as soon as he had been selected as Beth-El's architect, Goodman sent a detailed questionnaire to the temple's building committee.[71] Divided into three parts—"The House of Worship," "The House of Assembly," and "The House of Study"—it suggested that the structure should be divided accordingly. There were more than forty questions whose answers would help the architect shape and color his ideas.

Only Rabbi Braude's questionnaire survives, with his preferences showing the nucleus of the building that was eventually constructed. For example, Rabbi Braude requested seating in the sanctuary for 500 congregants, High Holy Day seating for 1,500. He visualized an ark for six to eight Torah scrolls; the *bimah* would accommodate eight chairs. There would be two lecterns: one for preaching, the other for reading. Space would be required for an organ as well as a grand piano and stringed instruments. Rabbi Braude preferred a social hall equipped with a stage, but no permanent seating. He requested meet-

ing rooms for various groups, such as Boy and Girl Scouts, but he did not care for bowling alleys, as Goodman had suggested. The area most difficult for Rabbi Braude to envision was, surprisingly, the religious school. He could not predict the number of classrooms needed nor their configuration. Braude noted that the need for nursery and kindergarten classrooms would require further discussion.

There were two important areas missing from Goodman's exploratory questionnaire. The first was a library. The second was a chapel.

In November of 1949, Goodman presented his concept of the temple's design to the congregation's board of trustees. A cardboard model had been fabricated to demonstrate his ideas.[72] The design represented a simple and harmonious structure, imaginative but not radical. Goodman's plan emphasized the integration of the structure's three major functions: prayer, study, and sociability. Approximately 300 feet in length and 100 feet at its greatest width, the synagogue's spaces flowed easily and unobtrusively. Occupying a parklike setting, with lawn, trees, shrubs, and flowers, the temple was intended to have a distinct identity yet relate to its residential surroundings. If not readily identifiable as a synagogue, it was surely not a church of any denomination.

The third home built by Congregation Sons of Israel and David was inviting, unpretentious, and self-confident. Goodman's vision of a modern synagogue was fresh, strong, and dynamic.

After the concept was approved by the board, it was presented to the full congregation at its annual meeting the following month. Described by Chairman Levy of the building committee as "the finest Temple in the United States," it received broad and vigorous support.[73]

Financing the New Building

Despite this enthusiasm, however, financing remained an obstacle. In June of 1949, the architect had estimated that construction costs would run $830,000 (or $1.10 per cubic foot), but this figure included neither his fee of 6 percent nor the costs of engineering, furnishing, landscaping, or art. These additional expenditures would run $250,000.[74]

It became apparent to temple leaders that though the Rosenfeld and Lederer bequests would serve as financial cornerstones of the building program, a capital campaign of $400,000 or more would be required. Yet the timing of such a campaign was less than ideal. Jewish needs overseas were extraordinary, and Rhode Island had not yet developed a strong network of Jewish social service agencies.

Fundraising for Beth-El was considered by many temple leaders to be burdensome. The presidency of the congregation was thus regarded as much a task as a privilege. With the explicit agenda of completing a capital campaign, Walter Sundlun, a former president, was persuaded to return to office. To this day, Sundlun remains the only Beth-El president to have served two nonconsecutive terms. His son, Governor Bruce Sundlun, is the only second-generation president in the congregation's history.

Despite Walter Sundlun's determination, fundraising was difficult at best. As of May of 1951, pledges totaled $179,000. There were fifty-eight pledges of $1,000 or more. Six of these pledges were for $5,000 or more, and three were for at least $10,000. The three largest gifts were $20,000 from the temple sisterhood, $17,500 from one family, and $10,000 from the temple's brotherhood. Percival Goodman pledged $1,000.

Two and one-half years later, in November of 1953, the building campaign had grown to 361 pledges of $242,000. There had been little growth at the upper end of the scale; the pledge by the sisterhood remained the largest.

Construction Underway

In September of 1951, four years after an architect had been hired, the congregation finally voted unanimously to enter into contracts for the erection of the new building.[75] The cost was not to exceed $1,200,000, with additional expenses budgeted at $250,000.[76]

There was one further impediment to construction, however. During the Korean War, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Production Authority controlled the availability of metal, particularly steel, copper, and aluminum. Consequently, Goodman's design was altered to rely less on steel and more on reinforced concrete. The fed-

eral government's authorization to obtain these precious materials was not granted until March of 1952, with construction to begin in July of that year.[77]

On June 30, 1952, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Orchard Avenue. More than 250 temple members attended. Temple officers posed for photos wearing hardhats. Even Rabbi Braude sat on a bulldozer to record the festivity of the moment.

September 20, 1953 was another momentous occasion, when the cornerstone of the new temple was laid. Once again, there was a parade of speakers, ceremonial handshakes, mugging for photographs, and expressions of progress and nostalgia. The president of the confirmation class spoke, as did two temple elders, both of whom had been present at the dedication of the Broad Street Temple in 1911.

Dedication Ceremonies

In the spring of 1954, during its ninety-ninth year, Congregation Sons of Israel and David departed its second home and entered its third. The last Shabbat services at Broad and Glenham Streets were held on April 16 and 17. Virtually the entire membership attended the bittersweet ceremonies. On Sunday, April 18, the first day of Pesach, the congregation's Torahs were removed from their stately ark and driven by limousine to Orchard Avenue, where they were marched into the new sanctuary, led by officers, board members, and a color guard of veterans.

The new Beth-El celebrated no fewer than six ceremonies of dedication. The first, for the congregation itself, was on Friday, April 23, 1954, the seventh day of Pesach. There was a ceremonial kindling of the Eternal Light, and an address was delivered by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. A children's service of dedication was held Shabbat morning. On Sunday, April 25, the Rosenfeld and Lederer Memorials were consecrated, as symbolic keys were presented by Norman Fain, chairman of the building committee, to President Sundlun and Rabbi Braude.

During the following three weeks, there were four more dedications, each intended for a special group within the Jewish or larger community. There was a galaxy of speakers, including the governor

of Rhode Island, the mayor of Providence, educators, rabbis, ministers, and priests. The oldest confirmands of the congregation were honored. President Eisenhower, unable to attend, sent a congratulatory message.[78]

Percival Goodman, looking young and fit, spoke at the dedications. His design was soon published in leading architectural journals, including *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture*.[79] In the spring of 1955, when *Life* magazine published a five-part series on "The Great Religions of the World" (later made into a book), the section on Judaism featured a short text and five photos of the new Beth-El. In its hundredth year, Sons of Israel and David represented the forefront of growth and the promise of renewal within liberal Judaism. Indeed, in 1954 and 1955, the congregation played a key role in Rhode Island's celebration of the American Jewish Tercentenary, which focused on the settlement of Newport.

The Building Described

As viewed from Orchard Avenue, Beth-El is a low-lying, gently proportioned building, characterized by rounded shapes and contours. The temple's most prominent form is its vaulted sanctuary. Adding contrast nearby is the small dome of the chapel. At the western end of the building, opposite St. Martin's Church, is the two-story wing of the religious school.

As a modern building, Beth-El lacks the solemnity, and perhaps the authority, of traditional religious architecture. It is physically and emotionally accessible, however. The temple is orderly but not stuffy, friendly but not chatty. It conveys a quiet dignity, eloquent in its understatement.

The exterior walls, built of Ohio brick and trimmed with Indiana limestone, are plain and modest. Passing through the birch doors of the main entrance, one reaches the foyer, a threshold of multicolored slate flagging. Large enough to shelter a small congregation of its own, the foyer leads to the meeting hall on the left and the sanctuary on the right. In daylight, greenery is again evident through the large picture windows at the rear of the foyer.

Visitors and longtime congregants alike are often surprised by the spaciousness of the main worship hall, remarkable for any period or style in Rhode Island. Approximately 100 feet long and 80 feet wide, the sanctuary seats nearly a thousand. The arched wooden roof, of lamella design, rises 32 feet, but appears even loftier. The trusses of the copper-sheathed roof form an intricate diamond pattern, the primary decoration of the interior. Abundant natural lighting is provided by two arched clerestory windows, 13 feet high, on the north and south walls of the sanctuary. At the east end is the raised platform of the *bimah*, which nestles the ark.

Goodman's ingenuity is further demonstrated by his solution to the challenge of High Holy Day seating. The common device of a collapsing wall between sanctuary and social hall or foyer is avoided. Rather, he created additional space for seating by flanking the northern and southern sides of the sanctuary with eight classrooms, whose walls, when folded, allow for 600 temporary seats.

Beth-El's meeting hall, to the west of the foyer, is another spare, open space, 70 feet long and 60 feet wide. It can seat 350 for dining and 600 for educational and entertainment events. Even more restrained in its decoration than the sanctuary, the meeting hall has a ceiling supported by wooden beams and, running the length of the north wall, a bank of windows and glass doors that open to a patio and garden. A large, full-service kitchen is nearby.

Beth-El's chapel, also radiating from the foyer, is used for weddings and, without interruption since 1955, for a daily minyan. Compared to the quiet grandeur of the sanctuary, the chapel, seating about 100 congregants, conveys a feeling of intimacy. If any part of the temple suggests more traditional synagogue architecture, it is the chapel, with its small copper dome. The dome, resting on a band of glass, also provides soft illumination. The chapel is adorned with a simple cedar ark, a rosewood reading table, and a north wall decorated with a diamond-patterned grill. The Eternal Light, brought from Broad Street, hangs on the east wall beneath the inscription *Shaddai*, meaning "The Almighty." Like the sanctuary, the chapel has its own secluded choir and organ loft.

The other parts of Temple Beth-El, though less remarkable visually, are functional and uncluttered. The rabbi's study, the administrative

offices, and a large library are found on the ground floor. The religious school contains two classrooms on the ground floor, seven on the second floor, and one in the basement, where there are additional offices, lounges, storage spaces, and a second kitchen.

Goodman's architecture embraces many art forms. Though the sanctuary resembles a theatre, it reflects the warmth of a home. The acoustics are outstanding. A child's song or a shofar's blast resonates throughout the room. Though not visible from the pews, the temple's professional choir and organist—and an occasional harpist, cellist, or flutist—can be heard clearly. Over twenty years, many of the world's finest musicians have performed in public concerts sponsored by the sisterhood.

In sound and silence, Beth-El's sanctuary is a serene place. Though protected from the commotion of the workaday world, it celebrates nature. The sky, clouds, and trees are visible through the large arched windows. Flashes of lighting and explosions of thunder offer momentary but exciting distractions. Brilliant light and falling darkness animate the room.

Artistic Adornments

As both a traditionalist and a modernist, Goodman saw architecture as giving unity to the other visual arts. Decoration is integral to his design.[80] From his earliest contact with the building committee, Goodman advocated an art budget of 5 percent of total costs.[81] He dreamt of employing some of the most luminous Jewish artists to embellish and vivify the synagogue. Goodman hoped Lipchitz would carve bold, symbolic sculptures for the southern and eastern facades. Two rectangular slabs of stone, visible today, would have supported such images. The facades look bare without these sculptures.

Judging from sketches found in fundraising materials, Goodman had even more specific plans for magnificent, tapestrylike designs by Marc Chagall (1887–1985). In the sanctuary, large drapes beneath the arched windows, concealing folding classroom walls, would have portrayed biblical heroes and stories. Goodman calculated that the cost of such designs would be $100,000, and he made tentative plans for their manufacture by an order of French nuns.[82]

But art of this quality was simply beyond the comprehension and reach of his clients. Goodman nevertheless sought brilliant, not subdued colors. He chose a rich gold for the sanctuary carpet and a deep purple for the upholstery. The curtains covering the ark, designed by the prominent textile artist Dorothy Liebes (1899–1972), were an inky blue. The drapes beneath the arched windows, in lieu of Chagall's figures, were solid bands of color. At the rear of the sanctuary, Goodman placed two mural-like panels of stunning red marble—with veins of green, brown, and white—to support memorial plaques that are rotated throughout the year.

The sanctuary's clerestory windows were not left unadorned. They were sandblasted with biblical verses selected by Rabbi Braude. The Hebrew calligraphy and Jewish motifs were designed by another prominent Jewish artist, Ismar David.

While preserving the spaciousness of the sanctuary, Goodman foresaw a need for symbolic sculptures. Hoping to obtain fine examples by contemporary American artists, as he did so successfully for the synagogue in Millburn, New Jersey,[83] he turned to the New York art dealer Sam Kootz. Three leading sculptors received commissions. The most daring pieces are the columns flanking the ark by Ibram Lassaw (b. 1913). Their design was based on passages in Exodus selected by Rabbi Braude.[84] When illuminated from below, the spidery bronze forms, entitled "Pillar of Fire" and "Pillar of Cloud," seem to convey a sense of infinite time and space. Lassaw's pieces were considered among his best and were selected by the Museum of Modern Art for exhibition at the Venice Biennale of 1954.[85]

The Eternal Light, welded from sheet steel and copper by David Hare (b. 1917), seems to vacillate between representation and abstraction. It has a rough, unfinished quality, at odds with the sanctuary's more refined ambience. Hare's seven-branched menorah, displayed like a bas-relief on the left side of the *bimah*, is a dazzling piece of sculpture. It not only functions as a candelabrum, but evokes an ancient Mediterranean past through its resemblance to a nautical vessel.

Also commissioned through the Kootz Gallery was a large bronze *hanukkiyah*, mounted on a stone pedestal, by Herbert Ferber (1906-1991). Displayed adjacent to the temple's main entrance, the piece is

the focal point of Hanukkah celebrations, when, despite cold weather, children and parents gather outside to light the candles and sing the traditional blessings and holiday songs.

Adding further color and glow to the new Beth-El were mosaic panels crafted by Walter Feldman (b. 1925), an art professor at Brown University. Portraying biblical stories through complex imagery, there are three mosaic medallions embedded in the temple foyer, four more in the front patio.

In a further break with convention, Goodman refrained from decorating the temple's exterior with such obvious Jewish symbols as a Star of David or the Ten Commandments. These symbols appear more subtly in Ismar David's windows and can be seen from Orchard Avenue when the sanctuary is illuminated. An inscription carved on a beam over the main entrance reads simply: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations" (Psalm 90).

Even today, one of the remarkable features of Beth-El's decoration is the unobtrusiveness of plaques. Most Jewish communal buildings are encrusted with them. There are only two carved inscriptions on the Orchard Avenue exterior, recording the Rosenfeld and Lederer Memorials. While there are many names throughout the temple's interior, all are tiny in scale, some barely noticeable. The idea was to preserve the beauty of the architecture and also, in keeping with Rabbi Braude's outlook, to enforce modesty upon donors. Further, there are no painted portraits or bronze busts. A small photograph of Rabbi Braude was only recently hung in the temple library, which had been named in his honor in 1967.

Forty Years After

Solidly built and well maintained, the temple complex has undergone minor changes since 1954. The Braude library, growing to more than 25,000 volumes, required a remodeling of its reading room and an expansion of its basement stacks. Goodman's design did not include an office for an assistant rabbi. When the first was hired following the move to Orchard Avenue, new quarters were built. Beth-El's physical plant also necessitated the employment of a professional administrator. Similarly, a full-time director of the religious school was required,

and for eleven years the temple employed a full-time cantor. A much enlarged administrative office, neutral in style, was built in the mid-1980s.

During Leslie Gutterman's tenure as senior rabbi over the past twenty years, membership has grown significantly, reaching 1,100 families. Following the matriculation of the Baby Boom generation, the religious school's enrollment experienced a drop, but the number of children has begun to increase. Classroom space is again at a premium, and older students attend evening sessions. There is ample room but insufficient interest for a nursery or a Jewish day school under Reform auspices.

During the High Holy Days and for special lectures and concerts, the sanctuary is filled to capacity. During winter months, however, the chapel is frequently used for Shabbat services. Those congregants who regularly attend services and others who participate in the minyan form a congregation within Sons of Israel and David. To further heighten the sense of intimacy within the chapel, the seating arrangement was changed, so that three groups of congregants face one another rather than focus on a reader.

To commemorate Beth-El's 135th anniversary, the temple's rich archival collections were organized and stored in a newly created basement study area. The adjacent lounge, which had been designed as a gallery, was finally built as an exhibition area. Similarly, a hallway on the ground floor was redesigned to serve as an art gallery.

The temple's sanctuary, the heart of Goodman's design, has retained its integrity. There have been many cosmetic changes, however. As fabrics became worn and required replacement, there has been a continually changing color scheme of carpets, upholstery, and drapery. Goodman's vibrant colors have been sacrificed to muted tones, whose effect is a prettier and sweeter look. In the mid-1980s, new Torah mantles, ark, and lectern drapes were designed by Ina Golub, a New Jersey fiber artist. Aside from a lighter palette, these textiles also introduced busier rhythms, inconsistent with Goodman's stronger design.

While there has been no public criticism of the sculptures by Lassaw, Hare, and Ferber, an additional sculpture was commissioned for the sanctuary. Because Goodman's design never included images of

the Ten Commandments, Martin Craig was commissioned in 1960 to fill the so-called gap.[86] His wiry copper tablets resemble Lassaw's columns, but there was no appropriate place to put them. Consequently, they were wedged into the diamond pattern of the ceiling, where they look precariously balanced. Some congregants objected to Goodman's design of the chapel ark. The simple wooden cabinets in the shape of tablets but without Hebrew letters resembled coffins to some. Consequently, Hebrew letters were later affixed.

In another attempt to embellish Goodman's design, the large windows at the rear of the foyer were decorated with leaded designs. The glass artist, Edward McIlvane, chose obvious Jewish symbols and presented them in a rigid, heavy manner.

After nearly forty years on Orchard Avenue, Temple Beth-El—both the congregation and its building—are a landmark on Providence's East Side. Only a few score families remember the old temple at Broad and Glenham. Most congregants who are aware of the older building assume that it, like the Friendship Street Synagogue, has long since been torn down. Fortunately, they are mistaken, because the old temple not only stands but is still in use. Purchased by a consortium of Orthodox synagogues in the spring of 1954, the Broad Street Temple became Congregation Shaare Zedek and has been carefully maintained. Today as few Jews live in south Providence as in some Eastern European communities, however.

Looking back, Beth-El's move to the East Side of Providence was not only inevitable but overdue. The East Side needed a Reform congregation, but given the scale and expense of the new Beth-El, it could never have supported two. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the further dispersal of Providence's Jewish community was not foreseen. Two Reform congregations were established in southern suburbs and towns, Temple Sinai in Cranston and Temple Habonim in Barrington, one on each side of Narragansett Bay.

Now, nearly a half-century since Rabbi Braude began his search for an architectural style, it is evident that he had embarked on a journey not merely to clothe the exterior of a new building but to help define and shape an institution. His path toward modernism now seems totally logical and necessary. To have built in a manner evocative of some earlier time and place would have been a serious mistake. On

the one hand, Temple Beth-El would have been somehow relegated to a safe, predictable existence, more comfortable with a nostalgic past than an unfolding future. On the other hand, the congregation would have lost an opportunity to achieve an excellence provided by thought, imagination, and freedom. In retrospect, Beth-El's quest for an architectural identity was an exciting adventure, more successful and fulfilling than anybody would have dared predict.

Architectural Second Thoughts

It can be asked, rhetorically, whether Percival Goodman was the best choice of an architect espousing a modern design. No doubt a professional relationship with Erich Mendelsohn would have been taxing, given his remote distance from Rhode Island, his stormy temperament, and the timidity of the client. That Mendelsohn would have created an unusual, if not extraordinary, design is also not debatable. He was a gifted architect, thoughtful about Jewish needs, and a relentless seeker of truths. Most likely, a Mendelsohn design would have been more daring, perhaps radical, compared to Goodman's. This would have been exhilarating for architects, historians, and critics, but probably few others. Even after four decades of experiencing modern architecture, it is doubtful that Sons of Israel and David, if starting anew, would seek a bolder, more aggressive, more provocative design. Goodman continued to seek new challenges, however.[87]

Another question worthy of speculation is the extent to which architects other than either Goodman or Mendelsohn should have been considered. Most of the modernists recommended to Braude, such as Gropius, Neutra, and Saarinen, would have been stimulating choices as well. Neither Neutra nor Saarinen ever built a synagogue, and the Gropius synagogues in Newton, Massachusetts, and Baltimore[88] are probably closer in spirit to Goodman's Beth-El than to any of Mendelsohn's counterparts. At least in theory, there were still other possibilities, but the proponents of the International style did not, generally, create outstanding houses of worship. The great exception is Le Corbusier's Notre-Dame-du-Haut in Ronchamp, France, but this was not completed until 1955, and it breathtakingly contradicts most of the premises of his earlier work. In America, Marcel Breuer

(1902–1981), a student of Gropius at the Bauhaus and later his colleague, responded triumphantly to the task of designing Catholic churches,[89] but this ability was demonstrated after Beth-El was completed. Breuer did design a synagogue in Short Hills, New Jersey, built in 1961.

Today it is evident that Beth-El's search for an architectural vision occurred at an extraordinary moment. A distinguished era of American ecclesiastical building was just underway. If the search had begun only a few years later, in 1955, for example, many more possibilities would have been evident. Harrison & Abramovitz's Three Chapels at Brandeis University, in Waltham, Massachusetts, would have given confidence and inspiration to Beth-El's building committee. Similarly, Philip Johnson's Kneses Tifereth Israel in Port Chester, New York, completed in 1954, would have suggested a bold possibility.[90] Though he had built a synagogue in Philadelphia, Louis Kahn, in the mid-1950s, was not yet considered a leading architect, and he had not quite entered the phase of his own career that brought him three promising synagogue commissions.[91] If Beth-El's leaders had waited for an important example of contemporary religious architecture to be built in Rhode Island, they would have sat on the sidelines until 1961, when Pietro Belluschi (b. 1899) built a handsome octagonal chapel for Portsmouth Abbey and School on the same island as Newport's Touro.[92]

Perhaps Beth-El's oversight in the late 1940s was not giving serious consideration to America's most challenging, accomplished, and temperamental architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. Though shunned in New England, Wright was alive, well, and available. Further, he hardly ever turned down a commission. Fortunately, his opportunity to design a synagogue came in suburban Philadelphia when he was nearly ninety years of age. Beth Sholom in Elkins Park was indeed an extraordinary result. As unconventional, powerful, and revolutionary as Wright's only art museum, the Guggenheim, the synagogue too was completed in 1959, shortly after Wright's death.

While it is fascinating to hypothesize about what the new Beth-El might have been, such speculation is basically unfair in view of Percival Goodman's accomplishments. Providence's Beth-El is a work of

exceptional and enduring quality, within his enormous output of synagogues and beyond.

With Beth-El to his credit, Goodman's practice gained strong momentum. During the next twenty-five years, he designed scores of synagogues, of which fifty-four were built in twenty states. The majority are found in the Northeast and Midwest, with others scattered in such places as Tennessee, Florida, Oklahoma, and California. During the peak decades of his practice, Goodman took on an average of four synagogue designs each year. Evidently, many congregations were pleased with his work and his manner. Twelve congregations returned to him for additions to his original designs.

It is not possible to determine from Goodman's papers the number of times that he was invited to consult with a congregation but not awarded a commission. In Rhode Island, for example, he was approached by Woonsocket's B'nai Israel, which later selected Samuel Glaser, a Boston architect.[93] There can be no doubt, however, that Goodman, like Mendelsohn with Beth-El, positively influenced the Woonsocket design. By 1962, B'nai Israel's leaders required little coaxing in the direction of modernism. Probably reinforced by Goodman's thoughts, B'nai Israel's leaders sought the finest decoration. The Israeli artist Avigdor Arikha (b. 1929), a disciple of Chagall, designed magnificent stained-glass windows, which were fabricated in France. Equally impressive were textiles designed by Anni Albers (b. 1899) and metalwork crafted by Ludwig Wolpert (1900–1981).[94]

Though Goodman built his later career around synagogue design, he was involved in other commissions, such as public schools, a community college, and urban planning. In Providence, he was consulted in the design of new offices for the Apex Company, whose president, Norman Fain, had been chairman of the temple's building committee. Also through Fain's influence, Goodman was, involved in the design of a suburban campus for Providence's Jewish Home, but the facility, unfortunately, was never built.[95] Due to Norman Fain's encouragement, Goodman was hired by his older brother, Irving, later a temple president, and his wife, Macie, to build a home near Blackstone Boulevard.[96] A splendid example of contemporary architecture, it resembles many of the Southern California homes by Neutra but is even more understated in its simplicity. For Rabbi Braude's younger

brother, Michael, a publisher and writer, and his sister-in-law, Lillian, Goodman designed a large home in East Hampton, New York, not far from his own vacation home.[97] The Braude home, spacious and unassuming, is a fine backdrop for the display of an important collection of contemporary art, including a piece by Lassaw, who also lives nearby.

Throughout the years, Goodman remained particularly proud of his design of Temple Beth-El.[98] Though he was aware of some imperfections, he considered the commission one of the best of his career in terms of site, budget, and freedom of expression. Beth-El was also meaningful to him because of the cohesiveness of its design. Nevertheless, though he grew closer in his respect for Judaism, Goodman remained both an architectural and a religious maverick. To the end of his life, he was privately outspoken, eager to criticize all with whom he disagreed and any note of hypocrisy or artifice. Though Goodman did not worship God, he saw divinity in men and women, most notably his wife, Naomi. He was not a prayerful man, but he provided resonance for others' prayers.

Most likely, Congregation Sons of Israel and David will occupy its place on Orchard Avenue far longer than any of its previous locations. Presently, a move anywhere else seems implausible. But if further growth necessitated a new wing or an unforeseen bequest offered a guest house for visitors, in what style would it be built? Surely the postmodern era, with its many leading Jewish architects, would present numerous possibilities. One design might use as a springboard the neo-Colonial styles of the neighboring residences. Another design might take for its lead the neo-medievalism of St. Martin's Church. A third possibility would be a departure on the Victorian buildings of nearby Lincoln School. Percival Goodman's Beth-El would be a difficult building to reinterpret, because it represents a clear, honest, and humble search for truth in its time.

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Notes

1. For introductory references on American synagogue design, see Alexandra Shecket Korros and Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Synagogue History: A Bibliography and State-of-the-Field Survey* (New York: Markus Wiener, 1988). For a list of extant synagogue buildings, see Mark W. Gordon, "Rediscovering Jewish Infrastructure: The Legacy of U.S. 19th Century Synagogues," *American Jewish History* 75, no. 3 (March 1986). The most distinguished nineteenth-century American architect of synagogues was Dankmar Adler (1844–1900), the son of a rabbi, who built four synagogues in Chicago, of which two survive, both as Baptist churches. See Charles E. Gregersen and Joan W. Saltzstein, *Dankmar Adler: His Theatres and Auditoriums* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).

2. The Beth-El Archives (hereafter cited as Temple Archives), contain extensive correspondence files of Rabbi William Braude and other files of Arthur Levy and Norman Fain. Among a large collection of oral histories recorded by the author between 1988 and 1990 were interviews with Lillian Braude, Pearl Braude, Norman Fain, Percival Goodman, lbram Lassaw, and Macie Fain Silver. The Beth-El commission is probably one of Goodman's best-documented synagogue designs.

3. The first synagogue in the Americas was built in Recife, Dutch Brazil, in 1640. The oldest surviving synagogue building is in Surinam, and was dedicated in 1685. The oldest synagogue in its original form is Mikve Israel, in Curaçao, consecrated in 1732. See Gunter Bohm, "The First Sephardic Synagogues in South America and in the Caribbean Area," *Studia Rosenthaliana* (University Library of Amsterdam), 22, no. 1 (Spring 1988).

4. For information about Touro and Peter Harrison, see Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island: 1640–1915*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: American Legacy Press, 1982). For fine color reproductions of Touro and other Rhode Island houses of worship, see Peter T. Mallary, *New England Churches & Meetinghouses* (Seacaucus, N.J.: Chartwell Books, 1985).

5. For a comprehensive history of the temple, based largely on minutes of board meetings, see Seebert J. Goldowsky, *A Century and a Quarter of Spiritual Leadership: The Story of the Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David (Temple Beth-El), Providence, Rhode Island* (Providence: Beth-El, 1989).

6. Other early members of the UAHC in New England were Hartford's Beth Israel (1878) and Boston's Ohabei Shalom (1880).

7. For autobiographical essays by Rabbi Braude, see "Recollections of a Septuagenarian," *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes* 8, no. 3 (November 1981) and 8, no. 4 (November 1982).

8. Beth-El's architectural dialogue with Mount Zion was resumed in the 1940s with Mount Zion's architect, Erich Mendelsohn.

9. David Hovitz, ed., *Temple Emanu-El: The First Fifty Years, 5684–5734* (Providence: Temple Emanu-El, 1974).

10. For an analysis of Providence's ecclesiastical architecture, see William McKenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson, *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources* (Providence: Historical Preservation Commission, 1986), pp. 116–124.

11. The William J. Harris House still stands in a dilapidated condition at the rear of the temple parking lot.

12. The most important modern residence in New England was the home Gropius built for himself in Lincoln, Massachusetts, in 1937. The second key modern home was built by Rhode Islanders, the John Nicholas Brown family of Providence, on Fishers Island, New York, offshore New London, Connecticut, in 1938. The Brown house, called "Windshield," was designed by Richard Neutra, beginning in 1935. It was destroyed by fire in 1975. In 1939, Henry-Russell Hitch-

cock, a leading historian of modernism, considered the Brown house "the largest and most elaborate modern house in America, by one of the world's leading modern architects." *Rhode Island Architecture* (Providence: Rhode Island Museum Press, 1939).

13. Temple Archives, April 17, 1944.

14. Wright spoke on November 11, 1932 at the first Institute of Art cosponsored by Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design and supported by a grant from the Carnegie Endowment. A headline in the *Providence Journal* is probably illustrative of the way he was received: "Noted Architect Says Bathrooms Offer Only Message of American Civilization Today" (p. 1). The architect declared, "Modern architecture should invade Providence because we can't go on ad nauseam repeating the old." Thomas Hart Benton, the prominent muralist, was another speaker at the Institute. Wright asked Benton, "Why doesn't painting come home to its mother, architecture, take its spanking and go to work?" Evidently, there was laughter in the audience, but Wright was not joking.

15. The writer and critic Brendan Gill believes that Beth Sholom is one of Wright's greatest buildings, and that his numerous religious designs form a major contribution to American architecture. Typically, only Wright's Unity Temple, the Unitarian church in Oak Park, Illinois, completed in 1904, is singled out for praise. See *Many Masks: A Life of Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Putnam, 1987), p. 471.

16. Geoffrey Wigoder, *The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book* (Tel Aviv: Beth Hatefutsoth, 1986).

17. Temple Archives, April 25, 1944.

18. Goodman designed Mishkan Tefila's new building in Newton, Massachusetts, which was dedicated in 1958.

19. Temple Archives, September 29, 1945.

20. Ibid., May 16, 1944.

21. Richard Krautheimer, *Mittelalterliche Synagogen* (Berlin, 1927).

22. Temple Archives, December 12, 1945.

23. For Mendelsohn, see Bruno Zevi, *Erich Mendelsohn* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1985); idem, *Erich Mendelsohn: Opera Completa* (Milan: Etas/Kompass, 1970); Sigrid Achenbach, *Erich Mendelsohn: 1887–1953: Ideen, Bauten, Proiekte* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1987); *Erich Mendelsohn: Complete Works of the Architect: Sketches, Designs, Buildings,* English trans. of 1930 German ed. (Princeton Architectural Press, 1992).

24. Temple Archives, July 27, 1945.

25. Ibid., December 3, 1945.

26. Ibid., December 14, 1945.

27. Presently, the Jewish Museum's addition of 1953 is being rebuilt by Kevin Roche, the Pritzer Prize winner, in a French Gothic Chateauesque style to mirror the original mansion built in 1908.

28. Wischnitzer's book, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955), is still the best overview of its subject.

29. Temple Archives, December 16, 1945.

30. The collaboration Wischnitzer sought was probably achieved through Wright, Rabbi Mortimer Cohen, and Prof. Boris Blai of Temple University, who recommended Wright, in the design of Beth Sholom. See Cohen, *Beth Sholom Synagogue* (Beth Sholom, 1959).

31. Nathan built or remodeled synagogues in Frankfurt am Main, Friedberg in Hessen, Konstanz, Mannheim, and Klaus. For an encyclopedic and lucid history, see Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning* (New York: Architectural History Foundation

and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985). Nathan built at least three American synagogues, including Brooklyn Torah Israel Sephardic Society, Sheepshead Bay, 1953; White Plains Jewish Community Center, 1957; and Temple Mishkan Israel, Hamden, Connecticut, 1960.

32. For information about Finney Farm, I would like to thank Jane Northshield, the village historian of Croton-on-Hudson.

33. Temple Archives, December 9, 1945.

34. In his Rizzoli book, Zevi described all four synagogues as "community centers," which meant that they had religious schools and social halls as well as sanctuaries. They were not recreational centers. Zevi dated the Mendelsohn synagogues as St. Louis, 1946–1950; Cleveland, 1946–1952; Grand Rapids, 1948–1952; and St. Paul, 1950–1954. Drawings of the St. Louis synagogue were published in *Architectural Forum* in May of 1947, which surely led to the other commissions. It seems noteworthy, however, that Mendelsohn was largely ignored on the West and East Coasts.

35. Mendelsohn was contacted by Rabbi Harry Margolis of Mount Zion as early as 1946. A contract, however, was not signed until 1950. Mendelsohn's design was completed by a St. Paul firm, Bergstedt & Hirsch. See my brochure on Mendelsohn, published by Mount Zion in 1987, on the occasion of a centennial exhibition and symposium.

36. Temple Archives, January 22, 1946.

37. For Dorner, see Carla Mathes Woodward and Franklin W. Robinson, eds., *A Handbook of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design* (Providence, 1985); Samuel Cauman, *The Living Museum* (New York: New York University Press, 1958). Gropius, among others, recommended Dorner for the directorship in Providence. See Winfried Nerdinger, *Walter Gropius: Architecture, Drawings, Prints, Photographs, Complete Project Catalogue* (Berlin: Harvard University and Bauhaus Archive, 1985), p. 245.

38. Temple Archives, January 29, 1946.

39. Ibid., January 30, 1946.

40. Ibid., March 19, 1946.

41. Ibid., March 19, 1946.

42. Mendelsohn first met Wright at Taliesin, in Wisconsin, in 1924. They met again, at Taliesin West, in Arizona, in 1941 and 1946. See Zevi, *Erich Mendelsohn* (Rizzoli), pp. 199–201. Also: Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright: Letters to Architects* (Fresno: California State University Press, 1984).

43. Kahn had built three synagogues: two for his own Congregation Beth El (1903 and 1922), and one for Congregation Shaarey Zedek (1932), all in Detroit.

44. Temple Archives, March 8, 1946.

45. Ibid., March 11, 1946.

46. Mendelsohn was also considered for a synagogue design in Dallas, drawings for which were published in *Architectural Forum* of April 1953. Wischnitzer wrote that only his death prevented Mendelsohn from carrying out his design. *Synagogue Architecture*, p. 148.

47. Temple Archives, March 25, 1946.

48. Ibid., March 13, 1946.

49. Ibid., May 23, 1947.

50. Ibid., May 12, 1947.

51. Like Neutra, Gropius was a pioneer in modern public school design. An early example by The Architects Collaborative was Peter Thacher Junior High School, in Attleboro, Massachusetts, completed in 1950. Attleboro is only a few miles northeast of Providence.

52. Temple Archives, June 4, 1947.

53. For information about Neutra's entry in the competition for the Vienna-Hietzing synagogue of 1924, see Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, pp. 195–199.

54. For Neutra's unbuilt design for the North Shore Temple, also 1924, see Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 50. I would like to thank Dan Sharon of the Asher Library, Spertus College of Judaica, Chicago, for identifying the "North Shore Temple" as today's Agudas Achim North Shore Congregation on Kenmore Street, Chicago. Neutra, early in his career, was also a devotee of Wright. See Pfeiffer, *Frank Lloyd Wright.*

55. Temple Archives, June 9, 1947.

56. See Woodward and Sanderson, *Handbook of the Museum of Art*, p. 216, and William H. Jordy and Christopher P. Monkhouse, *Buildings on Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825–1945* (Providence: Brown University and other institutions, 1982), p. 216. Harkness's son, John C. Harkness, became a partner in the Gropius firm, The Architects Collaborative.

57. Oral history interviews with Pearl Braude, recorded by the author on November 15, December 11, and December 22, 1989, in Providence.

58. Temple Archives, May 27, 1947.

59. Ibid., July 12, 1947.

60. The exact chronology of Goodman's earliest synagogues is difficult to establish. Wischnitzer thought that Beth El in New London, Connecticut, completed in 1950, was first; B'nai Israel in Millburn was completed in 1951; and Beth El in Springfield, Massachusetts, was completed in 1952. Goodman's Providence synagogue stands today as the earliest and perhaps best example. The New London synagogue, diminutive in scale, received a large and provocative addition by Paul Rudolph in 1964. The Springfield synagogue, destroyed by fire, was rebuilt by Goodman in 1968.

61. Temple Archives, August 5, 1947.

62. Ibid., August 11, 1947.

63. I would like to thank William Goss, the archivist of the diocese of Burlington, for the identification of the church and its architects.

64. Temple Archives, November 3, 1947.

65. Ibid., November 6, 1947.

66. Oral history interview with Percival Goodman, recorded by the author on May 12, 1989, in New York City, shortly before the architect's death. Copies of the tapes are available at American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati; Avery Architecture Library, Columbia University, New York; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; and Architecture Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. For additional information about the Goodman family, I am indebted to Professor Taylor Stoehr of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, who is a specialist on Paul Goodman.

67. See James D. Kornwolf, ed., *Modernism in America, 1937–1941, A Catalog and Exhibition of Four Architectural Competitions* (Williamsburg, Va.: Joseph and Margaret Muscarelle Museum of Art, College of William and Mary, 1985). I would like to thank Zephorene L. Stickney, archivist of Wheaton College, for sharing this source with me.

68. Wischnitzer wrote that Mendelsohn's design for a Dallas synagogue "vividly recalls" Alvar Aalto's Finnish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939. *Synagogue Architecture*, p. 148. Goodman's vaulted roof in Providence bears a generic similarity to the naturalism and warmth of Aalto's work.

69. In his obituary of Percival Goodman, Paul Goldberger emphasized the architect's stature as an urban planner and theorist. *New York Times*, October 12, 1989.

70. Evidence suggests that Goodman's desire to speak was not only a matter of happenstance. Along with Franz Landsberger of Hebrew Union College, Mendelsohn, and the architect E. J. Kahn, Goodman had been invited to respond to an article by Rachel Wischnitzer, "The Problem of Synagogue Architecture," which appeared in the March 1947 issue of *Commentary*. Goodman's response, "Creating a Modern Synagogue Style," appeared in the June issue. Percival and Paul Goodman later wrote "The Modern Artist as Synagogue Builder," *Commentary*, January 1949.

71. Temple Archives, November 17, 1947.

72. A reproduction of Goodman's model is found in Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture*, p. 151.

73. Temple Archives, December 4, 1949.

74. Ibid., December 4, 1949.

75. Ibid., September 9, 1951.

76. The final cost of the new temple, including construction, architect's fees, engineering, furnishings, landscaping, and art, was $1,490,812.72. A mortgage of $500,000 was required.

77. Temple Archives, March 22, 1952.

78. Ibid., April 1, 1954.

79. See *Architectural Record*, December 1955, and *Progressive Architecture*, October 1956. Three of Goodman's synagogues—Baltimore, Springfield, and Providence—were featured in "Five Contemporary Synagogue Pulpits," *CCAR Journal*, October 1956.

80. Avram Kampf wrote that Goodman was chiefly responsible for the revival of synagogue art that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Further, according to Kampf, this achievement is as significant as Goodman's designs of individual synagogues. See *Jewish Ceremonial Art and Religious Observance* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), p. 37.

81. Temple Archives, November 3, 1947.

82. Norman Fain, chairman of the building committee, believes that his greatest mistake in completing the temple within its budget was the omission of the Chagall drapes. Oral history interview with Norman Fain, recorded by the author on May 31, 1989, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

83. The Millburn synagogue was embellished with a Torah curtain by Adolph Gottlieb (1903–1974), a lobby mural by Robert Motherwell (1915–1991), and relief sculpture by Herbert Ferber (1906–1991). Gottlieb's magnificent Torah curtain is on extended loan to the Jewish Museum. See Norman L. Kleeblatt and Vivian B. Mann, *Treasures of the Jewish Museum* (New York: Universe Books, 1986), pp. 190–191. Among other artists for whom Goodman obtained commissions were Helen Frankenthaler (b. 1928) and Seymour Lipton (1903–1989). See Avram Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945–1965* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966).

84. Oral history interviews with Pearl Braude.

85. Lassaw's first solo exhibition in New York was with the Kootz Gallery in 1951. Lassaw also made sculptures for the Goodman synagogues in Cleveland and St. Paul. Perhaps his finest ensemble of sculptures—an Eternal Light, a menorah, and an enormous exterior relief—were for Goodman's synagogue in Springfield, Massachusetts. See *Ibram Lassaw: Space Explorations: A Retrospective Survey, 1929–1988* (East Hampton, N.Y.: Guild Hall Museum, 1988). Also: Oral history interview with Lassaw, recorded by the author on September 25, 1988, in East Hampton.

86. Craig previously received a commission from Goodman's Mishkan Tefila in Newton, Massachusetts.

87. There is continual variation in Goodman's synagogue designs. Perhaps the most striking is Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan, completed in 1962. G. E. Kidder Smith,

the distinguished architectural historian and photographer, described Goodman's Temple Beth-El in Springfield as "one of the great contemporary synagogues in the United States." Springfield's Beth-El was built in 1953 and then rebuilt by Goodman after a fire in 1968. *The Beacon Guide to New England Houses of Worship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), p. 96.

88. Newton's Temple Reyim was completed in 1958, Baltimore's Temple Oheb Shalom in 1960. See Walter Gropius et al., eds., *The Architects Collaborative: 1945–1965* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1966).

89. Breuer, like Neutra, had Jewish ancestry but did not practice Judaism. See Christopher Wilk, *Marcel Breuer: Furniture and Interiors* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1981), p. 15. St. John's University Church in Collegeville, Minnesota, famous for its "bell banner," was completed in 1961, as was St. Francis de Sales Church in Muskegon, Michigan. Annunciation Priory in Bismarck, North Dakota, was completed two years later.

90. Johnson's synagogue has three sculptures by Lassaw: an Eternal Light, a menorah, and a relief-like screen displayed behind the ark.

91. Louis Kahn (1901–1974) built Philadelphia's Ahavath Israel Synagogue, now Grace Temple, in 1937. His reputation beyond Philadelphia did not grow significantly until 1947, when he was appointed a visiting professor at Yale. The extension of the Yale Art Gallery, completed in 1953, is considered his first major commission. In 1954, he completed the Jewish Community Center of New Haven, which was followed by the Jewish Community Center of Ewing Township (near Trenton), New Jersey. Also that year, when Wright had already been commissioned by Beth Sholom in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, Kahn was approached by Adath Jeshurun Synagogue to design a building nearby. This project remained unbuilt, as was Kahn's design for Mikve Israel Synagogue, developed between 1961 and 1972, for Independence Mall. Kahn's design for Jerusalem's Hurva Synagogue, developed between 1967 and 1974, was also never realized. The only Jewish house of worship built by Kahn in later years was Temple Beth El in Chappaqua, New York, completed in 1972 and based on the destroyed wooden synagogues of Poland. See David B. Brownlee and David G. DeLong, *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, and Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991). Kahn's deeply moving First Unitarian Church in Rochester, New York, completed in 1962 (and an addition in 1969), is located across South Winton Road from Goodman's Temple Beth-El, completed in 1961.

92. Belluschi built two synagogues: Temple Israel in Swampscott, Massachusetts, in 1955; and B'rith Kodesh in Rochester, New York, in 1964. B'rith Kodesh, notable for its campuslike building and grounds, is one of the finest synagogues of the postwar era.

93. See minutes of B'nai Israel board of trustees, February 1959. Glaser was the brother of Vera List and brother-in-law of Albert List, of Greenwich, Connecticut. The Lists were instrumental in bringing Philip Johnson to the commission of Kneses Tifereth Israel in Port Chester, New York. Glaser had met Johnson in the Lists' home. The Lists, important collectors of contemporary art, were major patrons of the Jewish Museum. They also gave the List Art Building to Brown University, which was designed by Johnson and, without his permission, completed by Glaser.

94. For reproductions of B'nai Israel's art, see Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art*, pp. 60 and 161.

95. Norman Fain to the author, July 21, 1992.

96. Oral history interview with Macie Fain Silver, recorded by the author on July 14, 1989, in Newport, Rhode Island.

97. Oral history interview with Lillian Braude, recorded by the author on September 25, 1988, in East Hampton.

98. Oral history interview with Percival Goodman.