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See Page 6 re "economic engine"

Transcript of the Public Hearing  
before the  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
on Tuesday, November 26, 2002  
at  
One Centre Street, 9th floor  
New York, New York

**ORIGINAL**

AR-TI RECORDING COMPANY, INC.  
305 Madison Avenue                      142 Willis Avenue  
Suite 449                                      P.O. Box 347  
New York, N.Y. 10165                      Mineola, N.Y. 11501  
(212) 349-9692                                      (516) 741-5235

1 existing community house and construct a new  
2 14-story building.

3 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: Meisha?

4 MS. HUNTER: Good afternoon,  
5 Commissioners. Meisha Hunter preservation staff.

6 This is an application for alterations at  
7 the site of Congregation Shearith Israel as well as  
8 complex community house and vacant lot adjacent to  
9 the community --

10 AUDIENCE: Could you speak louder?

11 MS. HUNTER: Yes. Is that better?

12 And there is a large team to present  
13 today so I am not going to be speaking too long. We  
14 will begin with the counsel for the team.

15 MR. FRIEDMAN: Good afternoon,  
16 Commissioners, Shelly Friedman, Friedman & Gotbaum.

17 You have before you the applications on  
18 behalf of the 450 families of Congregation Shearith  
19 Israel for a 14-story building adjacent to its  
20 landmark. It is interesting to note that if you do  
21 a research of the literature, you will find several  
22 references, none of them attributable to the  
23 congregation, referring to the congregation as,  
24 quote, "The Mother Congregation of American Jewery."

25 This is an odd statement and it is at

1 odds with Jewish tradition as there is no hierarchy  
2 among its houses of worship as with other religions.  
3 Yet, for what it represents, both in the  
4 congregation's historic role as the pre  
5 Revolutionary War birthplace of the American Jewish  
6 experience and its equally historic role of the  
7 centuries old migration of the Jewish people into  
8 the New World, the building at 70th and Central Park  
9 West was already an international landmark long  
10 before its designation by the Commission in the  
11 1970s.

12 Each succeeding generation of congregants  
13 has taken it as a matter of pride that they are the  
14 stewards of the world-renowned physical icon of  
15 faith, liberty, perseverance and history. The  
16 continuing preservation of the synagogue for what it  
17 represents to its past and its future is to this  
18 congregation already an article of faith.

19 With that in mind, the congregants come  
20 before you today fully supportive of your mission  
21 and view it as identical to their own.

22 This generation of congregants needs your  
23 assistance. Not once in its 350-year history on  
24 Manhattan has it asked for such assistance from the  
25 City of New York. It needs to produce a modest

1 economic engine, 10 or 11 apartments, to further its  
2 preservation program for the landmark; to restore  
3 adjacent parsonage, which is, in fact, one of the  
4 true remaining single-family, built as a home on  
5 Central Park West; and to replace a dysfunctional  
6 and utterly unattractive community house located in  
7 the historic district.

8 We are requesting a Certificate of  
9 Appropriateness and for a report one exception  
10 74-711 special permit is essential to these needs.  
11 Our presentation today will hopefully demonstrate to  
12 you the care with which the congregants have  
13 approached this request. The formal presentation  
14 will consist of remarks by Rabbi Marc Angel  
15 following myself. He will be followed by Peter  
16 Neustater, who is the president of the board of  
17 trustees. They will discuss the commitment to  
18 preservation purpose that the synagogue has long  
19 adhered to and is certainly willing to adhere to as  
20 we move forward through this process.

21 They will be followed by Steve Tilly.  
22 Steve Tilly has been a preservation architect since  
23 1999, has been working on the synagogue itself, and  
24 will talk to you about the steps which have already  
25 been taken to stabilize it, but for the important

1 work that remains especially to maintain the  
2 building and to bring it up to first class  
3 condition.

4 He will be followed by Elise Quasebarth,  
5 Elisa Quasebarth, who will speak about the context  
6 of building in the historic district, as an  
7 individual landmark and as across the street from a  
8 scenic landmark. And, then, she will be followed by  
9 Charles Platt and Paul Byard who will take you  
10 through the building.

11 Then, if you wish, I can return to talk  
12 about some of the zoning aspects that are being  
13 requested in the Section 74-711 application. And,  
14 of course, we are all here to respond to your  
15 questions.

16 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: Thank you.

17 RABBI ANGEL: Thank you for very much  
18 for giving us this opportunity to make our  
19 presentation. My name is Marc Angel, I am the Rabbi  
20 of the congregation. I began serving Congregation  
21 Shearith Israel in 1969. I was a young kid in those  
22 days. When I first came to the synagogue and sat at  
23 the reader's desk, the person immediately to my  
24 right then Rabbi Emeritus, David Sol Pool. Dr. Pool  
25 began Shearith Israel in 1907. Dr. Pool's

1 See page 19 re 'economic engine"  
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9 Transcript of the Public Hearing

10 before the

11 LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

12 on Tuesday, November 26, 2002

13 at

14 One Centre Street, 9th floor

15 New York, New York  
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22 ORIGINAL

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1 Central Park West, this was a duck farm. The only  
2 building in the area, I believe, was the Dakota at  
3 on West 107th Street. All the other buildings in  
4 the neighborhood since 1897 blocked our views,  
5 interrupted our lives, caused all kinds of  
6 commotion, but you know what, this is a growing city  
7 and we are part of it and we did our best to adapt  
8 and to be a very good neighbor.

9 In sum, Shearith Israel has proven over  
10 the years its seriousness, its integrity and its  
11 commitment to New York and its commitment to the  
12 West Side. We have invested time, we have invested  
13 money. This building, this area is not only our  
14 past, we believe it is also our future. We ask you  
15 to help us maintain the standards for which this  
16 congregation is famous. We owe this respect and  
17 reverence to the generations that have come before  
18 us, and perhaps, more importantly for this evening,  
19 we owe this standard of commitment and reverence to  
20 the generations yet to come.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: Thank you.

23 MR. NEUSTATER: My name is Peter  
24 Neustater. I am the "Pinnas" (ph) of Congregation  
25 Shearith Israel Spanish and Portugese synagogue in

1 the City of New York.

2 In 1654, 23 Sephardic Jews claimed a  
3 position in Portuguese Brazil. They were making  
4 their way back to Amsterdam when they were captured  
5 by pirates, rescued by a French ship and dropped off  
6 destitute two weeks before Rosh Hashana here in New  
7 Amsterdam. That Rosh Hashana service, held  
8 September 1654, marked the beginning of Jewish life  
9 in North America. Even at that time, they had the  
10 historic foresight to name their newly formed  
11 congregation Shearith Israel, remnant of Israel.

12 Congregation Shearith Israel, the subject  
13 of this application, residing in its fifth synagogue  
14 building on 70th and Central Park, is not only the  
15 oldest Jewish congregation in North America, but  
16 also the oldest in the English-speaking world.  
17 These Jews from the beginning fought not to be  
18 tolerated, but to be equal citizens. They fought  
19 with the Dutch against the British. They fought  
20 with the British against the Indians and with George  
21 Washington for the independence of the United  
22 States.

23 On exactly this date, November 26, 1789,  
24 President George Washington declared a national day  
25 of Thanksgiving. Our congregation 213 years ago

1 celebrated this first Thanksgiving ever in the City  
2 of New York. The 1730 synagogue that this  
3 Thanksgiving was celebrated in still exists today  
4 next to our main sanctuary. It has been carefully  
5 preserved and restored and is used every morning and  
6 evening for services.

7 We sit on the original 1730 benches. The  
8 Torah scrolls are kept in the 18th Century Ark, lit  
9 by 270 year old eternal light. Pre Revolutionary  
10 War era bells crown the Torah scrolls. One set of  
11 these bells in the main sanctuary was made by the  
12 famous colonial silversmith Ron Myers, a  
13 contemporary of Paul Revere and the "Pinnas" (sic)  
14 of this congregation during the colonial period.

15 In the Ark there are Torah scrolls that  
16 were slashed by British soldiers when they entered  
17 the synagogue during the war. The Chazan would read  
18 on the 1730 reader's platform surrounded by the  
19 Milano style candlesticks. In the main sanctuary  
20 the loose floor boards under the reader's platform  
21 were taken from the 1730 synagogue building.

22 This Friday afternoon we will be lighting  
23 a Chanukah Menorah that predates Christopher  
24 Columbus. As you can see, Shearith Israel's mission  
25 is about preserving the past and carefully handing

1 it down to the next generation. For hundreds of  
2 years we acted as a landmark and preservation group  
3 before this concept was popular.

4 During the early 19th Century, the  
5 Congregation of Turo Synagogue, the oldest building  
6 in the United States, dwindled and could not main  
7 their synagogue building. It was Shearith Israel  
8 that took over the building, maintained it until the  
9 congregation was revitalized at the end of the 19th  
10 century. Today Turo Synagogue, still owned  
11 Congregation Shearith Israel, was the first  
12 religious institution to join the National Trust.

13 Shearith Israel, throughout its 348-year  
14 history has always been at the forefront of historic  
15 preservation. To think that we are going to do less  
16 is inconceivable. Our goal today is still the same,  
17 preserve the past through the landmark, hand it down  
18 to the next generation restored, and provide the  
19 means for future generations to maintain it. Even  
20 before the fire at the Central Synagogue, the  
21 trustees of the congregation ordered an engineering  
22 study of our 100-year old building.

23 The engineers reported that the south  
24 wall and parts of the ceiling were in danger of  
25 collapse. The turn of the century electrical wiring

1 with a staple installation was a fire hazard and  
2 there was, in fact, evidence of earlier electrical  
3 fires that, thank God, did not spread. Water  
4 leakage from the roof and walls were causing damage  
5 to the magnificent scagliola. Tiffany glass was  
6 falling out of its frames, and limestone masonry was  
7 in danger of falling off the building.

8 It was obvious to the trustees that we  
9 could not wait to go through this lengthy procedure  
10 to start the repairs. Our historic building had to  
11 be protected and stabilized immediately. We did the  
12 responsible thing, we started a major capital  
13 campaign and spared no expense to protect the  
14 landmark. New electrical systems, state of the art  
15 fire detection and suppression systems were  
16 installed.

17 The first mist suppression system in the  
18 City of New York was put in place. Leaks were  
19 fixed, walls were reinforced and fire-retardant  
20 materials pumped in. During the restoration, our  
21 architects discovered that not only did Louis  
22 Tiffany design the windows, but, also, Tiffany did  
23 the entire interior. I think you will find of  
24 interest the original list of invoices presented to  
25 the trustees in 1898 that were found by architects

1 in our archives, if you would pass that around.

2 We have restored the interior to the  
3 original 1897 Louis Tiffany color scheme. We all  
4 knew that our synagogue was magnificent, but when  
5 the interior scaffolding came down, it was beyond  
6 expectations. New York City has one of the greatest  
7 synagogues in the world.

8 While we have stabilized and protected  
9 the landmark, much work is still left to be done.  
10 Our restoration architect, Steve Tilly, will give a  
11 detailed report on the extensive work that remains  
12 undone on the exterior of the landmark and the  
13 parsonage.

14 In addition, the community house next to  
15 the landmark on 70th Street is in terrible condition  
16 and has to be torn down and rebuilt. The trustees  
17 of the congregation have decided not to proceed with  
18 the developer for this application. We wanted to  
19 take control over the process. We are the ones that  
20 are going to be here years after the developer has  
21 left. The goal of the developer would not  
22 necessarily coincide with the needs of the landmark  
23 in this community.

24 To achieve this, we have interviewed  
25 architects and consultants that have a reputation

1 for historic conservation and preservation. We  
2 asked them to design the minimum size building that  
3 could become the economic engine for us to finish  
4 the restoration, rebuild the community house and  
5 provide the endowment for continued maintenance of  
6 the landmark.

7 We feel our proposal is responsible, one  
8 that highlights and supports the landmark building,  
9 enhances the skyline of Central Park West, and  
10 complements the neighborhood. Many people have  
11 asked why don't we just raise the money from the  
12 congregation and finish the restoration and rebuild  
13 the community house? Before we submitted this  
14 application, I met with our budget finance and  
15 campaign committee, the main supporters of the  
16 congregation. In today's world where there is such  
17 great demand on every dollar, both here in New York  
18 and abroad, I can tell you definitively that it  
19 would be impossible to raise the sum of money  
20 required from the congregation. There is no chance  
21 that the congregation will be able to finish the  
22 restoration of the landmark, continue the  
23 maintenance of the landmark, and rebuild the  
24 community house without the economic engine that  
25 this process provides.

1           We will not be able to finish our task  
2 without this approval. 100 years from now when our  
3 grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be  
4 sitting on the same benches that our ancestors sat  
5 on during the first Thanksgiving in 1789, we hope  
6 that they, at that time, will thank this generation  
7 of congregants, this generation of New Yorkers, and  
8 especially this landmark committee for providing us  
9 with the ability to pass this precious heritage to  
10 them in a condition that will make us all proud.

11           Thank you.

12           CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: Thank you.

13           MR. TILLY: My name is Steve Tilly. My  
14 architectural team has been shepherding the master  
15 planning and restoration process to this point.

16           As you can see, the time frame of  
17 Shearith Israel is long, looking back as well as  
18 looking ahead, and it is has been a thrill for us to  
19 join this for the last tiny segment and to try to  
20 help look ahead for the next several hundred years.

21           When we arrived and started working with  
22 Peter and Rabbi Angel and the committee trying to  
23 develop a preservation-based master plan, we looked  
24 at obvious riches that we needed to preserve and  
25 restore. We also saw obvious problems, an abundance

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See Page 26 for Tilley reference to Economic Engine

Transcript of the Public Hearing  
before the  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
on Tuesday, November 26, 2002  
at  
One Centre Street, 9th floor  
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1 areas shaded in purple represent the entire scope of  
2 preservation work that you need?

3 MR. TILLY: The areas in purple  
4 represent those areas that need to be addressed in  
5 the continuing preservation work.

6 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: How much of this has  
7 already been accomplished?

8 MR. TILLY: The purple is what remains.

9 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: The purple is the  
10 what remains?

11 MR. TILLY: Right. The gray tone area  
12 indicates the surfaces we have dealt with to this  
13 point, but the purple hasn't been dealt with.  
14 Which, again, there are quibbles on that, because,  
15 for example, the largest piece of purple that you  
16 are seeing here is the roof of the sanctuary, and  
17 that we have put a temporary roof on, we put a  
18 membrane roof on, and that we have done in a way  
19 sitting on plywood which will allow to restore the  
20 standing seam metal roof which we found underneath  
21 the asphalt.

22 So there is a major expensive piece of  
23 work that needs to be done, that roof is actually  
24 visible up and down Central Park West. That is,  
25 restoring that roof. The entire roof of the

1 parsonage needs to be replaced. If we look at the  
2 photographs, over here it shows the parsonage. The  
3 mansard roof on the parsonage, which is both a  
4 decorative finish and a building envelope, it is  
5 actually beyond the end of its useful life so that  
6 needs to be completely redone.

7 We have serious limestone staining that  
8 remains on the parsonage from copper and other kinds  
9 of growth, that we actually will need to replace the  
10 limestone. The front steps of the parsonage need  
11 to be replaced. There are Tiffany windows that  
12 haven't been dealt with. There was a program on the  
13 major Tiffany windows four or five years ago, the  
14 windows that they could not reach and that the  
15 budget would not stretch to, which are in back.  
16 These windows are in the back of the small synagogue  
17 which is adjacent to the large synagogue. These are  
18 on the south wall. Those are beginning to show  
19 signs of buckling, so we need to begin restoration  
20 and protect those windows in the back.

21 These pictures show you the parsonage  
22 roof. This shows you the membrane of the roof on  
23 the sanctuary which is being installed in copper  
24 hatch. We have done penetration for the future for  
25 ACHV systems, and that is awaiting the copper. This

1 is the detail of the copper maynard that needs  
2 preservation.

3 On the sanctuary, there is an  
4 inappropriate railing. The front steps are really  
5 -- we deferred -- the scope of work that we done was  
6 really everything that we did not need scaffolding  
7 for. So we scaffolded the exterior and we  
8 scaffolded the interior, just the work that could be  
9 done from ladders on the ground. The front of the  
10 synagogue facing Central Park West has seriously  
11 deteriorated limestone steps, inappropriate  
12 railings, a set of grades which do not meet access  
13 codes, so we are in the process of restoring those.

14 A set of railings in front of the  
15 parsonage and the parsonage steps which is in need  
16 of repair. The areaway around the sanctuary, we  
17 still have water, the potential for water to migrate  
18 in at the foundation. We arrested the water that  
19 was moving through the rest of the structure, but  
20 that needs to be attended to. The hen house was  
21 recently removed by the MTA, so that leaves the  
22 railings leading down and the stairways leading down  
23 to that areaway also remaining to be done.

24 So those are really the symptomatic  
25 highlights of the degree of deterioration on the

1 exterior.

2 At the end of our master plan, we return  
3 to issues of, as I said, there were circulation  
4 issues, there also were the substandard issues in  
5 the community house itself. So that we turned to  
6 the notion of the new building on the community  
7 house site for those three reasons, in order to  
8 replace the substandard facilities in a building  
9 that was, again, beyond the end of its useful life,  
10 to solve the interior circulation problems, and also  
11 to act as an **economic engine** for the rest of the  
12 preservation program that we have mapped out.

13 Now I think Elise will talk about the  
14 concept of the new building.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN PAULSEN: Stephen, do you have  
17 a full scope of work regarding the preservation that  
18 you are proposing for the historic building?

19 MR. TILLY: Yes.

20 MS. QUASEBARTH: Good afternoon,  
21 Commissioners. My name is Elise Quasebarth,  
22 preservation consultant for this project.

23 We have worked with the team to take a  
24 look --

25 AUDIENCE: Can you speak up, please.

See pages 16 and 17 re "economic engine"

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THE NEW YORK CITY  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, North  
New York, New York

February 11, 2003

The above-entitled hearing commenced  
at 9:30 a.m.

ORIGINAL

AR-TI RECORDING COMPANY, INC.	
305 Madison Avenue	142 Willis Avenue
Suite 449	P.O. Box 347
New York, N.Y. 10165	Mineola, New York 11501
(212)349-9692	(516)741-5235

1 anniversary, September 2004. Mark it on your  
2 calendars. We've been on our present site for 105  
3 years. The site of our building in 1897 was a dust  
4 bowl. I think the only building in the area was on  
5 72nd Street, the Dakota. All the buildings in our  
6 vicinity, all these buildings you see here all came  
7 after Shearith Israel. It was understood that the  
8 community grows, the community develops. And just  
9 as Shearith Israel was a very good neighbor and was  
10 very happy to see the development of others and  
11 know others with similar sentiments of kindness and  
12 compassion, the work of our own congregation.

13 We think our proposal is reasonable and  
14 thoughtfully conceived, and the experts will tell  
15 you about that, but I just want to conclude by  
16 saying that we ask you to consider our proposal  
17 favorably on its own merits, but also in light of  
18 the importance to the ongoing stability and ability  
19 of Shearith Israel to maintain its high standards  
20 of stewardship and communal service. We owe this  
21 respect and reverence to the generations that have  
22 come before us, but we also owe this respect and  
23 commitment to the generations that will follow us.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. NEUSTADTER: Good morning. My

1 name is Peter Neustadter. I am the Parnas or  
2 President of Congregation Shearith Israel, the  
3 Spanish and Portugese Synagogue in the City of New  
4 York.

5 In 1654, 23 Sephardic Jews, fleeing the  
6 inquisition in Portuguese Brazil, were making their  
7 way back to Amsterdam when they were captured by  
8 pirates, rescued by a French ship and dropped off  
9 destitute two weeks before Rosh Hashanah here in  
10 and then New Amsterdam.

11 That Rosh Hashanah service held  
12 September 16, 1654 marked the beginning of Jewish  
13 life in North America. Even at that time they had  
14 the historic foresight to name their newly formed  
15 congregation "Shearith Israel" or a "Remnant of  
16 Israel."

17 Congregation Shearith Israel, the  
18 subject of this application, residing in its fifth  
19 synagogue building on 70th and Central Park West is  
20 not only the oldest Jewish congregation in North  
21 America, but the oldest in the English-speaking  
22 world. These Jews, from the beginning, fought not  
23 to be tolerated but to be equal citizens. They  
24 fought with the Dutch against the British, they  
25 fought with the British against the Indians, and

1 with George Washington for the Independence of the  
2 United States.

3 Because of community opposition,  
4 services were held in private homes until they were  
5 given the right to purchase land and build the  
6 first synagogue building in New York in 1730. That  
7 1730 synagogue building still exists today next to  
8 our main sanctuary on Central Park West. It has  
9 been carefully preserved and restored and is used  
10 every day for morning and evening services. We sit  
11 on the original 1730 benches. The Torah scrolls  
12 are kept in the 18th century ark lit by a  
13 270-years-old Eternal Light.

14 Pre-revolutionary rimonim or bells crown  
15 the Torah scrolls. One set of these bells in the  
16 main sanctuary was made by the famous colonial  
17 silversmith Myer Meyers, a contemporary Paul Revere  
18 and Parnas of the congregation during the colonial  
19 period.

20 In the ark there are Torah scrolls that  
21 were slashed by British soldiers when they entered  
22 the synagogue during the Revolutionary War. The  
23 Chazzan will read on the same 1730 reader's  
24 platform surrounded by the Morano style  
25 candlesticks. In the main sanctuary, the wood

1 floor boards under the reader's platform were  
2 taken from the 1730 building.

3 Shearith Israel's mission is about  
4 preserving the past and carefully handing it down  
5 to the next generation. For hundreds of years, we  
6 acted as a landmark and preservation group before  
7 the concept was popular. Our goal today is still  
8 the same, preserve the past, which is the landmark;  
9 hand it down to the next generation; restore; and  
10 provide means for future generations to maintain  
11 it.

12 Even before the fire at the central  
13 synagogue, the trustees of the congregation ordered  
14 an engineering study of our 100-year-old classical  
15 Beaux art building. The engineers reported that  
16 the south wall and parts of the ceiling were in  
17 danger of collapse, the turn-of-the-century  
18 electrical wiring with its newspaper insulation was  
19 a fire hazard, and there was, in fact, evidence of  
20 early electrical fires that, thank God, did not  
21 spread. Water leakage from the roof and walls were  
22 causing damage to the magnificent scagliola.  
23 Tiffany glass was falling out of its frames and  
24 limestone masonry was in danger of falling off the  
25 building.

1           It was obvious to the trustees that we  
2 could not wait to go through this lengthy procedure  
3 to start the repairs. Our historic building had to  
4 be protected and stabilized immediately. We did  
5 the responsible thing. We started a major capital  
6 campaign and spared no expense to protect the  
7 landmark. New electrical systems, state-of-the-art  
8 fire detection and suppression systems were  
9 installed. The first nitrogen mist suppression  
10 system in New York City was put in place. Leaks  
11 were fixed, walls reinforced and fire retardant  
12 materials pumped in.

13           During the restoration, our architects  
14 discovered that not only did Louis Tiffany design  
15 the windows, but, also, Tiffany did the entire  
16 interior design. We have restored the interior to  
17 its original 1897 Louis Tiffany color scheme. We  
18 always knew that our Synagogue was magnificent, but  
19 when the interior scaffolding came down, it was  
20 beyond expectation.

21           New York City certainly has one of the  
22 great synagogues of the world. While we have  
23 stabilized and protected the landmark, much work is  
24 left to be done. Our restoration architect, Steve  
25 Tilly, will give a detailed report on the extensive

1 work that remains undone on the exterior of the  
2 landmark and parsonage.

3 In addition, the community house next to  
4 the landmark on 70th Street was in terrible  
5 condition and should be torn down and rebuilt.

6 The trustees of the congregation have  
7 decided not to proceed with the developer for this  
8 application. We wanted to take control over this  
9 process. We are the ones that are going to be here  
10 after the developer has left.

11 The goal of a developer would not  
12 necessarily coincide with the needs of the landmark  
13 or the community. To achieve this, we interviewed  
14 and hired architects and consultants who have a  
15 reputation for historic conservation and  
16 preservation. We asked them to design the  
17 minimum-sized building that could become the  
18 **economic engine** for us to finish the restoration,  
19 rebuild the community house and provide the  
20 endowment for continued maintenance of the  
21 landmark.

22 We feel our proposal is a responsible  
23 one that highlights and supports the landmark  
24 building, enhances the skyline of Central Park West  
25 and compliments the neighborhood.

1                   Many people have asked why don't we just  
2 raise the money from the congregation and finish  
3 the restoration and rebuild the community house?  
4 Before we submitted the application, I met it with  
5 our Budget, Finance and Campaign Committees and  
6 main supporters of the congregation. In today's  
7 world, where there is such a great demand on every  
8 charitable dollar both here in New York and abroad,  
9 I can tell you definitely that it would be  
10 impossible to raise the sum of money required from  
11 the congregation. There is no chance that the  
12 congregation will be able to finish the restoration  
13 of the landmark, continue the maintenance of the  
14 landmark and rebuild the community house without  
15 this **economic engine** that this project would  
16 provide.

17                   We hope that future generations will  
18 thank this generation of congregants, this  
19 generation of New Yorkers, and especially this  
20 landmark board for providing us the ability to pass  
21 this precious heritage to them in a condition that  
22 would make us all proud.

23                   Thank you.

24                   MS. QUASEBARTH:        Good morning,  
25 commissioners. My name is Elise Quasebarth. With

See Page 6 for Reference to "engine."

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THE NEW YORK CITY  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, North  
New York, New York

February 11, 2003

The above-entitled hearing commenced  
at 9:30 a.m.

ORIGINAL

AR-TI RECORDING COMPANY, INC.	
305 Madison Avenue	142 Willis Avenue
Suite 449	P.O. Box 347
New York, N.Y. 10165	Mineola, New York 11501
(212)349-9692	(516)741-5235

1 Congregation Shearith Israel Synagogue - Individual  
2 Landmark, in the Upper West Side/Central Park West  
3 Historic District. Block 1122, Lots 36, 37.

4 An Academic Classical and Beaux-Arts  
5 style synagogue, designed by Brunner & Tryon and  
6 built in 1896-97.

7 Application is to demolish the existing  
8 community house and construct a 14-story building.

9 The second application is a request for  
10 modification use and bulk in Manhattan. Docket  
11 03-2653. 8 West 70th Street, Congregation Shearith  
12 Israel Synagogue - Individual Landmark, also within  
13 the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic  
14 District. Block 1122, Lots 36, 37.

15 An Academic Classical and Beaux-Arts  
16 style synagogue, designed by Brunner & Tryon and  
17 built in 1896-97.

18 Application is to request that the  
19 Landmarks Preservation Commission issue a report to  
20 the City Planning Commission relating to an  
21 application for a special permit, pursuant to  
22 Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

23 MR. FRIEDMAN: I'm Shelly Friedman  
24 of Friedman & Gottbaum representing Congregation  
25 Shearith Israel.

1           The applications before you this morning  
2           are filed on behalf of the 450 families of the  
3           Congregation Shearith Israel. It's interesting to  
4           note that if you do a search of the term "Shearith  
5           Israel," you will find many references -- none of  
6           them coined by the Congregation itself -- referring  
7           to Shearith Israel as the "Mother Congregation  
8           American Jewry." It is that role in which this  
9           building is viewed, both in terms of the  
10          Congregation's role as the birthplace of the  
11          American Jewish experience. It predates the  
12          American Revolutionary War, as well as its role,  
13          centuries old role, in the migration of the Jewish  
14          peoples to the western hemisphere that this  
15          building was considered an international landmark  
16          long before this commission honored it as such in  
17          the 1970's.

18                 Each succeeding generation has taken  
19                 with great pride its role as the steward of an  
20                 icon, which is world renowned as a symbol of  
21                 liberty, freedom and a historical continuity and  
22                 faith. The congregation is pleased to be here this  
23                 morning and present to you its plan for a building  
24                 which will permit it to build 14 stories on a site  
25                 which controls immediately behind the landmark.

1                   Its interests in preserving the landmark  
2                   itself are well documented by its efforts virtually  
3                   since the construction of the building, and its  
4                   preservation is taken as an article of faith by the  
5                   Congregation itself. We're not here to ask for  
6                   your help in preserving the building. That will  
7                   continue. What we are here to do is to ask you for  
8                   your assistance in helping us to produce a modest  
9                   **economic engine,** ten or eleven apartments, which  
10                  will be used to support the fulfillment of the  
11                  completion of the preservation program of the  
12                  landmark itself, to permit the restoration of the  
13                  parsonage immediately adjacent to the landmark,  
14                  which is in the historic district, and to permit  
15                  the replacement of a dysfunctional and commonly  
16                  viewed unattractive community house which is behind  
17                  the designated landmark but also within the  
18                  historic district.

19                  Our presentation this morning will  
20                  consist of five speakers. I will be followed by  
21                  Rabbi Mark Angel, to discuss the program of  
22                  Synagogue, immediately followed by Peter Neustadter  
23                  to describe the history, in brief, of the  
24                  Congregation and the relevance of that history to  
25                  the application before you.

1                   They will be followed by Elise  
2                   Quasebarth who will describe the context in which  
3                   we are viewing -- the multiple contexts in which we  
4                   are viewing this project as you look at it and find  
5                   for its appropriateness.

6                   She will be followed by Charles Platt,  
7                   who will describe the building itself in the  
8                   application. Following that, Steve Tilly, who is  
9                   the restoration architect for the Synagogue, will  
10                  discuss the restoration program. And I will come  
11                  back to discuss the zoning actions that are being  
12                  requested pursuant to the Section 74-711 request.

13                  This congregation seriously needs your  
14                  assistance with regard to both the Certificate of  
15                  Appropriateness and the filing of the report to  
16                  support the 74-711 special permit so that all of  
17                  these preservation efforts continue and so that  
18                  they can bring the building and retain the building  
19                  in first-class condition.

20                  I'm going to ask Rabbi Angel to speak to  
21                  you.

22                  RABBI ANGEL:       Thank you very much. I  
23                  began serving Congregation Shearith Israel as a  
24                  student rabbi in 1969. I was a 24-year-old young  
25                  man then. I have the pleasure of sitting next to