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*architecture
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January 28, 2008

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chairperson
New York City Board of Standards and Appeals
40 Rector Street
New York, New York 100017

re: Congregation Shearith Israel
6-10 West 70th Street
New York, New York
74-07-BZ

Dear Chairperson Srinivasan:

1. I am an architect duly licensed to practice in the State of New York. My qualifications are included with this submission.
2. I have reviewed the various sets of drawings relating to the Congregation Shearith Israel project as submitted by the Congregation to the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals in support of its application for a zoning variance, initially filed in April 2007. I have also reviewed the drawings submitted by the Congregation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission starting in 2002 in support of the Certificate of Appropriateness, ultimately approved in 2006. In addition, I have reviewed the statements made by the Congregation in support of these applications and the Congregation's description of programmatic needs, including the narrative and drawings submitted on December 28, 2007 by the Congregation.
3. I have specifically reviewed the design illustrated in drawings AOR-A-1 through AOR-A-15, As Of Right Scheme—Scheme A (Original), dated October 22, 2007, by Platt Byard Dovell White, Architects; program and mission requirements as set forth in a letter from Shelly S. Friedman, Friedman & Gotbaum, LLP, to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals dated December 28, 2007; and the Building Code of the City of New York, 2003 Edition.
4. I will first discuss the issues of access and circulation which are mentioned repeatedly at various points in the narratives presented by the Congregation. The Congregation has stated that the non-compliant "Proposed" building shown in drawings P-1 to P-17 dated October 22, 2007 and revised December 26, 2007 is needed in order to resolve issues of barrier-free access relating to the Sanctuary. I have compared those drawings to the As-Of-Right Scheme A building, drawings AOR-A-1 through AOR-A-15. I have also reviewed the comparison document submitted to the record by opponents as Exhibit Opp.- M, which is an accurate comparison of the Proposed Building to the Existing building on this issue. This drawing shows that the principal difference between the

Proposed Building and the As-Of-Right building is the configuration of the single elevator serving the Sanctuary and the Community House.

5. I also have compared the drawings of the Proposed Building to the As-Of-Right Building and the comparison document submitted as Opp. Ex. CC. I can state definitively that there is no difference between the non-compliant Proposed building and the As-Of-Right Scheme A building as to meeting the asserted programmatic needs of access and circulation. Moreover, I note that all of the needs are met within 10-15 feet of the wall between the Sanctuary and the Community House in the Proposed Building. In other words, very little of the Proposed Building has anything at all to do with resolving the asserted programmatic needs of access and circulation.
6. Additionally, my review of Existing Condition drawings PROG E - 6 through PROG E - 9 and EX - 10, dated December 26, 2007, by Platt Byard Dovell White, Architects, indicates that the accessibility issue could have been remedied long ago by modifying the existing passenger elevator to include a side door and stopping at intermediate levels. This passenger elevator appears to have been installed when the Community House was created in 1954 and there is no indication that any changes have been made since that time.
7. I have compared the other programmatic needs such as classroom and archive space asserted by the Congregation with the As-Of-Right building drawings. My opinion is that the stated needs can be comfortably accommodated within the As-Of-Right Scheme A building. The building contains eight floors (two below grade, six above). Stories two and three and a portion of story four are assigned to educational uses. Stories five and six are assigned to income-producing housing. A portion of Story four is assigned to housing for the building's custodian.
8. In reaching these conclusions, first I observe that the Congregation has not chosen to utilize stories five and six to resolve the asserted programmatic needs. There is no question that the Congregation could resolve its programmatic needs, without the need for the lower floor variances into the rear lot, if it utilized floors five and six for classroom and other programmatic needs, rather than for residential condominiums.
9. I also considered whether the As-of-Right building and the other structures on the zoning site would accommodate the Congregation's asserted programmatic needs without recourse to floors five and six and without the need for the lower floor variances. I understand that located on the zoning site under consideration is the Parsonage Building and the Sanctuary, which includes substantial space under the Sanctuary. I have reviewed the testimony provided by the Congregation to the Landmark's Commission (Opp. Ex. C-3) in which the Congregation described the Parsonage, the Sanctuary and the proposed

building as being "a single complex that's interconnected on several levels" I also understand that the Parsonage is part of the same zoning site as the proposed building. Accordingly, I have also considered the availability of the other buildings to meet the programmatic needs.

10. The Congregation indicates a need to provide for 35-50 students (divided into 7 classes) in its Hebrew School, up to 150 in its Family Education program, and up to 60 in its Toddler Program, plus 125 in the tenant Beit Rabban School, which is unrelated to CSI's mission. It has not been made clear whether the Toddler Program is mission-related or merely an income producing function. The Hebrew School, Family Education program, and Toddler Program are non-simultaneous and can readily share facilities. The adult participants in the Family Education program can be accommodated in several spaces (the Elias Room, Small Synagogue extension, and others) outside of the educational floors. It is clear that the As-Of-Right Scheme A building can easily accommodate the anticipated mission-related occupancy.
11. In reviewing the plans submitted by the Congregation to LPC, I note that from 2002 through 2006, the plans contemplated relocating the Small Synagogue from its existing location to the new Community House building. This would apparently have permitted the expansion of the Elias Room or other additional Community Space. Opp. Ex. B and Opp. Ex. E. Then, when the plans were filed with the BSA, the Small Synagogue was not moved: rather, in the rear of the first floor, a large room was designated as the Small Synagogue Expansion - with door opening to the Small Synagogue. Review of the plans suggests that the Synagogue Expansion is an ideal location for education and other needs, and could even use flexible partitions for multiple classrooms, on the assumption that classes would not be held at the same time that there would be a need to use the room for Synagogue expansion purposes.
12. The educational floors (floors 2, 3, and 4) contain a total of approximately 4,640 net square feet rigidly divided into fifteen classrooms. This space is sufficient to accommodate 232 students at the code-mandated allotment of 20 square foot per occupant. I have not included in this amount the approximately 1204 square feet in the Synagogue Expansion which is ideal for classroom including adult classroom and seminar usage.
13. Each of the three educational floors (2, 3, and 4) also provides eight toilets, two of which are designated as barrier-free. These are sufficient for 840 students at the code-mandated allotment of 1 fixture per 35 students. Reducing the area devoted to toilets could add significantly to the available educational space.

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14. Should exigencies of architectural layout indicate need for additional space, the 1,200-square-foot custodian's apartment could be utilized instead as educational space to accommodate up to an additional 60 students. A 1,200-square-foot apartment also seems extravagantly sized for its stated purpose. The custodian could appropriately be housed in the existing Parsonage, a six-bedroom residence attached to the main synagogue. See Opp. Ex. C. Additionally, the Parsonage would be suitable for use as library, office, or tutoring space. In reviewing the plans provided to the LPC for the proposed building, I note as well that the initial plans had no provision at all for a custodian's apartment in the proposed new building.

15. In summary, it is my professional opinion that the first four floors of the As-Of-Right Scheme A building and the other spaces available in the existing synagogue building and on the zoning lot can without question amply satisfy all of the programmatic and accessibility needs asserted by the Congregation in a reasonable and acceptable way and with space to spare.

Very truly yours,



Craig Morrison AIA

CRAIG MORRISON, AIA

Craig Morrison's nationwide practice combines close, hands-on investigation, study and interpretation with the art of restoration to bring new life to historic buildings. His twenty-one years of independent practice and established relationships with a wide variety of specialized consultants provide a base of stable constancy as well as the talent, expertise and flexibility to work with large and complex buildings and to address smaller, more specialized projects in a personal and caring manner.

Mr. Morrison has worked with such monuments as the Second Bank of the United States, the Pennsylvania Capitol, Washington Union Station, Grand Central Terminal, and the 1885 Academy of Music, in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Projects during prior employment included the New York Capitol, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Academy of Music and City Hall in Philadelphia.

Recent projects include feasibility studies and restoration planning for the Stanley Theatre, Newark, New Jersey; Woodward Opera House, Mount Vernon, Ohio; the Long Beach Historical Society's historic house museum, Long Beach, New York; the 1894 Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove, New Jersey; the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, in the 1870 Kings County Savings Bank, Brooklyn, New York; and for Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan and Philadelphia Opera Houses.

In an aside from building design, Mr. Morrison worked with Oscar Andrew Hammerstein as co-curator of *Direct from Broadway*, a major exhibition of the history of Broadway theater, mounted at the Paine Webber Gallery in New York. His recent book, *Theaters*, is the first major pictorial study of America's theaters. He also founded Theater Heritage, a comprehensive nationwide inventory of historic theaters.

Mr. Morrison has specialized in the preparation of Historic Structure Reports and Master Plans, including Second Bank of the United States, the New York State Senate; the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium; the Carolina Theatre, Greensboro, North Carolina; the Blue Bell Tavern, Philadelphia; and the Count Basie Theatre, Red Bank, New Jersey.

Craig Morrison, Architect, *New York, New York*

Mr. Morrison served on the Board of Architectural Review in Alexandria, Virginia and was first Chair of the Historic Designation Advisory Board in Detroit. He was a member of the adjunct faculty of Wayne State University, the University of Michigan-Dearborn and Eastern Michigan University. He has lectured in numerous venues including Yale University, the Library of Congress, and Oxford Polytechnic, England, and has published in the fields of architectural and theater history. He has chaired AIA Historic Buildings Committees in Philadelphia and New York.

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