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### Special Issue: Sacred Landmarks of Cleveland

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This issue is funded in part by a grant from the George Gund Foundation.
Preface

Michael Tevesz
Thomas Lewis
Michael Wells
Thomas Hallet

When Joseph Badger arrived in the Western Reserve in 1800 to serve as minister to both the Congregational and Presbyterian pioneers, he began a religious tradition in Cleveland symbolized by the building of sacred structures. As greater Cleveland grew, its citizens built over eighteen hundred churches, temples, and synagogues. Today, the towers, steeples, and domes of these buildings fill the skylines of the city’s main thoroughfares; many of the buildings still figure prominently in residential neighborhoods. This special issue of The Gamut explores the cultural and aesthetic significance of some of the more remarkable of these buildings, beginning with Foster Armstrong’s overview of their architectural history.

As each ethnic group moved into Cleveland, its house of worship was both a link with the land left behind and a bridge to the group’s new community. The clergy and the congregations did their utmost to create churches and synagogues representative of their cultures, as Cathy Thomas shows in her discussion of the Polish community’s construction of St. Stanislaus Church.

Every religious structure reflects some part of its community’s cultural, historical, and ethnic heritage. The stained glass in many churches and synagogues is, of course, an important
aspect of this heritage. Thomas Hallett and James Whitney draw attention to windows in Cleveland-area churches designed by such well-known artists as Louis Tiffany and Charles Kempe.

For the past two hundred years Cleveland’s churches and temples have been more than locations for religious services. They have also met their congregations’ educational, social, and charitable needs. When the dwindling congregation of a church or a synagogue wants its place of worship to remain an active participant in the community, tensions can arise, as Michael Wells illustrates in his article on Trinity Cathedral.

Not only are many of Cleveland’s sacred structures visually significant, but many of their designers are internationally known. Walter Leedy discusses the approach taken by Eric Mendelsohn, one of the twentieth century’s most prominent architects, to the design of Park Synagogue.

The bell tower standing alone at East 81st Street and Euclid Avenue symbolizes the fact that some sacred landmarks serve dwindling communities, some face closure, and some have simply disappeared. The article by Michael Tevesz, Thomas Lewis, and Michael Wells regarding how best to handle redundant sacred landmarks places the issue in a national and international perspective.

A map of sacred landmarks, by Foster Armstrong, is included in this issue of The Gamut to facilitate visits to these sites by readers.

While it is inevitable that most buildings will disappear, an informed citizenry will not allow its heritage to be forgotten. Unfortunately, no books dealing specifically with houses of worship in northeastern Ohio are available to the general public. This special issue of The Gamut attempts in a small way to remedy this lack; we hope it will also stimulate research about sacred landmarks in the Cleveland area.

Made possible by a grant to Cleveland State University from The George Gund Foundation, this is part of a series of public education studies conceived and undertaken by members of the Cleveland State University College of Arts and Sciences Sacred Landmarks Research Group, an organization dedicated to helping Greater Clevelanders recognize and understand the heritage of their religious structures. Its members appreciate the cooperation of The Gamut in making this venture in public education possible.

Michael Tevesz
Thomas Lewis
Michael Wells
Thomas Hallett
The Forms of Cleveland's Sacred Structures

Foster Armstrong

Introduction
Although Cleveland's sacred landmarks exhibit a wide range of architectural styles, they are all variations on two standard forms, the line and the circle—one emphasizing the procession and hierarchy, and the other suggesting unity. A house of worship based on the procession is often laid out in the form of a Latin cross (with one axis longer than the other) or a simple rectangle preceded by a steeple. A church or a temple that emphasizes unity often has a central focus and is laid out in the form of a Greek cross, a circle, or an octagon. Both forms were used early, became standard, and have served liturgical and symbolic purposes throughout the history of religious architecture.

Early Processional Structures
The linear form of the processional plan is common among Cleveland's sacred landmarks. Not only does the Latin cross symbolically represent Christ, but it was also spatially appropriate for liturgical purposes. The Roman Catholic Church in particular used the processional theme from medieval times until the mid-twentieth century.

Shortly after Emperor Constantine established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christians began to believe that places rather than individuals were associated with God's presence and so they used the word "church" to designate both a community of people and places where they met.¹

In the early days of the Christian Church, the Roman basilica exerted a powerful influence on church form. Romans used the term "basilica" to identify buildings used for public assembly, the exchange of goods, or the administration of justice. After the Christians gained imperial sanction, they adopted the basilican form for religious purposes because, as one church historian says, "They were delighted to practice their religion in spaces that involved
the power of the law." An outstanding example of such a building is the Basilica of Constantine, begun by Maxentius about 306 and completed by Constantine about 313. The basilica is impressive because of its mass, size, and innovative technology. Measuring 215 by 300 feet, it had a high central space, or nave, rising 114 feet. Light flooded the interior through the ends of the curved ceiling, which were left open. Predating the Gothic buttress system by seven hundred years, buttresses, or piers, reinforced the ceiling vault (see Fig. 1).

More typical earlier basilicas, such as the Basilica Ulpia in Rome, constructed about 112, had entrances on their long sides and semi-circular forms called apses on each of their short ends. In halls of justice the apse, which terminated the visual axis, could be placed at the end of either the long or short axes. But when older structures were converted into Christian places of worship, or when new structures were erected, the apse was always placed at the end of the long axis to reinforce the idea that the shrine was the focus for the whole design and the place of the central mystery of the Christian faith. The longer nave created a sense of spatial procession by establishing a focal point to reinforce the directional signals given by the primary axis.

Because the basilica form served the liturgy well and was relatively simple to build, it soon became the basic plan for many churches. The early basilican churches generally consisted of several basic elements: the narthex, or vestibule; the nave, or main body of the church; the low side aisles; and the transverse aisle, or transept, placed between the nave and the apse and projecting beyond the walls of the nave and the aisles. All of these features can be identified in Old St. Peter's in Rome, dedicated about 330 (see Fig. 2). Because it served as a model for so many churches, it is considered by many to be the most important design in the history of church architecture.

The nave of the old St. Peter's might be compared to an elongated shoe box placed on its side: it was long, narrow, and high. Three bands of elements made up of columns formed the two longer sides of the space. At the lowest level, the load of the upper building mass was transferred to a series of columns that divided the side aisles from the nave. Above this was a level of masonry surmounted by a series of windows called a clerestory, which admitted light. The basic elongated form of the nave directed attention forward, toward the altar.

Parallel to the nave and reinforcing the movement toward the altar were the aisles. These were considerably narrower and lower than the nave. Projected from the aisles at right angles were two basic transept forms. In one, the colonnades of the nave ended just before the transept began. This created a continuous transept and the short axis remained undivided. This second form created a "swelling in the nave" called a cross transept. In such a form the colonnades turned at right angles and entered into the wings.
The combination of the proscenium or triumphal arch and the apse was a Christian feature added to the Roman basilica. The arch reinforced the direction implied by the nave and the aisles; in this sense it became a symbolic gateway to the altar and bishop's seat. The semi-circular form of the apse, aligned with the main axis, created a final point for all forward movement and framed the altar.

In the early Christian church the procession was terminated by the bishop's seat. This was important because the bishop represented Christ to the congregation; he was the congregation's shepherd. He dressed in the sacristy as the congregation prepared to receive him; he followed them in the procession and passed through them on his way to the altar. Continuing to his place at the extreme focal point of the apse, he then faced the altar and people. Above him, iconographers frequently displayed the Christ of the second coming. Mass at the altar represented the joy and nourishment of Christian life in this world and the promise of future life with Christ in eternity. The shepherd instructed his people, facing them from the throne; he then came before the altar at the offertory and acted as a mediator with Christ during the mass.

Adaptation of the Basilica Form to the Pilgrimages

From the end of the sixth century to the end of the twelfth century the basilican plan continued to evolve. During this period when the Roman Empire was disintegrating, Christianity, Roman tradition, and the new energetic spirit of the Celtic-Germanic peoples merged. Gradually the church became the central authority both politically and spiritually, and the popes, in effect, succeeded the Roman emperors.

Once firmly established, Christianity provided the unifying force in the midst of anarchy. Many of the principal northern rulers made pilgrimages to Rome, where they visited the earlier Roman Christian churches. Eager to reestablish the imperial past upon returning home, they reinterpreted these churches and other structures in the north. Important architectural innovations of this era included the development of new vaulting with ribs as the principal structural element; the refinement of pier form, in which several structural members were grouped together in compound designs; and the introduction of the tribune gallery in the space between the vaulting and the roof of the side aisle. The regular crossing and the use of passageways around the choir, which had radiating chapels connected by a circular walkway forming a chevet, became more common (see Fig. 3). These features are typically associated with the Romanesque, a nineteenth-century term used to describe the general style developed between the Roman and the Gothic periods. The round arches and heavy walls of this period clearly suggest ancient Roman architecture.

Figure 3: Innovations of the medieval period (Romanesque).
Because the folk heroes of these northern tribes struggled against a pagan world of fantastic creatures of the deep, dark forests, their churches often reflected this heritage. For example, the north side of the church came to represent darkness and cold and was associated with the Old Testament, while the south side, with its relatively greater warmth and light, represented the New Testament. The long axis was traditionally placed in an east-west direction so the apse of the church faced the rising sun. At the same time, the west end became the important ceremonial entry.

The Vikings who settled in northwest France after their conversion to Christianity became skilled administrators and builders. They developed the most progressive of the many Romanesque styles. Abbaye-aux-Hommes, in Caen, France (1060-1081), is considered their master model (see Fig. 4). Also known as St. Etienne and begun by William the Conqueror, the west facade has two towers. This type of composition became typical in later Gothic churches. Divided into three parts above the buttresses, the towers’ structural purpose was to contain the outward thrust of the high side and end walls. These towers also had symbolic meanings. While they did not attempt to reach heaven, they did point toward it. They also marked the importance of the west end as a ceremonial entrance. In German cathedrals the western towers were a traditional symbol of secular power, balancing the concentration of ecclesiastical power at the eastern end.

The church in Caen also contains a raised lantern above the crossing of the nave and transept. This became a typical feature in other churches and was used to provide additional illumination to this otherwise dark but important intersection above the high altar. The complexity of the piers and the reduction of wall surface resulting from larger openings also anticipated the brighter walls of later Gothic architecture.

The Romanesque style blossomed in the United States beginning in the 1830s. American interest in the Romanesque was an outgrowth of the earlier revival of this style by the Germans a decade earlier. (Many considered Germany to be the cultural leader of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century.) The first new American Romanesque Revival church was the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, New York. Designed by Richard Upjohn in 1844 in the manner of a typical German abbey, Pilgrim Church served as a model for hundreds of other churches across the country. The style became popular, in part, because it was relatively easy and economical to build, and various published plans for churches suggest that it was preferred for its simplicity.

The earliest and most visible Romanesque processional church in Cleveland is the Old Stone Church (First Presbyterian), located on the northwest corner of Public Square. Designed by the firm of Heard and Porter and built between 1853 and 1855, it exemplifies the early Romanesque Revival style in America (see Fig. 5).
Gothic Processional Structure

From the twelfth century through the fifteenth century the Gothic style, with its monumental space, brilliant light, and plastic structure, dominated the architecture of western Europe. "It was in the service of the church that the Gothic style attained its most meaningful expression," says Robert Branner, the author of Gothic Architecture, "for the church was the most prolific builder of the Middle Ages, providing the widest scope for the development of architectural ideas and calling for the best talents."

By this time, not only had the church acquired great wealth but it had attracted brilliant members of the clergy who sought to construct magnificent monuments to the glory of a God of perfect geometry. In the ancient world, the study of numbers, expressed through geometry, was considered a means of understanding the ideal order of the universe. Geometry was inherited by the Christian church and widely used in church planning. Based on the pure form of circles, triangles, and squares, the dimensions and proportions of the building had symbolic significance.

With the Gothic design a distinction developed between the laity in the nave and the intellectual religious community, arrayed in the choir behind the altar. After the altar had been pushed to the far end of the choir, replacing the seat of the bishop, a low wall was interposed to cut the choir off, thus separating clergy and congregation. The Gothic style, easily recognized by its pointed arches, was in a continual evolution. The rebuilt St. Denis, outside Paris, was one of the first churches to reflect this style. However, the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, begun only twenty years later, in 1155, was quite different. Perhaps Notre Dame is more representative of the early Gothic style because here height mattered as much as light and color. The problem facing the masons was how to support the high vaults. The solution—to adapt the earlier Romanesque idea of using galleries above the side aisles as the basis of support—initially resulted in a four-story interior elevation. This alternative arrangement enjoyed a considerable vogue in northern France during the second half of the twelfth century (see Fig. 6).

Two significant developments in the evolution of the Gothic style occurred at the end of the twelfth century, when galleries were dispensed with and the overall size of cathedrals was vastly increased. This enlargement was made possible by the imaginative use of flying buttresses. These provided the same kind of structural support as the more traditional galleries but did away with the need for heavy walls. The disappearance of the gallery and the introduction of flying buttresses made it feasible to enlarge the clerestory windows considerably, thus admitting even more light to the church interiors.

It was at Chartres that the first truly monumental clerestory appeared. Chartres paved the way for the soaring heights achieved at Amiens, which has been described as "a glass casket mounted on a lofty spacious hall" (see Fig. 7). Only on rare and special occasions were the great
French prototypes ever equalled in other countries—in Cologne, Germany, for example, in Milan, Italy, and in Barcelona and Seville in Spain.\textsuperscript{17} Though there are traces of the Gothic style evident in early America, Gothic did not become popular in the United States until the nineteenth century. From 1820 until 1930, the Gothic Revival underwent three transitions: Early Gothic Revival (1820–1860), High Victorian Gothic (1860–1890), and Late Gothic Revival (1890–1930). Gothic structures generally include pointed arches, pinnacles, battlements, and window tracery. In the Early Gothic period, the use of one or two of these elements would indicate that the architect was attempting to create a Gothic image. The common church form was a simple basilica with a steeple placed toward the entrance or in the center.\textsuperscript{18} During the High Victorian Gothic Revival, buildings were heavier than they were in the earlier period and different colored building materials were used.\textsuperscript{19} Late Gothic Revival structures were characterized by a "smoother" design and were often constructed in masonry—usually stone, if available. The detail was far more varied than that of the Early Gothic Revival period, when only one pattern of tracery was used for the entire structure.\textsuperscript{20}

Richard Upjohn popularized the "ethical" or "ecclesiastical" Gothic in the United States. These terms originated in the English Gothic revival movement that was promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society and the Oxford Architectural Society. Though philosophically opposed, these groups drew their energy from the same source: distaste for the immediate past and its influence on the present. Upjohn's design for Trinity Church in New York (finished in 1846) was essentially a modified version of an "ideal" English church shown in Pugin's True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture of 1841 (see Fig. 8).\textsuperscript{21} America was soon deluged with churches based on the Trinity model.

It happens that the oldest Gothic church in Cleveland, St. John's Episcopal Church (1836–1838), designed by Hezekiah Eldridge, predates Upjohn's church by a dozen years. St. John's is a good example of the use of Gothic detail popular during the Early Gothic Revival period. Eldridge was probably familiar with John Henry Hopkins' An Essay on Gothic Architecture, the first book on Gothic ecclesiastical architecture to be published in the United States. St. John's is a good representative of a small group of American churches inspired by Hopkins' book. This "Gothicized meeting house" has been rebuilt twice. The present plan, with neither a central aisle nor an apse, is therefore similar to the original plan (see Fig. 9).\textsuperscript{22} At one time the church was more elaborate than it is today. Figure 9, for example, shows pinnacles that no longer exist.

The High Victorian Gothic style was popular between 1860 and 1890. Cleveland was growing rapidly during this period, so it is not surprising that the city contains many landmarks built in this style. On the west side, St. Stephen's Church (1873), designed by Cudell and Richardson, is more sophisticated than St. John's Episcopal in that its design consists of a cruciform plan with vaulted side
Aisles. This structure achieves some of the spatial play of true Gothic. The two arcades of thin iron columns dividing the nave terminate at the crossing; they reappear to divide the side shrines from the main altar and give depth to the western end.\textsuperscript{23} The use of iron columns and wood throughout the interior demonstrates the creativity of designers and craftspersons in adapting new materials to what were traditionally stone structures (see Fig. 10).

A second example of High Victorian Gothic is St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church (1889–1982). Designed by Adolf Druieding in the German Gothic style, this church was built of buff-colored rough stone, now blackened with age. Three rows of columns in the interior divide the nave and support an arcade. Groined arches on corbel-supported colonnettes form the ceiling.\textsuperscript{24} The three central entry doors, the large rose window set in a Gothic frame, and the tall dissimilar towers make this church a distinctive landmark on Cleveland's west side skyline (see Fig. 11). On the east side, St. Joseph's Franciscan Church (1871), St. Stanislaus (1886), Our Lady of Lourdes (1891), and Holy Name (1881) are of the same general period and style.

The Gothic churches in central Cleveland reflect the late Gothic Revival period (1890–1930). Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (1901) and First Methodist Church (1903), for example, fit into this latter category. Further out on Euclid Avenue at University Circle, other late Gothic Revival churches include Church of the Covenant (1909), Amasa Stone Chapel (1911), and Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church (1926). Two of these churches, Covenant and Epworth, were designed by an architectural firm that was largely responsible for the flowering of the late Gothic movement in America. This firm had various names, such as Cram and Wentworth; Cram, Wentworth, and Goodhue; Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson; and Cram and Ferguson.\textsuperscript{25} Determined to revive the Gothic architecture of England, the firm intended to develop it further as the most appropriate architecture for American churches. Its members tried to discern the principles of medieval architecture and then apply their interpretation to contemporary needs.\textsuperscript{26}

The Church of the Covenant (1909) is based on the early English parish church (see Fig. 12). Despite the massiveness of the structure, the building has a simple design. Its nave is wide and has no arcades on the sides. Its transepts are shallow, while the galleries are deep. Hammerbeam trusses that end in carvings support the roof.\textsuperscript{27}

Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church, designed by a partner in the same firm, Bertram Goodhue, was inspired by the French medieval church on Mont St. Michel. However, the church also contains English influences and traces of Art Deco. Goodhue died before the church was built and the structure was completed by the Cleveland firm of Walker and Weeks. The Epworth-Euclid Church also marked the end of an era: it was the last great Gothic church built in the city (see Fig. 13).
One might expect that Protestant churches would be centrally focused rather than processional, since traditionally, Protestants had espoused a form of worship in which the word took precedence over the sacrament and the congregation predominated over the liturgical leadership. Yet ironically, many of the largest processional Gothic churches of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America were built not for Catholics but for Protestants. The circular form would have been more appropriate for a preaching church, but Protestants liked the form of the Gothic.

**Centrally Focused Sacred Landmarks**

The processional plan continued to be popular throughout the nineteenth century, but as the twentieth century progressed this plan was increasingly criticized as inadequate as the setting for new forms of worship. Paul Tillich, a prominent Protestant theologian, argued that in the Protestant church there is no distinction between the laymen and the clergy. Therefore, he said, “the processional church form should be replaced by one in which the members of the congregation look at each other and in which the minister is among the congregation, preaching and leading the liturgy. The communion table should be placed in the center where all can participate in the sacramental meal.”

After Vatican II, Roman Catholics also encouraged this arrangement, reorganizing the seating and liturgical furnishings in many old churches. Among new churches, also, the old rectangular plan of nave, narrow chancel, and fixed altar were abandoned. In its place stood the circle or square with an altar at or near the middle of the central space.

The circle did not constitute a new form for worship, of course. Pre-Socratic philosophers had symbolized God as an “infinite sphere.” Bramante, an important Renaissance architect, was fascinated by the idea that the circle had no beginning or ending: “Such form,” he said, “demonstrates the unity, the infinite essence, the uniformity and justice of God.”

In fact, in all eras, the circle has been indicative of unity. The circle was even used in the Roman Pantheon, which predates Christianity and is dedicated to all the gods. It was reconstructed by Hadrian between 118 and 128 A.D. Its interior is composed of two very simple geometric shapes, a cylinder below and a dome above, both having the same diameter and height. The controlling axis of the building runs through the middle of the structure, thereby creating a vertical line from the center of the floor to the middle of the oculus, or circular opening (see Fig. 14). The domed rotunda preceded by a pedimental porch that characterizes the Pantheon has often served as a model for Christian and non-Christian houses of worship. Indeed, at a later date the Pantheon itself was converted to a place of Christian worship.
The circle as it related to the Christian churches can be traced back to Emperor Constantine’s most important church in the east, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Anastasis Rotunda radiates from the tomb of Christ (see Fig. 15).

Early Christian tombs and mausoleums also used the circular form. Among the most important of these was the Mausoleum of St. Constantia, a Roman memorial built by the Emperor Constantine for his daughter. The building is a circular, domed structure with arched windows in its drum. Around the drum is a continuous circular passage with a barrel vault. This mausoleum represents a critical link between the Roman period and the Byzantine period when the arcade, the circular passage, and the dome were often brought together to create a single, centralized structure (see Fig. 16). San Lorenzo, in Milan (begun in 378) was equally important because of its use of a circle inscribed within a square. This circle within a square served as a prototype for many of the later Renaissance churches. St. Vitale, in Ravenna, Italy (begun in 540), though more complex, also emulated the earlier design of St. Constantia (see Fig. 17).

Shortly after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire, the imperial center shifted from Rome to Constantinople, where the Byzantine style reached its apogee in the great church of Hagia Sophia. Here the classical style, with columns supporting the entablature, or framework, and a roof, was fused with the oriental tradition of a square plan surmounted by a dome. The series of compartments growing out from the central area of the dome made possible a variety of semi-domes. Churches with centrally-focused worship spaces became standard in the east.

During the Byzantine era, the use of circular forms in ecclesiastical structures gradually waned in the west, where the processional plan remained more important. It took the emergence of the Renaissance and of the Baroque and the Mannerist periods to reintroduce centralized worship space. Indeed, the earliest iterations of St. Peter’s by Bramante and Michelangelo had central foci. Bramante’s San Pietro in Montorio in Rome and the Church of Santa Maria della Consolazione in Todi (begun in 1508) are two surviving examples of this centralized type (see Fig. 18 and 19).

### Centrally Focused Churches in the United States

Robert Mills, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, was acquainted with the centrally-focused worship spaces that the Huguenots built when they came to America. In 1808 he designed the circular Sansom Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Other centralized churches by Mills included the Unitarian Church in Philadelphia; the First Baptist Church in Baltimore; and the Monumental Church in Richmond, the only one of these structures that survives (see Fig. 20). Mills’ intention was “to house large congregations...
in a comfortable auditorium with good sight lines and curved pews." The parishioners were angled toward the minister, who served as a focal point and stood on a preaching platform along one wall.

The auditorium form evolved into what was later known as the "Akron" or "Miller" plan. First used in 1867 by Miller in the First Methodist Church in Akron, Ohio, the Akron plan provided design flexibility, comfort, and good sight lines. The "Akron" plan also allowed Sunday school rooms to be opened to the auditorium so that church members and others could listen to a speaker and a choir or musicians and could receive religious instruction. This plan was often associated with a building style termed Richardsonian Romanesque, which became popular after the building of Trinity Church in Boston in 1872. Frequently used in Protestant churches and named after Henry Hobson Richardson, the designer of Trinity Church in Boston and one of the most original and popular American architects of the late nineteenth century, this style was noted for its rounded arches and massive stone masonry.

Cleveland’s rough stone Pilgrim Congregational Church (1893) is a good local example of Richardsonian Romanesque. Designed by S.R. Badgeley, it also uses a modified "Akron" plan. Classrooms surround three sides of the assembly room in the Sunday school; basically square, the room originally was separated from the church by a wall that could be raised. The pulpit is tucked in one corner. As the author of one study of architectural landmarks in Cleveland describes it, "the seating fans out from the pulpit, and the gallery sweeps in a dramatic curve from the corners of the fan. The interior space is unbroken by columns, the roof being an intricate construction of segmental domes and coves rising to a shallow saucer dome" (see Fig. 21).

Other examples of sacred structures in Cleveland inspired by Richardsonian Romanesque include the North Presbyterian Church (1887); the Bolton Avenue Presbyterian Church, now Antioch Baptist Church (1892-1984); and Euclid Avenue Christian Church, now East Mount Zion Baptist Church (1908).

Many Christian Science churches, Jewish synagogues, and Baptist temples in Cleveland also employed the auditorium form. Some have been strongly influenced by the Pantheon, while others have been based on Mills' octagonal churches. Still others had their roots in the earlier ancient Near East. All, however, can be more readily associated with a stronger central focus than movement along a longitudinal axis.

The plan of the old First Church of Christ Scientist, now Lane Metropolitan C.M.E., is most closely related to the Pantheon. Designed by George Hammon in 1900, old First Church has a rotunda form that is seen on both its interior and its exterior. It also contains a classic pedimented portico supported by Ionic columns. However, in this structure the entry form and preaching platform are also superimposed on the exterior form, whereas in the Pantheon the portico and rotunda were the only visible exterior forms (see Fig. 22 and compare with Fig. 14).
In the Second Church of Christ Scientist (now the Church of God and True Holiness), designed by Frederick Strieburger in 1916, the dominant central dome is resting on a square rather than a circular form, while the central space is extended by barrel vaults in each direction. In a similar manner, Temple B’nai Jershusum, now Shiloh Temple, designed by Harry Cone in 1906, includes a domed assembly hall that in some ways resembles the Pantheon but in other ways is quite distinct. This building contains a classical portico and a rotunda form, but like Second Church, it does not extend to the ground. Here a gabled roof projects in each direction, forming a Greek cross. However, because no axis is longer than another, as in the Latin cross, these spaces may still be considered centralized.

The new First Church of Christ Scientist and the Fifth Church of Christ Scientist are more aligned with Mills’ octagonal churches. The second Temple Tifereth Israel designed by Charles Greco in 1924 has a similar geometric form; its dome exerts a stronger presence to emphasize the central space. This style, often referred to as Syrian, suggests the first synagogue built after the Exile (see Fig. 23).4

All of these sacred landmarks, while centrally focused, nevertheless contained an ark, an altar, or a communion table located near or against one of the side walls. Unfortunately, the central high space and the central symbol along one wall represent a visual conflict.

Architect Eero Saarinen solved this problem in the design of the North Christian Church in Columbus, Indiana. In North Church, the communion table is placed in the center, with the steeple rising directly above the table. Light comes from an oculus below the steeple, above the table, and around the periphery of the space. The centralized plan with its use of light causes the environment to be focused yet mystical (see Fig. 24).

Evans Woolen used a similar design for St. Andrew’s Abbey Church in Cleveland, Ohio (1986). However, in this structure the peak of the roof is not directly above the altar, which is slightly off-center. The rear side wall is scalloped, which differentiates it from the flat planes that form the other five walls. While the space is centralized, an illusion of procession is created by the central axis, which runs through the Romanesque portico, the exterior entry, the altar, and the scalloped rear walls. But the hexagonal form, central altar, and seating arrangements emphasize centrality. Perhaps more than any other sacred landmark in the area, St. Andrew’s successfully alludes to the tradition of procession while encouraging participation among its worshippers (see Fig. 25).

Thus, although the ideal setting for worship continues to evolve, the styles of sacred buildings still spring from variations of two basic forms. The particular configuration of each structure reflects the continual interplay between tradition and innovation, and the need of every congregation to find the shape that best allows it to believe it is in touch with deity.
Notes

2Roger G. Kennedy, American Churches (New York: Stewart, Tabor and Chang, 1982), 251.
3Horst De la Croix and Richard Tansey, Gardner’s Art Through the Ages (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1975), 251.
4De la Croix and Tansey, 250.
6Davies, 147.
7Davies, 144.
9De la Croix and Tansey, 306.
12Lee, 14.
14Musgrove, 387.
15Musgrove, 388.
16Musgrove, 388.
18Whiffen, 89.
19Whiffen, 173.
22Schofield, 66.
24Cram, 7.
25Schofield, 166.
26Schofield, 71.
27Christ-Janner, 123.
28Lee, 14.
29Kennedy, 235.
30Kennedy, 122.
31Kennedy, 237.
32Kennedy, 244.
33Kennedy, 274.
34Lee, 16.
35Kennedy, 274.
36Christ-Janner, 122.
37Kennedy, 235.
38Schofield, 7.
39Schofield, 276.
40Musgrove, 293.
41Musgrove, 293.
42Kennedy, 244.
44Schofield, 71.
45Edward A. Reich, A Brief History of the Synagogue and Its Architecture, catalog of the exhibit entitled “Sacred Landmarks: A Selected Exhibit of Existing Ecclesiastical Structures in Cuyahoga County.” Organized by the Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners and the Western Reserve Historical Society, 26.
A Victorian Church for a Polish Parish: The Church of St. Stanislaus

Cathy Thomas

Why was the Polish Roman Catholic Church of St. Stanislaus of Cleveland, Ohio, built in the English High Victorian Gothic style? In the nineteenth century, the Gothic style was often the model chosen for churches both here in the Midwest and abroad. Good art from a better age, it was believed, would improve contemporary life. The medieval architecture of Roman Catholic churches, beautiful as well as practical, was an appropriate choice for the church of a growing parish of Polish Americans in Cleveland, Ohio in Victorian America.

The Church in Poland has always been closely connected with political events. The Book of Polish Pilgrimage, a collection of patriotic and spiritual poetry, contains passionate prayers and litanies reflecting some of the devastating partitions of Poland that have separated her peoples over the centuries.¹ The anguish of national partition was shared by those in many regions of Poland. In the nineteenth century, the Pomeranians, the Pozens, and the Silesians were absorbed by Prussia, the Carpathian mountain regions of Galicia and Gorale were taken by Austria-Hungary, and the Ukraine, Livonia, and Lithuania became part of the Russian empire.

Arriving in America, the new Polish immigrant again had to contend with separation and alienation. But the tradition tying Polish loyalties to the church as well as to the state aided in bonding the new, struggling community together. Building and adorning a church was one manifestation of faith and the most evident symbol of spiritual activity for the Polish community.²

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A challenging seminar on Cleveland architecture conducted by Walter Leedy led Cathy Thomas, then an M.A. candidate in art history at Cleveland State University, to develop a project involving St. Stanislaus. Her photographs of the church and her study of primary source materials in the archives of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese, the Western Reserve Historical Society collections, and the photo archives of the Cleveland Public Library provided the basis for this article. Now a Ph.D. candidate at Case Western Reserve University, Cathy is a part-time instructor of Western art at Kent State University and will shortly begin teaching art history at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Particularly fond of Italy, she has traveled widely and is proficient in Spanish, Italian, and German. She loves cats, writes poetry, and collects religious folk art.
By the late 1800's, the Polish community in Cleveland was already thriving and growing. In the 1870s, a labor dispute at the Newburg Rolling Mills, a local steel mill, led the owner, Amasa Stone, to go to Poland for cheap labor. Poles from Silesia and Galatia, attracted by the offer of free passage to either New York or Cleveland, made the trip on cattleboats hired for this purpose. Stone promised these Polish workers jobs at the mill, where they worked for fourteen hours a day for $7.25 a week. Life in America during the decades following the Civil War was filled with hardship for many immigrants. They lived in crowded and unsanitary conditions, and disease was rampant. Infant mortality was very high. Their religion gave many of the urban poor the strength to survive.

In 1873 the first Polish masses were said in Cleveland. The parish of St. Stanislaus, named after the martyred
bishop of Krakow, was formed in 1877 and given the use of St. Mary's, a small wooden church in the Flats, by Bishop Richard Gilmour.  

The cult of St. Stanislaus is widespread in Poland, especially in the episcopal city of Krakow, which honors him as principal patron and preserves the greater part of his relics in the cathedral.  

Stanislaus Szczepanowski was born in 1030 in Szczepanow. His parents were members of the nobility and dedicated their son to the service of God from his birth. He was ordained as a priest, and his saintly example inspired a great reformation among his penitents.  

Pope Alexander II ordered Stanislaus to the bishopric of Krakow in 1072. Boleslaus II ruled Poland at this time. A prince known for his unbridled lust and savage cruelty, he sent guards to murder the bishop in the Chapel of St. Michael outside of Krakow. The guards returned and told the king that the bishop was protected by a ring of heavenly light. The king was so enraged he went himself and murdered Stanislaus, cutting his body into pieces. The story is told that eagles protected the body pieces, which were gathered and buried three days later by the cathedral canons at the door of the chapel where Stanislaus had been slain. The murder of Stanislaus led to an uprising of the people, and Boleslaus fled the country. In response to this crime, Pope Gregory VII laid the country under an interdict. Nearly two centuries later, in 1253, St. Stanislaus was canonized by Pope Innocent IV. In 1969 Cardinal Carol Wojtyla (now Pope John Paul) presented St. Stanislaus Church in Cleveland with a relic of the martyr from Krakow's cathedral, thus creating another tie between Poland and this parish. 

The original church of the parish of St. Stanislaus, St. Mary's, was inadequate to meet the needs of the five hundred Poles in the congregation. This early community was closely knit. Preserving Polish customs and traditions, they centered their activities in their national societies, in their businesses, and, most important, in their church. 

Members of St. Stanislaus formed a committee to search for an appropriate location for a new church. A large potato patch owned by farmer Ashbel Morgan attracted their attention. With each lot they bought after the first, Morgan offered them a free one. The committee purchased thirteen lots at $240 each and built a small two-story frame building to use as both church and school.  

In 1883, Father Anton Francis Kolaszewski, born in Russian Poland and ordained at St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland, was brought in as pastor. A dynamic and charismatic leader, Kolaszewski saw the need for expansion and enlarged the little frame church. But it was soon apparent that the church was too small. In August of 1886, using local sand and other materials, parish members built the foundation for a great Victorian Gothic church measuring eighty-five by two hundred feet. 

Building the great church involved many hardships. Correspondence preserved in the Cleveland Diocesan Archives reveals stress and struggle for both Pastor Kolaszewski and his parishioners. In a letter to his bishop, Kolaszewski wrote,
At present, just now, I am finishing this great church. This needs all my attention, all my time. There are working at present, plasterers, stucco workers, fresco painters, oil painters, glass men, carpenters, marble workers, altar builders. And I myself personally superintend the work.¹

In another letter to his bishop, the pastor describes the economic burden:

At present I need a few thousand dollars more yet to complete this grand temple. The good people give it most willingly, but I have to call to their houses. I have to collect it from house to house. Saturday was payday. This morning I started a new house collection. We need money. This collection will take me more than a month, everyday from morning till evening.²

A year later, the structure was enclosed, and in November 1891, the church, the largest in the diocese, was dedicated. Not counting the entire expense of pews, altars, statuary, and stained glass, the cost was estimated at over $250,000. The Plain Dealer reported on the dedication:

Imposing Ceremonies at the Temple of Tod Street—A Big Parade through the Streets—Eloquent Speeches From Many Prominent Speakers—The Finest House of Worship in the Catholic Diocese.³

Attending the ceremony was the Chicago city treasurer, Peter Kiolbassa, who proclaimed St. Stanislaus “the finest Polish sanctuary in the United States.”⁴ (Chicago built its own large Polish church, St. Stanislaus of Kosta, in 1867).⁵ Also present that day was the architect of the church, William Dunn.⁶

The style of the church was not unfamiliar to the Polish people who attended it. The cathedral of St. Stanislaus in Krakow was Gothic. In 1840, Adam Idzkowski had used English Gothic to reconstruct the Warsaw cathedral, and in later decades the style invaded small towns throughout Poland.⁷

In Cleveland’s St. Stanislaus, the spires of the two towers rose 232 feet; the locally made, warm red brick, accentuated with dressed stone, was punctuated by the horizontal bands that characterize Victorian Gothic. The main facade of the church follows a harmony of its own: the two towers on either side of a niched statue of St. Stanislaus, over the entrance, represent a counterpoint to the mass of the design. Looking at an early photograph of the church, one is not disturbed by dramatic shifts in weight because of the carefully measured relationships.

Inside and out, the Latin cross plan, as in other Gothic churches, symbolically amplifies the Christian message. Crosses also adorn the church’s pinnacles and window gables. The holy trinity is symbolized in the triple-pier pointed arches, the three altar steps, and the triple moldings around the doors. Regeneration, symbolized by the number eight, is represented in the octagonal form of piers and fonts. Fish designs recall the ancient Christian symbol, based on the Greek word ichthus, an acronym for “Jesus Christ Son of God.”
The interior is a light and airy combination of delicate rib vaulting and thin piers decorated by floral rosettes. Radiating ribs decorated with gold leaf elaborate four-part vaults over the nave and aisle ceilings. These ribs, or supporting members, frame areas in the ceiling constructed of lightweight plaster that covers large expanses both aesthetically and economically.

The arms of the cross in the floor plan create two spaces called transepts. St. Stanislaus’ east transept wall supports a shrine to Our Lady of Czestochowa that honors the original shrine in Poland.

The lower portion of the cross, the nave, contains the main body of the sanctuary. The floor of the nave was originally covered with white Italian marble.

The stained glass of the church combines narrative art with floral and geometrically abstract designs in a comprehensive symbolic scheme. The legend of the martyrdom of St. Stanislaus appears in a great stained glass window above the choir loft. Old and New Testament stories about worshipful sacrifice are frescoed on the walls behind and to either side of the main altar. A technique practiced mainly in Italy between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, fresco involves using pigments applied to wet plaster to create mural paintings for large spaces.

While the church of St. Stanislaus has seen days of celebration, it has known death and misfortune. On April 21, 1909, a tornado destroyed its twin spires, "which crashed though the church roof, destroying the organ and many pews. Arthur Niedbalski, a seven-year-old who lived nearby, died when struck by bricks from one of the steeple. In the interests of public safety, the city would not allow the reconstruction of the spires to their original height.

Today the 120-foot towers stand crowned by dressed stone, their ornament a truncation of the original form. The two octagonal bell towers begin at the apex of the
the roof gable. They consist of panels with one arch in each of eight sections, topped by an arcaded balustrade and articulated with a small, stone-capped pinnacle. The effect is one of lightness, but nothing like the soaring and piercing steeples of the original design. All of the plain surfaces contain either arched windows or are angled by decorative pilasters, periodically interrupted with points that direct the eye to the sky.

A number of restorations have been made inside the church over the years. In 1958, the interior walls were refrescoed. Grey paint was removed from the ornately carved wooden altars from Germany. Over 150,000 feet of steel pipe and wood were required to build the scaffolding to reach the walls and the sixty-seven-foot high ceilings. During the last three years, the church has undergone more extensive restoration, including a new roof and interior and exterior cleaning. Heroic efforts were made to restore and rebuild the church organ as part of the church’s rededication ceremonies in November 1988.

Cleveland’s St. Stanislaus has earned the honor of inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places for both the distinction of its Victorian Gothic architecture and its role in preserving Polish culture. Having survived and
thrived, it remains the mother church of the Polish community in northeast Ohio. The church leaders and parishioners who built it over one hundred years ago knew that it was much more than brick and mortar, glass and stone. It stands today as a testimony to the hope, faith, and continuity of tradition of the Polish people of Cleveland.

Notes

1Charles W. Coulter, The Poles of Cleveland (Cleveland Americanization Committee, 1919).

2See William Thomas and Florian Zmaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (New York: Dover, 1958), which chronicles the story of the Polish emigrés using correspondence from the turn of the century.


4The Church in Northern Ohio and in the Diocese of Cleveland from 1817 to September 1887 by George S. Houck, Chancellor of the diocese in Cleveland, provides information on all the newly-formed ethnic parishes and their respective problems and achievements.


6Jagelewski.

7Archives (Cleveland Catholic Diocese).

8Archives.

9The Plain Dealer, November, 1891.

10The Plain Dealer, November, 1891.

11Joseph John Parot's Polish Catholics in Chicago, 1850–1920: A Religious History (Dekalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1981), describes the growth of the Polish community in Chicago. The most complete repository of information about Polish history in America is in Chicago. The Chicago Historical Society provided the date for Saint Stanislaus of Kosta Church.


14The Plain Dealer, April 22, 1909, 1.
Trinity Cathedral

Michael Wells

Trinity Cathedral has been a landmark in the Cleveland area since the early years of this century. As a religious structure it has been compared favorably with its European sisters. As both a cathedral and a parish church, with a bishop, dean, and strong-minded members, its sometimes Trollopean ecclesiastical politics have attracted the city’s attention. As a neighborhood institution it has reconsidered its role in the community whenever Cleveland’s economic and ethnic circumstances altered. Its decor as well as its liturgical and community celebrations have provided the city with impressive and sometimes controversial spectacles. Since its completion in 1907 the Cathedral’s robust life has been important to Cleveland and her citizens.

Some Early History

This importance began early on. Although plagued by controversy over its organization and its governance by bishops in the late eighteenth century, the American Episcopal Church eventually found itself expanding from the thirteen original states into the Northwest Territory. On November 9, 1816, a group of Episcopal laymen met in the home of Phineas Shephard to organize Trinity Parish in Ohio; four months later the Philadelphia Missionary Society, the evangelical agent of the church, sent Roger Searle, a Connecticut clergyman, to minister to the parishioners’ needs. Searle was, in fact, following his Plymouth, Connecticut Episcopal congregation into the west. Because many of its members had moved to the frontier to pursue new opportunities, the Missionary Society considered him the appropriate person to bring them together. By 1818, Searle, another Episcopal clergyman named Philander Chase, and the few interested Episcopal settlers who could spare the time for such matters organized the Episcopal Church in Ohio. In short order, Chase became the bishop of this church, continuing a professional life that was to lead him to national recognition as the frontier bishop.

In Cleveland Searle found thirteen Episcopal families and eleven communicants. After their organization in 1816, congregation members held services in the frame courthouse until 1820, when they decided to move the parish to Brooklyn and schedule an occasional service on the east.
side. This arrangement lasted, despite some grumbling, until 1825, when the decision was made to again locate the parish in Cleveland.6

By 1829, the congregation was able to celebrate the consecration of its first church in a ceremony performed by Bishop Chase. Described as “distinctly Gothic in detail,” the wooden church, located on the corner of Seneca (now West 3rd) and St. Clair, had a square tower and tall windows with green blinds. With its white walls, ceiling, and woodwork, it resembled a rural English chapel. As often happens, building costs overran estimates, coming in at $3,070, seventy dollars above expectations.7

This church burned down in 1854.8 Even before the fire, the congregation had decided that it needed to relocate to a larger structure. Important vestrymen such as Dr. Long (Cleveland’s first physician), Alfred Kelley (who lent his name to Kelley’s Island), and Samuel Mather headed a drive that resulted in the purchase of a lot on the south side of Superior Avenue, now the site of the Leader Building.9 Contracts for the construction of a new Trinity Church were let during April 1853, and after altering its plans, in 1855 the parish was able to move into a new stone church much larger than the first wooden structure.10 The new church served the parish until 1902, at which time the congregation left it because construction of the present Trinity Cathedral had begun.11 This second church was also technically a cathedral for part of its existence, since during its lifetime it became a bishop’s headquarters or seat.12

Building the Present Cathedral

As early as 1879, the southeast corner of Euclid Avenue and East 22nd Street had attracted the attention of Trinity Parish as a possible site for a new church. Negotiations over the $45,000 asking price proved fruitless, and in 1884 the congregation finally managed to purchase the property from the Reverend Lawson Carter for $51,000.13 In his last sermon at the church on Superior Avenue in 1902, Bishop William Leonard explained why the church was moved and discussed its cathedral form:

Some years ago it became evident to the authorities of Trinity Corporation that its sphere of usefulness was being cribbed and confined in this present situation. The outspread of the municipality to the east, and the south was phenomenal, due to the remarkable growth of our busy metropolis. The marks of trade and commerce, the place for traffic and multiplied industries came pressing about us. Many left our side and made themselves religious interest nearer their hearthstones in far-off sections of the city. We are the leaders of this important Diocese. The Cathedral should be the pivotal point, the irradiant center, the missionary corner stone, and we have accepted these requirements.14

Charles Schweinfurth, hired as the cathedral’s architect in 1890, designed a Romanesque parish house for the Euclid and East 22nd location; the building was complete in 1895.15 A Romanesque cathedral was also planned, but Schwein-
furth ran afoul of some strong architectural convictions held by Bishop Leonard. The bishop thought a Gothic building would better reflect the Episcopal Church in America. His architectural notions carried the day, and Schweinfurth submitted a new design in a Gothic style based upon fifteenth-century English precedents. Construction began on August 5, 1901.26

Of course, funds had to be raised to finance this large building project. The effort got under way in June 1892 when the Trinity Parish vestry made a request of the congregation and friends of Trinity Cathedral:

We need $300,000, and it is hoped that all the friends of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Ohio will take a lively interest in this matter, as it is to be the cathedral of the Diocese. Will you kindly give this matter your careful consideration, and as early as possible signify the amount you will contribute of the abundance that God has given you, for “the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”27
Naturally, the amount stipulated by the vestry in 1892 was not nearly enough. The estimated cost of the cathedral by March 1, 1906, was $573,469.86, and the Cathedral Building Fund on that date had taken in $527,576.96. Of this amount, Charles F. Brush donated $40,000; Bishop and Mrs. Leonard, $40,000; Samuel Mather, $100,000; Flora Mather, $10,000; William G. Mather, $50,000; and E.W. Oglebay, $30,000. In addition, church records note a special subscription pledge of $6,100 from Bishop Leonard to be used for wall facing and ceiling carvings and a pledge from Samuel Mather of $45,903.90 for the cathedral tower. Other, smaller contributions also helped pay for the cathedral. For example, St. James Church gave ten dollars for a children's column, and Mrs. F.B. Swayne gave one thousand dollars for a memorial pillar. The Cathedral Building Fund did not differ from any other capital fund-raising campaigns: the largesse of a few contributors allowed many small donations to have a hand in the success of the project.

After years of planning, fund-raising, and construction, congregation members, joined by visitors and distinguished guests, were finally able to celebrate the dedication of Trinity Cathedral on September 24, 1907. The ceremony was described by an eyewitness:

I saw Bishop Leonard mount the high steps of Trinity Cathedral and smiting the great oak doors with his jeweled pastoral staff, demand admission in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The big doors swung slowly open. Within were the wardens led by Samuel Mather. Up the aisle the procession moved. The verger at the head, bearing the pastoral staff, was followed by Bishop Leonard, his escort bishops, lay members
and clergy. The twenty-fourth Psalm was read. The bishop was addressed by Samuel Mather, who read the articles transferring the cathedral from the committee to the church. Dean DuMoulin pronounced the words of consecration, preceded and followed by prayer by Bishop Leonard. Came the reading of the Psalms by Bishop Charles D. Williams of Detroit, prayers by Bishop Partridge of Japan, Bishop Johnson of Los Angeles and Bishop Mills of Ontario, Canada. Thus terminated the consecration of Cleveland's... new Trinity Cathedral at Euclid Avenue and E. 22nd Street.

The Cathedral Building

What Clevelanders saw when Trinity Cathedral was completed in 1907, and what they still see today, is a sacred landmark reminiscent of medieval English churches and cathedrals. Its exterior is Indiana limestone while the interior walls are vitrified brick. The marble of the cathedral floors is matched by the eight-ton block of Pavonazza marble that, with a slab of Sienna marble, forms the altar. Panelled English oak was used for the wood furnishings. The windows, doors, capitals, and gargoyles done in conventional Gothic sculpture reflect Bishop Leonard's desire to have the cathedral symbolize the English origins of the Episcopal Church.

Trinity has been characterized as a fine example of English Gothic architecture. This development and its cathedral design were gradual realizations. The evolution of Schweinfurth's original Romanesque plans into a Gothic building came at the prodding of Bishop Leonard, met with the gradual approval of the building committee, and meant that architect, bishop, and committee worked closely in planning the structure. As opinions changed about the building's architectural style, the planners decided that only the lot size should limit a true cathedral-like appearance for the new Trinity. The cathedral thus joined America's Gothic architectural revival near its close and yet became a notable exemplar of this style.

Entering from the main doors on Euclid Avenue, those who follow Bishop Leonard's steps through the great oak doors pass through another set of doors into a sacred building laid out in typical church style as a crucifix. They have an uninterrupted view down the middle aisle and can clearly see from the entrance the altar and the intricate stone carvings above it known as reredos. The cathedral walls rise up to the clerestory; here the windows, above the aisle roofs, provide natural light. The cathedral's many stained glass windows enhance its other decorative elements. It is clearly, as one of Bishop Leonard's successors described it over forty years after its consecration, "one of the nation's beautiful churches."

Trinity's Community Role

Bishop Nelson Burroughs went on to note the cathedral's role as a community member by stating that "its influence in the Cleveland metropolitan area, and throughout the
Diocese of Ohio is already great. It has extensive financial resources in endowment, and a devoted congregation whose talents are already [sic] to be tapped by an imaginative leader." While the bishop might seem to have been stating the obvious in 1953, these comments do not reflect the discussions he and many others have had about Trinity's place in Cleveland. These discussions in the late twentieth century are a continuation of those begun in 1907. Even before the present Trinity was built, other bishops had expressed reservations about the attention sometimes devoted to the parish activities by the local media. Parish election coverage in the local press generated some of this concern, and the prominence of the new structure served to heighten community interest in Trinity Parish and its cathedral.

Of course, the first worshippers in the cathedral at Euclid and East 22nd found its location to be almost sylvan; some of them, in fact, lived in this very attractive neighborhood. According to an early description, "across the street deep lawns stretched to mansions framed in history. On the cathedral side splendid homes reached to Case Avenue (now E. 40th St.), the residence of Bishop Leonard among them. To the west were palatial houses, in many of which lived members of the church." In this setting, Trinity parishioners could take a more sanguine interest in the relationship of the cathedral to the community. However, the rapid move to the suburbs, the influx of Europeans and new arrivals from the deep South, and the increasingly industrial nature of Cleveland's economy quickly changed the cathedral's neighborhood and confronted its worshippers with some complex religious, political, and economic questions.

Hints of these questions can be found in the following comments, made in 1925, by the dean to the congregation:

Bishop Leonard's desires and efforts have given us laymen who with his devoted wife have made our fabric what it already is. But there is yet much to be done, before this shrine of ours will be quite fitted for its task. I am neither ready nor desirous to have Trinity Cathedral a "popular" church in the ordinary acceptation of that word. But I am desirous that our Cathedral should carry and present and represent at all times the message and spirit of Jesus, the Christ in such a way that "all sorts and conditions of men" will acknowledge the clarity, purity, strength and unflinching requirements which that Message and Spirit demand.

Almost thirty years later, the Trinity Cathedral congregation was still reminding itself that an essentially white, middle-class church located in a declining neighborhood had an obligation to its immediate environs. In 1954, a church publication drew this obligation to the parishioners' attention:

The people who live here are transients, living in hotels and boarding-houses and neither having nor wanting any real roots in this area. Many others live in housing that long since has been outworn. Although much of the area is covered with non-dwelling buildings or spaces, there are unknown numbers of people living in this area who need to know of God's love for them through Jesus Christ our Lord. How can we tell them?
Yes, the congregation was told, membership does come from the Greater Cleveland area, and these people are important. However, the publication continued, "none of us will be fulfilling our real function unless and until we have larger and more effective ministry to the people who can walk to our buildings."

Cooperative effort was to be the key to this outreach ministry:

There is no sense in any one of us trying to do the whole job nor for all of us to do the same things and set up a competitive failure. We should join together our forces for the common good of the people around us. By pooling our forces we can and will find the answer to the questions of who to minister to the people who live about our buildings.

As opposed to their nondirectional sense of mission in the 1950s, by 1960, cathedral members had become more realistic as to Trinity's situation. The cathedral was described by a consultant as "a downtown church with a widespread and constantly diminishing parish." Its wealthy supporters were succumbing to time, and families with children and young people were not joining the parish. More and more the congregation gathered for worship could be described as one of "visitors and transients." Those concerned about the cathedral's role in the community were now also worried about the future of Trinity itself.

As Trinity's internal discussions about its mission developed in the 1960s, they became more complicated because of developments outside the Episcopal church and the problems caused by having a parish church and a cathedral within the same structure. While the building of the Innerbelt and Cleveland State University had a positive effect on the Trinity-area redevelopment, it also complicated the congregation's struggle to sort out a mission for its parish and cathedral. Area redevelopment, while welcome, was also seen as threatening to Trinity's green space. In the midst of discussion about these external changes, Trinity members also posed for themselves several questions about their structure, as noted in a 1967 church memorandum:

- Should Trinity Cathedral primarily be a parish church which happens to be called a Cathedral with certain minimal usage by the Diocese?
- Should Trinity Cathedral be primarily an arm of the Diocese and Bishops with responsibility for carrying out the work of the Diocese?
- Should Trinity be both a parish church and the center of life in the Diocese seeking and implementing new forms of ministry cutting across all denominational lines and providing a powerful "voice" in Cleveland?

It should not be a surprise that Trinity's congregants decided to continue the ambiguous but wider role of being both a parish and a cathedral as they attempted to adapt their religion to the fast-breaking social and economic changes occurring around them. This dual role had been part of Trinity since 1907, and it had served the cathedral and the parish well through earlier years of change. In fact,
a more precise or narrow definition might actually have increased the difficulty of being a religious institution in an area where religious faith was not always a priority.

**Ceremonial**

Ceremony was one of the devices employed by Trinity to bring together the "real world" and the Episcopal faith. Earlier church discussions about ceremony revolved around debates between high- and low-church practices, and bishops always took care to insure that liturgical practices be kept within official guidelines. These ceremonial discussions changed when the 1960s presented opportunities to bring the secular into Trinity Cathedral. Music played a major role in bringing the world into the sanctuary. This is not to say that Trinity's managers were forgetful of tradition; they remained well aware of it.

Combining the sacred and the secular in Trinity through music made a particularly strong impression on Clevelanders. Trinity has always prided itself on a fine musical tradition. Some of this music in recent times stems
from Trinity’s acquisition in 1977 of a new organ to supplement its older Skinner instrument. Built by Flentrop Orgelbouw of Zaandam, Holland, this organ weighs 34,000 pounds, has 2600 pipes, and is mechanical in both key and stop action. Its music can be heard on Sundays, during the weekly “Brown Bag Concerts” and at recital.42

It seems only natural that this Trinity tradition should connect with a willingness to bring in the outside. As one Trinity dean put it, “We seek to maintain the high respect for Christianity in an area where movements are fast and ever changing. To do this, Trinity will integrate its ministry into the local cultural scene and modernize its approach as situations demand.”43 The January 1966 Sunday jazz service and the use in January 1973 of the cast of the musical hit “Godspell” in assisting the clergy in a Sunday service are perhaps the most well-known examples of this integration.44

While these experiments were not without their detractors, Trinity Cathedral’s willingness to stretch its liturgical traditions to include jazz and Broadway demonstrated a continuing effort to keep the cathedral in the midst of its city without destroying its religious purpose. The recently erected Gene Kangas sculpture between the cathedral and the Church House is another manifestation of Trinity’s willingness to alter form to serve a continually evolving function.

Notes


2Church Life, April 1984.

3Ibid.


5Newspaper clipping, n.d., Trinity Parish, Box 1, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

6The Plain Dealer, 8 October 1943.

7The Plain Dealer, 1 October 1938; The Plain Dealer, 8 October 1943; Church Life, April 1984.

8The Plain Dealer, 14 October 1943.

9Church Life, April 1984; The Plain Dealer, 14 October 1943.

10The Plain Dealer, 14 October, 1943; The Plain Dealer, 7 May 1938; newspaper clipping, n.d., Trinity Parish Box 1, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

11Newspaper clipping, Trinity Parish, Box 1, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.
In 1874, the Episcopal church in Ohio divided into two dioceses and the northern forty-seven counties became the Diocese of Ohio. This meant that the second Trinity structure became the first Trinity Cathedral after 1890 when Bishop Gregory Thurston Bedell's cathedral proposal was adopted. See Michael Wells, "Episcopalians," in The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, 376.

"The Cleveland Press, 1 December 1966; The Plain Dealer, 19 October 1980.

"Historical Sketch of Trinity Parish (n.p., n.d.), Trinity Box 1, File 4, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.


"Daniels, 71. See also The Cleveland Press, 8 October 1966.

"Message from vestry to congregation and friends of Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Parish Box 1, File 3, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.


"Annual Report of Trinity Cathedral Building Committee for Year Ending March 1st 1906." Some accounts note that Samuel Mather gave one million dollars to the cathedral building campaign, the cost of the building in excess of what was available. See William Ganson Rose, Cleveland: The Making of a City (Cleveland: World, 1950), 513, and The Plain Dealer, 19 October 1980. Other accounts indicate that Samuel Mather offered to pay for the cathedral tower when costs went above the allotted $500,000—on the condition that the tower be dedicated to his father, Samuel Livingston Mather. See The Cleveland Press, 8 October 1966. The tower is named for the elder Mather; this fact and the 1906 building report would seem to indicate that the last description of Mather's gifts is the most accurate.

"The Plain Dealer, 30 September 1938.


"Trinity: The Cathedral Church.


"Newspaper clipping, 18 November 1934, Trinity Parish Box 3, File 1 (Windows). Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"Letter, Bishop Nelson Burroughs to the Reverend Percy Rex, 14 April 1953, Trinity Parish Box 4, File 2 (Correspondence 1950s). Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.


"Confidential letters from Bishop Gregory Bedell to Samuel Mather endorsing a candidate for assistant Bishop and expressing concern about newspaper coverage of diocesan elections, 17 May 1885, 2 March 1888, 5 March 1888, Trinity Parish Box 1, File 4, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"The Plain Dealer, 30 September 1938.


"Church Life, January 1954.

Ibid.

Ibid.
Memorandum, "How should the contributions of Trinity Cathedral to Missions and the General Church be Determined," 21 June 1960, Trinity Parish Box 1, File 3, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives. Further discussions about Trinity's future can be found in The Plain Dealer, 19 October 1980; Memorandum, The Reverend Jones B. Shannon to vestry members of Trinity Cathedral, 28 July 1967, Trinity Parish Box 2, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Trinity Cathedral, 28 January 1980, Trinity Parish Box 2, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives; The Cleveland Press, 2 December 1966.


Memorandum, R. Henry Norweb to the Trinity vestry, 12 May 1965, Trinity Parish Box 4, File 1 (Correspondence 1960s), Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

The tower of Trinity Cathedral overlooks an area near downtown Cleveland that was once an elite neighborhood, then became a poor and dilapidated one, and is now undergoing renewal. In the foreground: part of a sculpture installation by Gene Kangas, on the campus of adjacent Cleveland State University.
"Memorandum, the Reverend Jones B. Shannon to the Trinity vestry, 28 July 1967, Trinity Parish Box 2, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"Memorandum, the Reverend Jones B. Shannon to the Trinity vestry; Memorandum, the Trinity vestry to the Reverend Jones B. Shannon, 25 August 1967, Trinity Parish Box 2, File 2 (Personnel), Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives; Trinity dean Perry Williams, quoted in The Plain Dealer, 19 October 1980.

"Correspondence between the Right Reverend C.P. Melwine, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of the Diocese of Ohio, and the Reverend James A. Bolles, D.D., Rector of Trinity Church, Cleveland (Cleveland: Harris, Fairbanks and Co., 1857) presents the case for and defense against charges of high church beliefs and practices. Twentieth-century concerns about liturgical practices appear in a letter from Bishop Nelson Burroughs to the Reverend Percy Rex, 14 May 1953, Trinity Parish Box 4, File 2 (Correspondence 1950s), Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives, and in liturgical reports on the Reverend Mr. Rex made in March and April 1953, Trinity Parish Box 4, File 2 (Correspondence 1950s), Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"Letter, Bishop John Burt to George P. Bickford, 12 June 1967, Trinity Parish Box 4, File 1 (Correspondence 1960s), Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"Memorandum, the Reverend Jones B. Shannon to the Trinity vestry, 28 July 1967, Trinity Parish Box 2, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"The Cleveland Press, n.d.

"The Reverend David Loegler, quoted in The Plain Dealer, c. 1966, newspaper clipping, Trinity Parish Box 1, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.

"Both the jazz liturgy and the "Godspell" appearance were well covered by local media. Correspondence attacking or commending the jazz liturgy was heavy for the several weeks following it and may be found in Trinity Parish Box 2, File 1, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio Archives.
Notable Stained Glass Windows in Cleveland Churches

James Whitney and Thomas Hallet

Over the past century and a half, one of the dominant trends in stained glass, as in church architecture, has been the revival of ancient styles. Cleveland's churches, built during this period, naturally reflect this trend.

How Stained Glass Is Made

A stained glass window is essentially pieces of colored glass held together by a framework of solder and lead. The artist creates a design based on the size of the window opening. Once the client approves the design it is made into a full size drawing called a "cartoon." Patterns made from the cartoon serve as guides for cutting the pieces of glass.

The glass is colored in its molten state by mixing it with various metallic oxides. The glass manufacturer makes this mixture, called pot metal glass, into flat sheets by a variety of methods.

The artist chooses the glass for the window according to its color, density, shading, and texture, then cuts it according to the pattern. Once the colored glass is cut, the artist paints on details such as robes and facial features. The paints, which contain metallic oxides and finely ground
glass, are mixed with various liquids so that they can be applied with brushes. The painting can range from simple opaque lines, called trace lines, to elaborately shaded and blended features that look three-dimensional. Heating the glass in a kiln fuses the paint to the surface. The glazer assembles the pieces of glass into panels using strips of lead called came, which fit around the glass and are soldered together. The glazer then waterproofs the panels by forcing putty between the glass and the lead. The panels are then ready for installation.

Trinity Cathedral—East 22nd and Euclid Avenue

Trinity Cathedral’s aisle window portraying the adoration of the Magi demonstrates some of the technical features of stained glass. Its anonymous designer filled it with intense but subtly shaded colors; these are particularly apparent in Mary’s robe. Carefully controlled color and shading permit the window to achieve its intended effects even if worshippers may be viewing it in a range of light conditions from thirty or more feet away. An overcast day is actually better than a clear day for viewing stained glass; on a cloudy day the glass glows.

A window such as this brought into the studio for restoration would appear nearly opaque. It is only on site, framed by the relatively dark church (and Trinity is quite dark) that the colors “speak.” The artist knew from experience just how much color and paint to use on the glass to achieve this effect.

Although the cathedral’s generally accurate records credit the window to Wilbur Herbert Burnham of Boston, who prepared the other aisle windows, this is not his work.

Trinity Cathedral: Adoration of the Magi. Artist unknown. (Detail, showing high level of painting.)
The window is in the Romantic Gothic Revival style, perhaps influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites of William Morris’s circle. It is very much like a window by the Victorian Charles Eamer Kempe, in the National Cathedral, but it could be German. Mary’s blonde hair may be an example of cultural influences that often found their way into religious art.

The Louis Comfort Tiffany studios in New York created the glass angel that is the focus of the window in the sacristy. Designed for the earlier cathedral at East 9th Street and Euclid Avenue, the window is now located in a hallway near the Dean’s office. Instead of the transparent colored glass used since medieval times, Tiffany produced images using a multicolored and translucent type of glass. Known as opalescent glass, its color variations, textures, density, and shading create the main effects in a Tiffany window, although certain details, such as hands and faces, were still painted.
Wade Memorial Chapel—Wade Park

The windows produced by the Tiffany studios, quite different from the two-dimensional medieval manner, are designed to look three-dimensional. Although Gothic Revival windows do achieve depth, primarily through the use of paint on glass, Tiffany used layering and natural shading variations in the opalescent glass to suggest fabric folds, wings, and feathers.

The Wade Chapel window, portraying the resurrection of Christ, is a fine example of Tiffany's work. It was shown in the 1900 World Exposition in Paris before being installed. The chapel also includes Tiffany mosaics.

When St. Paul's Shrine at Euclid and East 40th Street was an Episcopal church, it had Tiffany windows, but these have been replaced. However, other Tiffany windows can be seen in Calvary Presbyterian Church, in the Old Stone Church, and in the choir loft of the Church of the Covenant. The Temple (Temple Tifereth Israel on E. 105 St.) contains a Tiffany window designed for the congregation's earlier structure on East 55th Street. There is an excellent window by Frederick Wilson, once Tiffany's principal designer, on a staircase landing of the old County Courthouse.

Bethany English Lutheran Church—15460 Triskett Road

Unlike the Tiffany windows, Bethany's twentieth-century stained-glass portrayal of the passion of Christ could almost be a product of the thirteenth century. Located in the chancel and made of pot metal glass, it was designed by perhaps the most notable stained glass artist ever to practice in Cleveland, R. Toland Wright, who died in 1934.

Wright was very much a medievalist; not just his style but his subject matter has medieval origins. In feel, background, and coloration, this window is reminiscent of a window in the Bourges cathedral. It is Neo-Gothic, much more faithful to the Gothic tradition than was stained glass made in the earlier Gothic Revival manner.

In true medieval style, Wright uses an elaborate pattern of symbolism in his portrayal. He depicts, for example, an Old Testament type, Moses, together with the New Testament antitype, Christ. Medieval windows are filled with such symbols—the keys or upside-down cross that represents Peter, for instance, or, as in this window, water, representing Christ's blood, flowing through a rock. In ancient times, the clergy used panes of stained glass as an aid to teach illiterate congregations, who came to understand—and were expected to contemplate—the elaborate symbolism depicted in them. Ironically, this complex symbolism, a kind of liturgical language, is lost on today's highly literate congregations.
The Church of the Saviour–2537 Lee Road

Wright also prepared the pot metal glass windows in the High Gothic-style Church of the Saviour. The baptismal window, portraying the baptism of Christ, uses a white pearl border around the medallion to catch the viewer’s eye. The border is a medieval technique little used in this century.

The Church of the Saviour also contains a memorial window to Wright that depicts St. John the Divine, the patron of craft workers. Although small, the window is composed of thousands of tiny glass pieces. This is, again, a technique characteristic of medieval times, when glass was relatively precious and even the smallest pieces were used in some way. The window, in Wright’s style, was made by his wife Ruth as a memorial and dedicated on Easter 1935.

Little is known of Wright’s life. He may have come to Cleveland to work on windows for the now-demolished St. Agnes Church. Wright’s house and studio were on East 82nd Street, where the Chester Avenue extension now runs. His legacy in glass can be seen in a great many churches in Greater Cleveland and throughout the country.
Amasa Stone Chapel–Euclid Avenue

Amasa Stone Chapel honors Amasa Stone, the iron ore magnate, who was the father of Flora Stone Mather and the father-in-law of industrialist Samuel Mather, the benefactors of Western Reserve University, where the chapel is located.

Its south window, a memorial to Flora Stone Mather, is the work of Charles Kempe, who had an imposing reputation in his lifetime, and whose work reflects the aesthetic ideals of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. The only authenticated work by Kempe in Cleveland, this window is rich in ornamentation and painted details.

St. Stephen’s Church–1930 West 54th Street

Windows from the “Munich school” enliven many of the older Catholic churches in the city, with fine examples in St. Patrick’s, St. Joseph Franciscan, St. Peter’s, St. Paul’s, St. John’s Cathedral, and St. Stephen’s.

The Munich school began in the nineteenth century through the patronage of Ludwig I of Bavaria (“Mad King Ludwig,” who was also Richard Wagner’s patron). Though the Munich studios were operated on something like an assembly-line basis, their products were of excellent quality. Windows in St. Stephen’s, all of which probably were made in the Mayer Studios in Munich, reflect the technical skill of the Munich artisans. The painting is of virtuoso quality, and the level of detail—and care over detail—is staggering. Garments have a palpable, naturalistic quality—velvet and brocade have a remarkably lush appearance. And although the
"Munich school" window in St. Stephen's depicting the changing of water to wine at the wedding at Cana. (The transformation occurs abruptly in mid-stream!)
pot metal glass windows are very heavily worked with paint, they appear vibrant, not dark or dull. Even very highly blended areas spring to dramatic life in the light.

But then—the assembly-line quality. St. Stephen's shares a window with St. Patrick's—both churches have nearly identical windows that depict the wedding feast at Cana.

Munich-style windows were produced by a group of studios that included the Royal Bavarian, Zettler, and Mayer (which is still in operation).

**The Church of the Covenant—11205 Euclid**

The Church of the Covenant was designed by Ralph Adams Cram, who often used windows by Charles J. Connick of Boston. This church, however, was constructed in 1909, early in Connick's career, and it has only two Connick windows, rendered in his early style. As seen in the Hickox Window on the aisle, portraying Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Isaiah, Connick’s work shows a reaction against the techniques of Tiffany and a return to a medieval style.
The Church of the Covenant also has (perhaps ironically, in view of Connick's attitude) a Tiffany window in the choir loft, the "Good Shepherd" window, moved from the Beckwith Memorial Presbyterian Church. Two other Tiffany windows, removed from other Presbyterian churches, were once stored in the basement but have been sold.

Most of the windows installed upon the opening of the Church of the Covenant were by Gorham Studios, as were some of the memorial windows added later.

Two other important windows in this church are the small contemporary windows in the narthex, created by Douglas Phillips. Considering their size, they are remarkable for their elegant lines and the deft handling of their varied colors.
St Paul’s Episcopal Church—
2727 Fairmount Boulevard

The windows in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, in particular the five-panel window in the choir loft, represent the best of modern design. These windows, which are still being executed, are the work of Carolyn Swash, an Englishwoman who won a design competition for the stained glass while living in Cleveland. St. Paul’s vision on the road to Damascus is the focus of the John Cremer Young Memorial window in the balcony. Of pot metal glass, the window makes rich use of colors associated with the liturgy—primarily radiating whites and golds that effectively convey the majesty of heaven, but also rich reds and blues favored by medieval stained glass artists, and a small amount of violet, a symbol of repentance.

The artist’s first windows for St. Paul’s were intricate, but the most recent are not so elaborate and perhaps not as striking. Nonetheless, her work effectively translates the ancient art of stained glass into modern terms.

Although thousands of stained glass windows were made for churches and other public buildings throughout the United States, many have been lost owing to neglect, vandalism, theft, and the demolition of the buildings that contain them. If we are to preserve this fragile art we need first to take note of what we have. An organization designed to accomplish this goal is the Census of Stained Glass Windows in America, 1840–1940. Founded in 1979, its stated purpose is to register information, make it publicly available, and encourage the preservation and appreciation of the stained glass windows in this country.
Eric Mendelsohn’s Park Synagogue

Vision informs reality

Walter Leedy

Strategically located within a woodland of thirty acres in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, is the Park Synagogue. Built under the steadfast leadership of Rabbi Armond E. Cohen, this synagogue, which was dedicated in 1950, reflects a concatenation of factors: the history and aspirations of its congregation, the purpose and function of a synagogue, and the solution of a design problem by one of the most strong-minded, brilliant, and prophetic twentieth-century architects, Eric Mendelsohn.

The particulars regarding the founding of the congregation have yet to be discovered, despite their historical importance. According to oral history and tradition, however, in 1869, Orthodox Jewish immigrants in Cleveland founded Anshe Emeth, which means “People of Truth.” Known as the “Polish” synagogue, Anshe Emeth was destined to become the Park Synagogue.

During its first years, the congregation worshipped in various rented halls in the West 6th-West 3rd-Ontario Street area. Soon, however, as a result of untiring industry and sacrifice, they purchased a church on Erie Street and converted it into a synagogue.¹ In 1904 the congregation moved to a commodious new brick synagogue on Forest Avenue (now East 37th Street) near Woodland.

At this time members called Rabbi Samuel Margolies to the pulpit.² He was destined to become a leader of Cleveland Jewry because of his traditional Judaism, his appeal to Zionists, and his conviction that Jews should quickly “Americanize” by abandoning their Eastern European attire and mannerisms. He was an eloquent preacher, both in Yiddish, the language of the immigrant Jew, and in English.³ The view that Jews must Americanize eventually led in part to the creation of an American form of traditional Judaism—Conservative Judaism, which “conserved” some of the legitimacy of the halakah,⁴ even while affirming the imperatives of modernity. After a period of stormy transition, Anshe Emeth embraced Conservative Judaism in the 1920s.

Chair of the Art Department at Cleveland State University, Walter Leedy received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture from the University of Michigan and a doctorate in the history of European art from the Courtauld Institute of Art of the University of London. He is a specialist in medieval architectural history and has published numerous articles and papers on the subject. His other scholarly interests include twentieth-century concerns, such as the architecture and urban planning of Cleveland. The discussion of Park Synagogue in this issue of The Gamut is a preliminary study of what he considers to be one of the most significant modern structures in the United States, designed by one of the most important—and under-studied—architects of the twentieth century.
Before that occurred, however, Rabbi Margolies unexpectedly resigned to become associate editor of *The Jewish World*; he died a year later from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Rabbi Margolies was the most outspoken proponent for The Talmud Torah (The Cleveland Hebrew Schools), and with Margolies' support the schools launched an appeal for a large new building, which was intensified as a result of his death. Later the Talmud Torah joined with Anshe Emeth to build the Jewish Center. The merger in 1916 of Anshe Emeth with Beth Tefilo—a congregation founded with Rabbi Margolies' encouragement in 1912 to serve the Orthodox Jews of Glenville—provided additional congregational support for an enlarged program.5

As Margolies was a "progressive" or "enlightened" rabbi, the congregation sought a similar successor. Rabbi Samuel Benjamin was appointed in 1919; he led the drive to create a synagogue center that would add a recreational dimension to the traditional prayer and educational facilities. This idea was based on the concept that followers of Judaism belonged to both a religious and a secular culture. The first synagogue center of this type was established in New York in 1916 under the leadership of Mordecai Kaplan, who later was to teach Rabbi Cohen.6

Dedicated in 1922,7 the Jewish Center, located on East 105th Street and Grantwood in Glenville, then the heart of Cleveland's Jewish community, provided facilities that were not found elsewhere. Besides the synagogue, the building included an auditorium, classrooms, a gymnasium, and one of the largest indoor swimming pools in the city. Athletic activities, such as boxing, were taught by a trained staff. Synagogue leaders sought to provide Jews with religious and other activities that interested them. As a result, congregation members spent a great deal of time within the confines of the synagogue building. The Center was thus the vehicle through which Jewish life expressed itself. It was also very visible: a block long, the Center was an anomaly among the small buildings around it. It had visual presence, dominating its densely built-up environment.
In 1922 Rabbi Benjamin was dismissed because he stood fast by the Orthodox element within the congregation. He was replaced by Rabbi Solomon Goldman, who found a lay leadership responsive to his educational objectives: to persuade Jews that they ought to worship and to convince them that they ought to be identified with the Jewish people. To this end the Center further expanded its religious, educational, social, and recreational programs. Rabbi Goldman encouraged intellectual discussion and invited various notables with sharply contrasting views to speak to the congregation; as a result, he fostered an informed and intelligent lay leadership. The many other dynamic congregations in the area lacked the facilities and resources to support extensive programming. Thus the Jewish Center was the locus of activity—the geographic center—not only for its members but for the entire neighborhood of Glenville and beyond.

Rabbi Goldman was responsible for moving the congregation completely into the Conservative orbit, causing so much opposition from the Orthodox faction within the congregation that a court battle ensued. He was succeeded in 1929 by Rabbi Harry Davidovitz, who resigned in 1935 to work in Palestine.

When Rabbi Cohen joined the congregation in 1934, the Jewish Center, while well established, was confronted with new challenges and opportunities. By the early 1940s the Jewish population of Cleveland began to shift to the suburban Heights area; judging from past experience, the leadership of the Center knew that its membership would dwindle. Of necessity, the congregation’s earlier moves to new locations had paralleled the migration of the Jewish community within Cleveland, for it was not until 1950 that the Rabbinical Assembly of the United Synagogue of America voted to permit automobile travel on the Sabbath to attend worship services, thus—some would contend—accepting the reality of current practice. The move to the suburbs—a less dense social and physical environment—aggravated the problem many Jews had of maintaining their Jewish identity. While a Jewish congregation may become sentimentally attached to their old synagogue, no religious reasons prevented them from moving to a more convenient location.

The general movement into the suburbs occurred because Jews sought better residential housing and relief from the congested urban environment. This movement was to accelerate after World War II, when the economic base of the community began to explode (wealth was now more equally distributed within the Jewish community), and restrictive housing barriers against Jews began to crumble. (In contrast with the 1920s, Cleveland proper is today a city nearly without a Jewish population.) In response to the migration of the congregation to the Heights area, the Jewish Center began to conduct religious classes in rented rooms in the Masonic Temple Annex at Mayfield and Lee Roads.

In 1942 synagogue leaders announced they might establish a branch and eventually move the Center to the Heights area. To this end a committee headed by Myron E.
Glass negotiated for the purchase of property. They quickly found the ideal site—the twenty-seven-acre Kenyon Painter estate located at Lee and Fairmount. Just when an agreement seemed inevitable, however, Mrs. Painter unexpectedly transferred title, some said, practically as a gift, to the Ursuline nuns for the relocated Beaumont School for Girls.

But the twelve-acre site of the Park School, located on Euclid Heights Boulevard between Ivydale and Compton Roads, became available. This progressive institution was in financial trouble; it also suffered from a shortage of male teachers because of America's entry into World War II. Soon after, school administrators announced that the school would close. Rabbi Cohen spotted the announcement and called the chair of the school's board of directors to request that he be notified if the site were to be sold; he was. After it was announced that the site would be auctioned—the school filed for voluntary bankruptcy in U.S. District Court—Rabbi Cohen heard that the Catholics were also interested in it, so he telephoned Bishop McFadden, a friend of his, recalling the recent circumstances pertaining to the Painter estate. Bishop McFadden assured Rabbi Cohen that the Catholics would not bid against them. Leonard Ratner, a leading member of the Jewish Center and a successful Cleveland developer, went with Rabbi Cohen in November 1942 to the auction, which was teeming not only with other developers but, to their surprise, with priests and nuns. The situation grew tense. The Catholics, however, kept their word. The Jewish Center's bid was the only one; the Center acquired the site for $31,500. (The priests and nuns were there to bid only on the school's furnishings, which they soon learned were to be sold together with the site.)

Because of the war, gasoline rationing was in effect. The Euclid Heights Boulevard site, within easy walking distance of the Taylor/Lee bus and Mayfield Road streetcar lines, was therefore ideally located. At that time, perhaps to assure some members of his congregation, Rabbi Cohen said firmly that the congregation would not abandon its activities on East 105th Street.

With wartime restrictions on building in force, this site offered another advantage: school buildings, playgrounds, and equipment were already in existence. Therefore, educational activities were able to start immediately in January 1943. During their first three years at the Park site, the congregation developed the Park Religious Schools, Park Hebrew Academy, Park Nursery, Park Day Camp, and Park Chapel. In May 1944 it held a mortgage-burning party to celebrate the payment of all debts.

Leonard Ratner thought the congregation should acquire an additional eighteen-acre parcel of land next to the Park School site that would secure them prominent frontage and visibility on Mayfield Road, a major traffic artery. In an attempt to acquire it, Rabbi Cohen wrote to the owner of the parcel, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Rockefeller's reply was negative: he said he already had an agreement with a developer. Suspecting an unwillingness to sell to
Jews, Ratner sent a gentile in his firm to negotiate for the land and was thereby able to acquire it. (In the process of developing neighboring Forest Hills, Rockefeller had an understanding with potential buyers that he would not sell to Jews. It is reasonable to believe, however, that he knew to whom he was selling the land and for what purpose it was being acquired.)

No plans were announced for a new synagogue when the Cleveland Jewish Center on East 105th street was put up for sale in March 1945 for a quarter of its original cost of one million dollars.

As soon as wartime restrictions on building were over, the Center proposed to build a new synagogue, unique in its physical layout among synagogues in the world. The Park Synagogue was to be a symbol of [its members'] confidence in the preservation of Jewish life in Greater Cleveland. With uniqueness in its surroundings, and in its grasp of the concept of broadening Jewish living, the greatest opportunity in American Jewish history of serving a community, is offered to the Cleveland Jewish Center.

Addressing the congregation, Rabbi Cohen said the Center was embarking on a great adventure. We need to create a center of religious life particularly for our returning servicemen and their families. In view of the destruction of Jewish religious life in Europe we must intensify efforts here.

Nationally, Conservative congregations sought to provide a setting for both sacred and secular activities for returning veterans so that their "re-discovery" of the synagogue would be congenial and their relationship with organized religion a happy one.

To arrive at an architectural plan for their new synagogue center, the congregation invited local architects to submit proposals. This approach proved to be informative. At their annual meeting in 1945, it was announced that the proposed structure would be placed on the highest point of the site and would have a center section seating about one thousand with two wings for class and meeting rooms. On High Holy Days the Temple proper and its wings could be combined to seat about 2,500 people. American synagogues like the Park, which had the largest Conservative congregation in America, had to make provision for several times the normal Sabbath seating on the High Holy Days—Rosh Hashanah (the New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). Because of their length, worship services could not be repeated by being placed back to back, as they might have been in a Christian church on Christmas or Easter; thus, this type of "expanding synagogue" obviates the need for off-site space and extra personnel to lead "overflow" services. This type of plan, therefore, reflects the reality of Jewish religious practice. Besides the unusual site, therefore, the Park's leaders recognized the usefulness of a multi-purpose, adaptable, open structure. Such a plan was current in the 1940s in theories of synagogue design; the concept derived from the current design theories for
modern industrial plants. Another innovation was the absence of a balcony, although the old synagogue had one; all members of the congregation were to be seated on the same level. Ground was to be broken in the spring of 1946.

While its educational and symbolic potential was recognized, neither of the two proposed alternative designs (by Charles C. Colman and Braverman and Halprin) published in the fund-raising prospectus and local newspapers truly responded to the uniqueness of the site. While both proposals were for comparatively low buildings with taller center sections, more suburban than urban in character, neither exploited the site's visually strong topographical features. The tract slopes irregularly upward from Mayfield Road to the east and contains a brook running through a twenty-foot deep, east-west oriented ravine. A smaller, subsidiary ravine branching off from this major one defines a triangular promontory, thirty feet higher in elevation than Mayfield Road. Later this projecting land mass would be recognized as the ideal location for the synagogue, for with proper landscaping a building placed on this promontory had the potential to be visible from Mayfield Road, located almost one thousand feet away. At this time, however, the site looked, to one reporter, like "an overgrown woods you could find on an abandoned farm."

Before building could begin, the congregation had to overcome a legal hurdle. After some hesitation, local residents petitioned the Cleveland Heights Zoning and Planning Commission to deny the necessary rezoning request that would enable a synagogue to be built on the site. This was not surprising; suburbanites are traditionally opposed to any non-residential use of land in the vicinity of their homes. In this instance, however, the residents' structural anti-Semitism intensified their objections. But in spite of their petitions the Commission granted a permit to build in July 1947.

Whoever was chosen to design the building had to consider the function of a synagogue: to house Jewish congregational worship, study, and community meetings. "Community" is central to the idea of a synagogue; this idea constitutes the synagogue in its most fundamental sense. (Because Hebrew has no indigenous word in common use for temple of worship, the Greek synagogue has
been used in English since the twelfth century on the model of the Hebrew *beth hakketereth*, house of assembly.) Although there are three major practices of Jewish doctrine (Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox), in ascending order of strict adherence to Jewish ritual law, the differences have little actual effect on synagogue design.

Awareness of a synagogue's programmatic requirements would impose upon the architect of a synagogue numerous constraints. Specific architectural considerations include the fact that every synagogue must have an ark, the repository for the Torah scrolls and therefore the holiest feature of the synagogue, and a *bimah*, the table and platform from which the scrolls are read. In addition, the congregation, which always faces the ark during prayer, requires seats. Space must also be provided for reading desks and for storing prayer books.

By its importance, the *bimah* is the principal determinant for a synagogue's plan. From there the officiant reads the Torah scrolls and leads the congregation in turning toward Jerusalem during prayer. As the primary focus of attention, the *bimah*’s importance is signified by its location, design, and, customarily, lighting, which is usually the most intense around it. While the *bimah* has to be only large enough to hold the Torah scrolls, it is traditionally made of wood to imitate the wooden pulpit from which Ezra read the Law, as recorded in Nehemiah 8:4, and raised on a platform surrounded by a railing for safety.

While the *bimah* usually stands on the architectural axis of most synagogues, modifications in the position of the *bimah* have historically changed with time and place. Conservative and Reform synagogues in America usually combine the *bimah* with the ark.

As the locus of instruction, the *bimah* complements the ark, which terminates the axis that traditionally faces Jerusalem. The ark is made strong—for security, of course, but also perhaps to suggest a latter-day version of the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple, which was also an impenetrable place containing the evidence of the Lord’s relationship to the congregation.

Jews must read and recite prayers, and they are honored by being called to the *bimah* to read from the Torah scrolls. Individual reading requires that good light be provided. The Eternal Light hangs in front of the ark. It has been interpreted as a symbol of the Lord’s presence among
the people, as representing the spiritual light that went forth from the sanctuary of Jerusalem, or as a symbol of the Law that Jews must keep alive. Light also comes from the synagogue's windows (windows are a requirement stemming from Daniel 6:11, which describes how Daniel prayed by windows facing Jerusalem).

Commonplace in synagogues since the eighteenth century, pulpits are used for reading texts less holy than those read at the *bimah* table and for offering prayers. A Jewish pulpit is likely to be a modest piece of furniture in comparison to a Christian one. Once introduced into the services, the choir and the organ were usually placed in a western gallery or around the Torah container. This further emphasized a linear axis for synagogue activity.

The principal annex to the synagogue is the vestibule, for a synagogue is seldom entered directly from a street or courtyard. Because a Talmudic passage, read literally, tells worshippers to enter the synagogue by two doors, a door leading from the outside into a vestibule is followed by a second door into the prayer hall.

With these constraints in mind, Eric Mendelsohn began architectural studies for the new center in 1946. The reason that Mendelsohn was hired may seem obvious in retrospect: having fled Nazi Germany in 1933—he later said he took only his head and a pencil—to settle eventually in the United States, he was the foremost Jewish architect of his generation. Although he had lectured extensively at various architectural schools in the United States, he was unknown to the general public until December 1941, when the Museum of Modern Art in New York opened a retrospective exhibition of his work. Rabbi Cohen wandered into this exhibition, was struck by his work, and began to read about it. A happy accident, therefore, initiated a series of events that ultimately led to Mendelsohn's receiving the commission.

Just before World War II ended, Mendelsohn had been commissioned to design a Jewish community center in St. Louis. While he had designed a synagogue in Tilsit, now Sovetsk, 1925-26, he was internationally known for his "Einstein Tower," in Potsdam, built in 1920-21. This captivating design created by the plastic flow of forms and concomitant linear elements integrated the structure into the surrounding space. Furthermore, illusory movement imbued it with life, and its horizontal rhythm, articulated through line and shape, were summed up into a vertical melody. The Einstein Tower was built of brick covered with stucco—not, as its sculptural forms suggest, reinforced concrete, a material new to the twentieth century and one appropriate, Mendelsohn said in 1914, "for the new form of expression, for the new style." Mendelsohn used forms closely related to function to escape the trappings of eclecticism. He did not want to hide his "own life," he said, "behind the lifeless features of a past society." Straightforward, simple architectural forms and the use of reinforced concrete, as well as his quest for symbolic form, were typical of Mendelsohn's work. The quest for symbolic form is rooted in nineteenth century architectural practice.
At the time, hiring Mendelsohn was a daring move, and "took something in a group of Jewish laymen to accept." Mendelsohn worked in a strictly modern mode, which might not have been acceptable to a more traditionally oriented congregation. Clearly, the leadership decided for a distinctive building, one that would be a hallmark for the suburban community. As modern architecture sought to develop new forms to replace abandoned traditional ones, of all the building types, religious edifices in particular posed problems to the architect in search of symbolic form. Mendelsohn immediately articulated his goal to design a building with meaning: "The new synagogue I will design . . . will typify the enduring and undying principles of our faith quietly exerting themselves to make better the new era we are entering."

As Rabbi Cohen later recalled, all was not, however, to go smoothly during the design decision and construction stages. At times Mendelsohn became violently impatient with the laity—he thought they lacked cultural appreciation and maturity—and at one point, when an important design decision was being made, said, "Gentlemen, remember that the decision is not yours to make; you are only the clients who pay for this, but not the designers. Good night."

The ultimate choice of Mendelsohn as architect was unquestionably due to the persuasive leadership of Rabbi Cohen. In 1949, when Cohen was voted life tenure at the age of thirty nine—an unprecedented honor—Henry A. Rocker, who had been president of the congregation since 1930, credited Cohen's youthful vigor and enthusiasm with restoring their confidence as well as with starting the congregation on this building project; for when Cohen joined the congregation in 1934, he was weighted down with an almost unbearable debt and with an ever diminishing membership, which at that time was down to 600. By 1949,
the efficacy of the building program was already paying off: membership was up to 1,100. What Rocker did not mention was Rabbi Cohen's pertinacity. For it was he who contacted Mendelsohn and suggested he stop here on his next trip East in hope, as he put it, of getting the commission. Mendelsohn immediately came (at his own expense, for Cohen was not authorized to invite him), determined the congregation's needs, inspected the site (to check visibility, he had Leonard Ratner stand on the promontory and wave his arms, while he stood on a truck on Mayfield Road), and met with the formal committee. He explained his philosophy of architecture as he drew on a blackboard, humorously noting his inability to draw a straight line: "I have one glass eye," he said, "but my draftsman will be accurate." A great debate over Mendelsohn's candidacy ensued. The Jewish architects in the city insisted the commission should go to a Cleveland man. But others, like Frank Stein, found Mendelsohn's presentation "utterly convincing," even though they did not fully comprehend it. Mendelsohn was given a contract before he presented any preliminary studies. The leadership had contracted for Mendelsohn, not for a specific design.

While it was Cohen who had the vision for a synagogue among the trees, the decision was communal, as it is in most major building projects for religious congregations. In this instance, Leonard Ratner, chairman of the building committee, was unquestionably the chief decision-maker throughout the entire design and construction stage; he also led the fund-raising effort. At first the building committee doubted if it could raise the necessary funds. But Ratner pledged his family to $100,000 in gifts "just to show we mean business" and initiated the necessary well springs of giving. By the time the project was over, he had given much more.

Later, when building funds were low, the Building Committee intended to postpone construction of the classrooms. But during the critical decision-making meeting, Ratner said, "You can't have a shul without a school." Just at that moment, noise was heard outside, and everyone ran to the window: a steam shovel was beginning the excavations for the classrooms. By giving the committee something concrete to rally behind, Ratner had given them the courage to go forward. In contrast to his leadership role, children in the congregation fondly knew Leonard Ratner as the "candy man" because he regularly passed out candy to them when they attended services.

As an architect, Mendelsohn was uncompromising in what he knew to be right. When he first came to Cleveland he stayed at the Wade Park Manor. Finding his accommodations there to be too baroque and the residents disagreeable, on most subsequent trips he stayed with Cohen, who had just moved to his father-in-law's house in the Heights in anticipation of the move from East 105th Street. Ever the designer, Mendelsohn rearranged their furniture and declared: "Tell the truth. Isn't it better this way?" But it did not satisfy him, so with the encouragement of Cohen and his wife, he eventually sent plans for the remodelling of the
Mendelsohn's initial sketch for the domed synagogue.

Mendelsohn's initial sketch for the domed synagogue.

house, along with suggested finishes for the furniture and carpet samples. The remodelling was carried out. (Cohen's father-in-law thought Mendelsohn had ruined a perfectly good house.)

Mendelsohn's stay with the Cohens offered him an unremitting opportunity to follow the directive he gave architecture students at Berkeley: "the architect must react psychologically on the character of his client... on his social and private life, in order to advise him" on all aspects of the building.

Mendelsohn's way of developing a concept gives insight into his final designs. Initially, he would analyze the site in person—sometimes for hours—noting how the wind blew, where the sun was the hottest, what kind of views there were. He would make innumerable small scale sketches—just a few square inches—until he established the spirit of the project. These initial small scale drawings stressed the major visual elements and were meant to be more evocative than buildable. After he established the concept, he worked up drawings in progressive scales ranging from one thirty-second to one quarter of an inch to the foot. He studied all the elements in perspective rather than in straight elevation. To study changes quickly, as well as to show his clients what they would be getting, he built models out of malleable materials, such as cardboard or plasticine. He used these models at the beginning of the project to understand the general massing and disposition of the design elements and continued to use them to develop the final architectural details and the actual drawings—the working drawings—that the contractors would use to construct the buildings.

In some instances, even scale models and drawings did not adequately anticipate the design problems, and substantial and costly changes were made during actual construction. Mendelsohn always worked listening to music, especially Bach and Beethoven.

In his first sketch of Park Synagogue, Mendelsohn conceived the Temple as a large dome placed on the promontory generated by the ravines; thus, the spirit of the design was quickly established. His original sketch for the interior is also very similar to the finished building. At this time he had no idea how this structure would be built, for his general attitude was "It must be done and it can be done," even when he did not understand how it would be done. In many ways these first drawings reflect a romantic approach rather than a careful analysis of spatial function, flow, and traffic patterns.

As the design developed, to the east of the tall dome Mendelsohn located a lower-ceiled, fan-shaped foyer and
assembly hall wing, which tapered out from the synagogue proper. In accordance with the original intentions of the leadership, these areas could be opened up with the prayer hall to provide seating for three thousand. Because he sited the building with the dome on the point of the promontory, Mendelsohn had to place the ark and the bimah, traditionally located in front of the east wall, in front of the west wall. Mendelsohn adroitly explained this variance by saying "The earth is round," 51 meaning whether one faced east or west, one faced Jerusalem.

While this design is suggested by the triangular promontory itself, Mendelsohn may have been aware of a conceptually similar design by Percival Goodman, printed in the Manual for the Synagogue Building Committee published by the United Synagogue of America (Conservative) in 1946. 56 Goodman's design placed these same functions, one in front of another, tapering fan-like out from the prayer hall, which was the smallest unit. Also surely known to Mendelsohn was Cecil Moore's design for Anshei Israel in Arizona (1946), in which the synagogue proper can be opened up to its social hall by sliding doors, thus providing additional seating. 57 Furthermore, Mendelsohn may have known Joseph Hoffmann's published competition design for a synagogue in Zilina (Slovakia), in which Hoffmann placed a large hemispheric dome on a very low substructure. 58 Mendelsohn, therefore, undoubtedly drew upon the latest concepts regarding synagogue architecture.

To the west of the dome, on a lower level, Mendelsohn placed a triangular chapel and an open-air theater along an extension of the promontory. Across the brook, to the north in his scheme, he planned a one-story school section as an integrated but separate visual unit. Designed to accommodate one thousand students, thirty classrooms and a nursery were placed across a natural plateau and arranged around two courtyards. In the basement of one of the wings, he put a school auditorium. As the administration had to serve both synagogue and classrooms, following function Mendelsohn placed the necessary offices and a library on a wide connecting bridge over the larger ravine.

In this powerful design Mendelsohn joined the various components of the building and site, thus creating the kind of dramatic composition typical of his work. Mendelsohn was so highly esteemed in his profession and his design was so striking that it was immediately published in the architectural press 59 and in the Britannica Yearbook for 1948. Construction bids, however, came in at close to $1,800,000, three times the projected budget. 60 Mendelsohn asked Rabbi Cohen to reach a conclusion about the minimum needs of the congregation—"Do it without panic and with courage"—and added,

Your leaders must give up their mental ups and downs—the ghetto-like psychology and face the facts . . . To fall back for a cheap building means to renounce the revival and enhancement of Jewish life so necessary for our new position and status in this country and the world at large. My whole life is devoted, my work directed toward this purpose.
Mendelsohn advised that the project be built in stages, and directed Rabbi Cohen "to get into [his] group discipline, common sense and—mental courage." Nonetheless, the Building Committee insisted that the design be reworked, that the cost be reduced to $650,000, and that the building be three hundred feet from Mayfield Road. "If you can work with us on this basis," Leonard Ratner wrote to Mendelsohn, "we are prepared to go ahead. [We] would like to keep as much of the original design as possible. This would relieve us from long explanations as to why we threw away one set of plans." They came to an agreement. Merely publicizing this design, therefore, affected the design making process. Cost overruns and, later, delays in the design of details and construction became continual problems and resulted in almost continual bickering and disagreements between Mendelsohn and the Building Committee. Henry Rocker and Rabbi Cohen mediated many of the disagreements.

In the design that was actually built, Mendelsohn arranged all the necessary functions together on the promontory. He kept the dome and lower chapel (the Miller Chapel) in the same location but shrank the foyer and assembly hall (the Rosenthal Ballroom). To the east of the hall he placed a patio, on one side of which he relocated the classrooms in a more economical, two-story curved wing. On the north side of the patio he placed the library and administrative offices. The west wall of the patio has electrically-driven glass doors and can be entirely opened up to the assembly area. When all the walls are open from the patio to the prayer hall, the worshipper has an unobstructed view of the ark. Because of the great distance involved, however, concentration during long services is difficult for some to sustain.

A pergola on the south side of the patio can serve as an entrance. Frank Lloyd Wright placed various activities around an entrance terrace of his Unity Temple of 1906 and such a terrace was used twenty years later in Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco. Mendelsohn, who had visited Wright in 1925, knew and admired his work. While the patio may symbolize the ancient courtyard of the Temple, functionally, the open pergola provides light and air for the classrooms. During the day, the need for artificial light is negligible.
Along with the lower chapel, designed for weddings and daily services, Mendelsohn placed the men’s and women’s parlors. These stunningly designed areas, with their curved walls, can be combined when the need arises for a larger space.

During the course of construction in 1949, Mendelsohn indicated that he did not like the changed design: “all [are] convinced of their own mistake not to follow my first design and my admonitions,” he wrote to his wife. But he was satisfied with “the impressive dome and the interior—still with scaffolding but wholly atmosphere.” It was the experience of the building and not his model or his drawings that he believed “finally convinced the crowd of what they are getting.” Moreover, he remarked on the confidence to go on with the project and the friendly atmosphere.

The asymmetrical, hierarchical arrangement of the exterior forms, from the comparatively low fan-shaped classroom wing to the high dome—the Temple proper—clearly differentiates and communicates the relative importance of the functions taking place within. A repertory of simple, unadorned shapes—rectangles and circles—are employed throughout in contrasting scales for different purposes. Concurrent use of both curved and rectilinear shapes creates dynamic tension. Deep overhangs and other details reinforce this effect by casting muscular shadows. Yet coherence, stability, and clarity are maintained because all the forms are subordinated both to a powerful, linear, horizontal axis (ark-bimah-foyer-assembly-patio-classroom) and a dominant vertical one (prayer hall). Thus, a potentially transitory feeling is turned into a monumental one.

Mendelsohn not only used similar shapes to create visual unity, but also employed similar materials (the cream-colored brick). Furthermore, he tied together each component by using horizontal linear elements, such as the unadorned copper cornices. Thus, the sections used for worship, assembly, and learning, while distinguished, are comprehensively integrated and visually interlocked in three dimensions. The overall visual effect is not static, as it
often is in “boxy” contemporary architecture, but dynamic and rhythmical. The flowing design invites visitors to walk around the building where they encounter a series of ever-changing and engaging images, both of structure and of site: “good architecture,” according to Mendelsohn, “is designed around the corner.”

Mendelsohn designed not only the building but the approach and landscape plantings as well, which he believed were “absolutely necessary [and] without which the building [would] be naked because not properly or decently dressed.” He planned the approach to enhance the perspectival effects of the Temple and to prevent a view of the roof of the lower chapel. During construction, he filled in the south ravine, eliminating the need for the bridge to the main entrance. In doing so he united the Temple with the surrounding landscape: approaching worshippers, therefore, feel the Temple is part of their existence.

The main entrance, although not monumental, is clearly signaled by three small circular windows on the facade. Decorum demanded that the windows be small; otherwise those approaching them would have been able to see directly into the kitchen. The windows’ circular shape helps to integrate this lower section with the dome through the use of similar forms. Because they are placed in a horizontal grouping, they help to direct the eye, in conjunction with the over-hangs, to the dome, the climax of the composition. Mendelsohn considered the theater, which was never built, as a significant part of his design, “the beginning of the movement towards and the anticlimax to the height of the Dome.”

When approaching the main entrance, worshippers go up three steps, along a horizontal open platform, and then up five more steps to another platform located in front of the doors. Thus, their perception of entrance and arrival is intensified through design. After passing through the doors, they enter the large but relatively low-ceilinged foyer. From there, one has to turn ninety degrees to the left to enter the Temple proper, where an overwhelming visual experience takes place. This bent-axis approach to the

Main entrance of Park Synagogue.
prayer hall demands that the worshipper become more aware of the building. This entrance was also designed to serve the assembly area and classrooms. Thus, all the units simultaneously enter in the group-life of the congregation.

One hundred feet in diameter and sixty-five feet high, the interior of the dome was conceived from the start to be an unadorned surface that was light in visual weight. As Mendelsohn said, it embodies "the idea of the tent—shielding the Ark—the ancient Jewish symbol of holiness." It does not rise up from the floor; rather, the 680-ton dome is placed on only six columns separated by a wall of clear glass fifteen feet high. As such, and because the interior profile of the dome is semi-spherical rather than pointed, the dome seems to reach towards the earth rather than to a skyward goal, symbolizing for Mendelsohn and the congregation the nearness of heaven and earth and men's closeness to God. The congregation fought to have the windows fitted with the traditional stained glass, but Mendelsohn was insistent that clear glass be used. The effect of this transparency is that the interior and exterior are visually integrated; indoor and outdoor life are conceptually united. For the congregation, the magnificence of the surrounding landscape elements with their ever-changing coloristic effects is the constant manifestation of God in nature. Rashi (Berakoth 34b) commented that windows are required because they allow the supplicant to see the sky, the sight of which inspires reverence and devotion during prayer. For Mendelsohn, the use of clear glass may have
had a special, more personal meaning. He was raised in rural surroundings and never lost his love of nature. Throughout his life he selected living quarters in proximity to untampered-with natural environs.77

The main visual focus of the prayer hall is the natural maple-stained ark. The ark stands on a mahogany podium placed on an axis with the entry under a canopy of exceptional design. Rising from the pavement, encircling the rear of the podium, and arching above it, the canopy represents the Mishkan, the first sanctuary of the Jewish people. Because this is a permanent canopy, no chupah, or wedding canopy, is necessary for marriage ceremonies.78 Made of copper, brass, gold, and silver, it incorporated the latest contemporary lighting technology—indirect cold cathode ray illumination.79 Indirect flood lamps, hidden behind the canopy, saturate the dome with light, making it appear even more weightless.

The relative importance of different liturgical acts is symbolically reflected in the design of the podium area, which has three levels of ascending importance: from the lowest, the sermon is delivered; from the next, prayers are chanted; and from the highest, the Torah is read. The twelve seats on the podium are for those called to read the Torah: they may ascend together in procession and sit on the pulpit during the reading.80

On the back panels of the canopy are the four crowns, illuminated in gold, which represent those mentioned in the Talmud: the crowns of the Torah, of royalty, of the priesthood, and of a good name, “which excelleth them all.”

The ark is adorned only by Tablets of the Law. A stylized letter, shin (ש), the twenty-first letter in the Hebrew alphabet, is repeated for each commandment. Mendelsohn used “shin” in variations in the grillwork of the main entrance and in the white-bronze menorahs on the pulpit rails, among other places, because it symbolized the Hebrew name for God, Shadai. But like many visual images it is multi-vocal and can connote Shema, the first word of a prayer that begins “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” To Jews, the Shema is the supreme affirmation of the unity of God. The “shin” may also connote Shalom, a form of greeting common among Jews, meaning “Peace.”81

From the top of the canopy, above the bimah, hangs the Eternal Light. Made of brass, copper, and aluminum and formed of unending circular shapes and spokes, it symbolizes the eternal wisdom of the Torah.82

A circular plan used for the prayer hall, rather than a long, narrow, rectangular one, allowed for longer rows of seats. This arrangement in combination with a pitched floor not only insured visibility but brought more of the congregation closer to the ark and to the bimah, the place of “focused interaction.” A wider front means that when the Torah is carried in procession, more of the congregation can come closer to it. Furthermore, Mendelsohn abandoned a central aisle, which some committee members had wanted,83 in favor of two radial aisles and a circular one located close
to the perimeter. Here again the worshippers are made more aware of the space because they are forced to turn once they are inside it. In combination with the warm lighting and warm colors, this seating arrangement works to create an overwhelmingly spiritual atmosphere.

One other factor needs explanation: the reason for the overall simplicity of the design and its consequent effect in human terms. When writing about the symbolism for the Torah mantle, Mendelsohn partly explained his philosophy: "My personal approach rejects everything that needs a literary interpretation. The meaning of things to be seen should be legible even to the illiterate, immediately and automatically; my temples are simple in structure, conception of space and ritual elements."46 Because of this designed simplicity, when at a service, worshippers can find no visual or intellectual escape from it. No stained glass, elaborate moldings or visually complex ceiling distracts them—no inscriptions in Hebrew letters, not even a Star of David.45 There is no escape from the service.

Because this dome is of such unusual design the engineering and construction details required continuous and considerable study by outside structural engineers and dictated that seasoned and knowledgeable contractors build it.46 Mendelsohn's idea could have been realistically achieved only in the twentieth century after the invention of reinforced concrete, that is, concrete, used in conjunction with steel reinforcing bars. Such a material can carry great tensile stresses economically and is especially useful in counteracting the outward thrust of a dome. Domes built in the Renaissance and later employed chains made of wood or iron to accomplish this counteraction, but none was set only on columns. In the sixteenth century Bramante had envisioned the dome for St. Peter's in Rome to be placed up on a colonnade, but the structural problems were so great that the scheme was abandoned.

Because the Park Synagogue dome has a diameter of one hundred feet and rises from a ring placed fifteen feet above floor level to a height of sixty-five feet, an elaborate scaffold, shores, and complex forms had to be built first to hold the concrete until it set. This preliminary structure used 180,000 linear feet of lumber. Upon the outer surface of this temporary formwork was first placed a two-inch layer of
cork for insulation; this in turn served as the form for the steel reinforcing bars. After the bars were properly placed and positioned, concrete was sprayed on over a three-week period using pneumatic hoses having a muzzle pressure of thirty pounds per square inch. The use of reinforced concrete permitted the dome to have the same profile on both the interior and exterior and for the most part to be only four inches thick, except for a beam around its base, which sits on the six columns. This extreme thinness was also possible because a dome, like an egg, is an extremely rigid structure. The exterior of the dome is covered with felt and preformed copper sheets (in his original scheme Mendelsohn wanted sheets of aluminum), which have been left untreated to develop a natural green patina that helps integrate it into the landscape. For acoustical reasons and because of the shape of the dome, the surface of plaster originally intended for the interior was abandoned for twelve-inch by six-inch acoustical tiles. On the exterior pinnacle of this vast and imposing dome, which was intended to be seen from Mayfield Road, is a Mosaic tablet with Hebraic symbols of the commandments in stainless steel.

This building, like all buildings, is not perfect, and in some ways it is controversial. The choir is located in a separate room behind the podium area, so the sound has to be electronically transmitted. Hearing the results of this arrangement, Mendelsohn told Rabbi Cohen, “I made them invisible, now you make them inaudible.” Among other problems, the acoustics of the Temple and the sound conveyance to the foyer and assembly areas pose difficulties,
and the location of the main restrooms and cloakrooms on lower levels causes congestion in the foyer.

On the conceptual level, architect Sigmund Braverman, who had many more commissions for synagogues than did Mendelsohn, believed that “the synagogue has been tyrannized by the dome and moorish arch” and historically in comparison to a Christian church has been modest and unpretentious. The Christian church, he believed, sought to inspire through its majesty and mystery, while a synagogue, which is based on learning, has different aims. Therefore, Braverman believed that “imposing domes” did not carry along with them appropriate symbolic connotations. In addition, he believed that the arrangement whereby the foyer served the assembly area as well as the prayer hall lacked dignity. Another critic found that building a “bit too cold” and “too similar to any secular building”; he concluded that Mendelsohn had given the congregation “what it needs: a social center.” There is no question, however, that the congregation viewed its project as a success.

During the 1950 dedication service Rabbi Cohen led the congregation in a pledge of rededication to the ideals and traditions of Judaism, ideals and traditions that Mendelsohn had consciously sought to express in architectural form. The curved and circular shapes come together with the linear elements to bring the building to life. Park Synagogue is not only one of the most unusual synagogues in the United States, but one that speaks to a positive future for humankind—a future based on mutual understanding and respect. This thought must have been in the mind of Rabbi Cohen when he published All God’s Children: A Jew Speaks in 1945 to explain the Jews and their religious beliefs to their Christian neighbors. A corollary purpose, although not explicitly stated, was to combat religious bigotry.

By 1953, when the Kravitz Library and the school wing (the Ratner Educational Center) were finished, the congregation was already able to gauge the effect that the whole building program had had on it. Ratner, who had been president of the congregation since 1952, announced at the eighty-fourth congregational meeting that pledges made by one thousand people together with gifts and other commitments assured the congregation a future free of debt. Recalling the Depression, when the congregation had experienced trouble meeting their mortgage, Ratner said, “We wanted to give our children a future of opportunity—not one of debt. This is the most inspiring experience of my whole life as a Jew.” Henry Rocker, who was honorary president, noted that the completion of the building closed “The Era of Achievement” and opened “An Era of Opportunity.” Rabbi Cohen articulated their achievement with great eloquence:

The success of our building venture and the total congregation reorganization during the last 10-year period is in its greatest sense a tribute to our people’s faith in America and in our religious heritage. It is, furthermore, a testament to the power of faith in ourselves.
Privately, Rabbi Cohen wrote to Mendelsohn, “This building accurately reflects the greater truth that the form of worship and the preachment are one generation in advance of the congregation. This is as it should be, for it is to elevate the people.”

Over time, as needs, goals, and objectives change, one can expect alteration and additions to the physical fabric of buildings. By the late 1950s the problems of suburbia and the outward migration of the congregation were getting Rabbi Cohen’s attention. Believing that a synagogue could not keep chasing its people forever, he proposed the creation of religious school branches off a central synagogue.

In the early 1960s, the congregation had outgrown its facilities and had to rent space in the Richmond Theater to accommodate members on High Holy Days. In response to this, it was announced that the Center would make its first major addition to its property—an auditorium, named Kangesser Memorial Hall, to be placed north of the streamed ravine and connected to the center by a bridge. This idea reflects Mendelsohn’s original intention to use that area. In fact, the congregation intended to be faithful to the original concept, for Michael Gallis, who had been an associate of Mendelsohn, was named as architect with Myron Manders as his associate. Max Ratner, Leonard’s younger brother, who was president at the time, named Samuel Miller as chairperson of the Building Committee and, no doubt following Rabbi Cohen’s model, it was also announced that funds would be raised for the construction of a Park School complex in an as yet unnamed “easterly suburb.”

As part of the congregation’s centennial celebrations, Kangesser Hall was dedicated in 1969. Speaking on that occasion, Dr. Abram L. Sachar said that the increasing assimilation of the Jewish people into American life had brought with it “problems of identity” that have succeeded the historical problems of freedom and security for the American Jew. In part it is this problem that the Park Synagogue seeks to address not only in its programs but through its architectural form. In an ethical will written to his children and grandchildren, Leonard Ratner wrote proudly, in the belief that the synagogue must be central to one’s life, “Don’t forget there are seats at the Park Synagogue.”

I would like to thank Rabbi Armond Cohen, Dr. Ruth Miller, and Mr. Nate Shafran, who shared their knowledge of Mendelsohn and the circumstances surrounding the building of the Park Synagogue. Rabbi Cohen’s papers are on deposit at the Western Reserve Historical Society. I am also grateful to Ms. Nancy Becker, archivist of the Society’s Cleveland Jewish Archives, and to Professor Carol Krinsky of New York University, who generously shared their knowledge with me. The Interlibrary Loan Office at Cleveland State University efficiently located many secondary sources for me.

—W.L.
Notes

1. The Plain Dealer, 10 May 1889, says it was located at 315 Erie Street, while The Official Vest Pocket Street Guide and Map of Cleveland (Cleveland: Whitworth Brothers Co., 1898) gives the address as 550 Erie Street. The reuse of edifices built by other creeds was characteristic of the relationship of Jews and their Christian neighbors in America.

2. For a fuller discussion, see Lloyd P. Gartner, History of the Jews of Cleveland, 2d ed. (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1987), 211. Their new synagogue was dedicated in July 1904.


4. ‘The halakah is the body of Jewish law supplementing the scriptural law and forming especially the legal part of the Talmud.

5. Van Tassel and Grabowski, 178.


7. For details see Eric Johannesen, Cleveland Architecture: 1876-1976 (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), 159. The architect was Albert F. Janowitz.


12. The Plain Dealer, 14 May 1942.

13. No doubt the migration of blacks from the South into Cleveland was also an influential factor, as it accounts for earlier moves of the Jewish population within Cleveland around World War I. See Weinstein, 272.


15. Interview with Rabbi Cohen, 19 July 1989; The Cleveland Press, 26 August 1940. At first Mrs. Painter considered tearing down the house. The asking price was reported to be $250,000.

16. The Cleveland Press, 1 September 1942; according to The Cleveland Press, 21 May 1970, “Mrs. Painter offered the site in a financial transaction unknown to this day.”

17. Interview with Martha Linton Whitehouse, 1989.

18. The Cleveland Press, 3 June 1942.

19. Interview with Rabbi Cohen.

20. The Plain Dealer, 11 November 1942.


22. Interview with Rabbi Cohen.

23. The Cleveland News, 7 March 1945. It was sold for $125,000 in September 1946 to the Cory United Methodist Church, which was in desperate need of larger quarters. See Van Tassel and Grabowski, 300.


25. The Plain Dealer, 28 May 1945.


27. The Plain Dealer, 28 May 1945, 14 November 1945.

Sigmund Braverman (1894-1960) had remodelled the Park Chapel for the congregation. In his proposal he included an approach road along which were twelve pylons symbolizing the tribes of Israel. The creek was to be dammed by creating a reflecting pool for the building, a ceaselessly-moving mirror intended to give life and atmosphere to the facade. The clock tower was to be a monumental feature, to serve as a point of interest. See the Western Reserve Historical Society, Braverman Papers, MS 3807.

Description of the site before building, later recalled, by Frank Stewart, religion writer, The Cleveland Press, 25 May 1959.

The Cleveland Press, 2 July 1947; interview with Rabbi Cohen; Dr. Ruth Miller, who was at the meeting, recalled that anti-Semitism was profound and pervasive. Interview, 1989.

The following discussion is taken from Carol Herselle Krinsky, Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning (New York: The Architectural History Foundation; MIT Press, 1985), which contains an extensive discussion of synagogues and their ritual arrangements.

Interview with Rabbi Cohen; Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Cohen to Louise Mendelsohn, 25 May 1954, in which he tells of his first hearing of Mendelsohn through his exhibition.

The literature on Eric Mendelsohn is extensive. One major monograph in English is by Arnold Whittick, Eric Mendelsohn, 2d ed. (London: 1956).


The Plain Dealer, 27 May 1946.


The Plain Dealer, 23 May 1949. Cohen was a confirment of the Cleveland Jewish Center, where his brilliance attracted Rabbi Goldman, who marked him for the rabbinate and guided his education. When he was elected Rabbi in 1935 (he had been named Acting Rabbi in 1934), he was one of the youngest in the country. He attended New York University and the New York Theological Seminary. The Plain Dealer, 18 November 1935.

Interview with Rabbi Cohen; Cohen, “Eric Mendelsohn as a Man and Friend,” 17.

The contract date is 27 May 1946. In a letter dated 19 June 1946, forwarding the contract, S.G. Stillman requested that Mendelsohn visit the site and discuss the exact location of the projected structure and the general type of construction before beginning his preliminary studies. Mendelsohn responded on 19 June 1946 that it was “not advisable to visit before . . . my ideas . . . crystallized and my first sketches were ready” and that exact site location was premature. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers. See also letter, Cohen to Rabbi Kronish, Miami Beach, Florida, 6 November 1952, in which Cohen describes how Mendelsohn was hired.

The other members were Myron Glass, Benjamin Kravitz, Samuel Rosenthal, and George Iskoff. Others also played important roles.

Interview with Rabbi Cohen; The Plain Dealer, 25 May 1952; The Cleveland Press, 1 January 1975. Ratner’s important role as decision-maker can be seen in extensive correspondence. Mendelsohn thought highly of Ratner’s intellectual contribution to the whole building effort. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Mendelsohn to Cohen, 17 March 1952: “Give Leonard a visual honor he well deserves.” Mendelsohn wanted to place a sculpted bust of him in the fabric of the building.

Telephone interview, 1989, with Mr. Nate Shafran, who was at the meeting.

Cohen, “Eric Mendelsohn as a Man and Friend,” 20; interview with Rabbi Cohen.

Mendelsohn, Three Lectures on Architecture, 27.


For example, in the Park Synagogue, part of the podium had to be rebuilt after it was realized that worshippers in the front rows had obstructed views because of its height. In this instance, the design for the rebuilt podium placed the officiant out beyond the canopy, thus causing unsolvable acoustical problems. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, for correspondence on this and on many other issues related to changes in the course of construction.


From an interview with Mrs. Eric Mendelsohn quoted in King.

Interview with Rabbi Cohen.


Illustrated and discussed in Wischnitzer, 136-137.

This design is discussed in Rachel Wischnitzer, The Architecture of the European Synagogue (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America 1964), 237-238, 83.

See “Eric Mendelsohn,” The Architectural Forum, 86 (May 1947): 73-77. It is likely that he arranged this publication for he viewed the Cleveland commission as a means of procuring others and often requested Cohen’s help, which he eagerly gave. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers.


A new contract was signed on 1 April 1948, which called for a reduced program. The project’s estimated cost was raised to $900,000. Western Reserve Historical Society, letter from Henry Rocker to Mendelsohn, 11 April 1948. Resubmitted preliminary plans were ready in May 1948.

Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Cohen to Mendelsohn, 28 June 1949, mentioning that Glass has a solution to the financial problem; Cohen was continually supportive of Mendelsohn, telling him to carry through with his ideas because he believed that they were building a historically significant building. Letter, Cohen to Mendelsohn, 6 May 1949: “It is urgent that in the closing stages of our building, the integrity of the scheme, design, and interior finish and decoration be maintained.”

Interview with Howard Katz, who grew up as a member of the congregation and sat in the back row of the assembly area, July 1989.


Quoted in Whittick, 162.


Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Mendelsohn to Cohen, 3 August 1949.

On 17 March 1948, in Beyer, 171.

The effects of the “floating” dome would have been even greater if the original scheme, which called for curved glass and half as many mullions, had been followed. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Mendelsohn to Henry Rocker, 22 April 1948.


Information from Rabbi Cohen, The Plain Dealer, 3 April 1958. This was a particularly difficult situation, because one member of the congregation volunteered to donate stained glass windows.


King.

'This canopy design was approved by a special ruling by the law committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, who held it in keeping with tradition. The Cleveland Plain Dealer Pictorial Magazine, 26 November 1950.


Mendelsohn decided to use the letter "shirt" in 1949. He wrote Cohen asking if he had any objection to its use on religious grounds. Cohen replied that he would not be in favor of it unless it had some religious precedence. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Mendelsohn to Cohen, 13 October 1949; letter, Cohen to Mendelsohn, 17 October 1949.


Interview with Rabbi Cohen.


After completion there were continuing complaints from the congregation that there was no Hebrew lettering or inscription on the synagogue. See Western Reserve Historical Society, Cohen Papers, letter, Cohen to Mendelsohn, 18 March 1951.

The engineer was Isodore Thompson of San Francisco. The contractors were The Leonard H. Krill Company. William D. Mason, the superintendent for the construction, had previously supervised the construction of the Stadium, John Jay High School, and other important buildings. More than eighty people were employed on the site, thirty-two on the dome alone. The Cleveland Press, 22 July 1949.


The supervising architect in Cleveland was Charles C. Colman. For information on the construction of the dome I am indebted to his article, "Some of the Construction Problems of Park Synagogue," Ohio Architect, vol. 3, no. 7 (July 1950), 1, 24-26.

The Cleveland News, 6 August 1949.

Interview with Rabbi Cohen.

The Cleveland Press, 27 August 1949; Western Reserve Historical Society, Braverman Papers, MS. 3807. Typescript, "The Needs of a Synagogue, 18 March 1946," text for "The Jewish Institute of the Air," 27 January 1952, and "Critique of Park Synagogue," 23 April 1952. Braverman used the Park Synagogue as an example of how one should not build, when he gave presentations and conferences and talked to prospective clients. There may be an element of "sour grapes" here, as he had not been awarded the commission.


The Plain Dealer, 8, 9 December 1950.

Rabbi William Seligman commented on the extraordinary number of visitors to the new center, of all races and creeds and from all over the country: "their interest has led me to hope that our synagogue may become a center of better understanding in the community." The Cleveland News, 28 July 1952.

Named after Charles and Rachel Kravitz. The library was started in 1947 to replace the congregation's former library, which had been destroyed by fire. This is a serious, professionally-run library with extensive holdings. The Plain Dealer, 13 March 1955.

The Plain Dealer, 28 May 1953. The mortgage was actually cancelled in 1955. The cost of the entire project was around $2,200,000. In 1955 the Park Foundation Fund was started with an anonymous gift of $25,000 to assure continued maintenance of its unique building. The Plain Dealer, 19 May 1955.


The Plain Dealer, 16 May 1959.

The Plain Dealer, 28 July 1966.


"... Take up the brush and tongs and mallet, and spare not cost or labor till the House of God that you build and adorn shall shine like the very fields of Paradise."

This imperative, issued by a twelfth-century German Benedictine, guided German immigrants who came to Cleveland in the nineteenth century and built the Church of St. Stephen, creating an interior that is still one of the most impressive spaces in the city. Today, however, the clergy and lay members who tend the church are faced with increasingly difficult financial challenges. Fewer people than ever before attend its services and contribute to the collection basket, mainly because the immigrants' descendants have moved to more affluent neighborhoods and many of the new immigrants in the area have chosen to attend other churches. As revenues have declined, maintenance and utility costs have increased. Artisans and skilled craftspeople are few and expensive, so restoration moves along slowly.

Periodic solicitations by church leaders for restoration and preservation monies fall far short of their goals. In addition, maintaining the parish school, a task that the church could perform with relative ease thirty years ago, is now financially burdensome, even though two other congregations help to handle it. In fact, if income from weekly bingo games were no longer available, the school would have to close. These financial pressures on the congregation have turned its decisions regarding expenditures into moral and ethical dilemmas.

Such diminution of congregations and increased financial burdens already have led to the demolition of houses of worship in Cleveland. The Church of St. Agnes, razed during 1975 and 1976, formerly stood on Euclid Avenue. Reminiscent of Romanesque churches in southern France and of early Christian basilicas, it was recognized nationally for its distinguished architecture. A fund-raising campaign, however, succeeded in saving only its bell tower. About the same time, the Cleveland Catholic Diocese also razed the
Romanesque-style Church of St. Thomas Aquinas and Church of St. Edward. The Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, demolished in 1961, and the Church of the Master, demolished in 1952, were among several synagogues and Protestant churches that shared a similar fate.

Cleveland's example mirrors a multidenominational, international pattern of decay and change affecting inner-city congregations. Other cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia are dotted with large, ornate churches standing as historic relics in neighborhoods now poor; each city has lost numerous buildings. In Philadelphia, for example, one or two Methodist churches have closed every year for ten years. While some were reopened by another Methodist congregation or ministry, at least six have been sold or passed on to other congregations, one is being reused as a medical office building, and four have burned or been demolished.

The problem is not confined to this country. In England, for instance, as many as three quarters of the country's 45,000 churches are potentially redundant and thus may face not only closure but demolition. Unlike religious organizations in the United States, however, England's most influential denomination, the Church of England, has found a way to try to deal with this problem.

The English Solution

Prompted by concern over population shifts and declining church attendance after the Second World War, the Church of England enacted the Pastoral Measure of 1968, a statutory procedure that allowed it to dispose of buildings considered no longer useful. The Measure established an Advisory Board for Redundant Churches to make decisions concerning the preservation, possible reuse, or demolition of these churches. A Redundant Churches Fund helped to restore those churches recommended for preservation if they could be put to alternative uses. Monies from both the Church commissioners and the British government maintain the fund, which is administered through the Department of the Environment. Occasionally, the Department assumes total care of a particular church. Some of the monies derived from the sale of sites of demolished churches are used to preserve structures that otherwise might have been destroyed.

Those interested in saving the churches began to publicize the issue, presenting arguments against the ongoing process of demolition. The Measure also prompted much discussion among preservationists regarding "adaptive reuse" as a way of saving buildings.

In 1977, a major exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum entitled "Change and Decay: The Future of Our Churches" dramatically revealed the plight of the churches to the general public. This exhibit was the consequence of a large-scale collaboration of concerned citizens, including architects, art historians, antiquarians, preservationists, and artists. It also resulted in the publication of a book that pre-
presented the first comprehensive view of the cultural, historic, and aesthetic resources represented by British churches and suggested approaches to their preservation. Change and Decay: The Future of Our Churches by Marcus Binney and Peter Burman preceded and perhaps inspired much of the international literature on the importance of sacred landmarks and the problems of their preservation. Its documentation and suggestions are still broadly relevant.

Change and Decay and a succeeding volume entitled Churches: A Question of Conversion, by Ken Powell and Celia Delahey, argue that because the problem of churches is a recent one, timely intervention can meet it before irretrievable losses occur. Powell and Delahey point out, for example, that demolition is often unnecessary, prompted only by lack of careful study and imagination. Its consequences may be so negative as to outweigh any short-term financial gain. Demolition means loss of information, beauty, and texture from the city and to many is the equivalent of abandoning a people, their neighborhood, and their city as a whole. Like an undisciplined retreat to the suburbs, it reflects an avoidance of rather than a thoughtful attitude toward social and economic problems.

In contrast, say the authors, the conversion of a church to a new use is a positive, creative process. One obvious reason why is that older structures are sometimes better built than their replacements; in terms of cost, it is not necessarily sensible in the long run to tear them down. In a few years, too many replacement structures simply become examples—often undistinguished ones—of the relatively insubstantial architecture of their time. In addition, maintaining structures, even if they are temporarily unused, is an expression of faith in the recovery, repopulation, and new growth of the city.

Adaptive reuse may also contribute to the economy and health of an area. The interior of St. Luke's in Harrogate, England, for example, has been converted into much-needed condominiums; when a model apartment was shown in 1984, deposits were put on three-quarters of those remaining and all were sold before the conversion was completed. Many other churches leading new lives as civic centers, galleries, and auditoria have benefited the economic welfare of their communities.

The arguments for and against adaptive reuse in Change and Decay center around theological, practical, aesthetic, emotional, and financial issues. The areas of greatest contention are the suitability of a proposed new use and the acceptability of the structural and architectural changes required.

Even through adaptive reuse, the preservation of all historically and aesthetically important sacred structures is still not a likely prospect. Some religious buildings are very difficult to reuse. Their structure, after all, reflects their initial religious function. And even if some of these buildings can be converted, how many auditoria, concert halls, art galleries, and museums can a community accommodate?
American Responses

No legislation equal to the Anglican Pastoral Measure has been enacted in the United States either governmentally or denominationally owing to the absence of a national church. Moreover, the United States government, unlike the British government, does not assume the care of or directly contribute funds toward the preservation of historic churches and synagogues even though social services provided through many of these properties contribute substantially to the well-being of community and neighborhood. Nevertheless, public agencies and many foundations tend not to support the maintenance and rehabilitation of these properties. Thus, monies available to congregations for these purposes from sources outside the congregations themselves are scarce. Compounding the problem is the scant information available regarding the number, nature, and condition of sacred structures in most American cities, which makes long-range planning concerning their maintenance, repair, and future difficult.

Too often, structures are dealt with only as crises arise. Decisions issued by clergy seem abrupt and final and reactions by congregation members are correspondingly emotional and dramatic. And too often it is only after a building is torn down that questions arise concerning an alternative solution. Those involved then realize that preservation requires more information, money, and cooperation than is usually available when such crises develop.

Responding to this need for information, fund raising, and organization, the Historic Religious Properties Program (HRPP) of the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation has helped to take the lead in publicizing the problems concerning America's older religious buildings, particularly those in the inner city. Although HRPP is but one of several privately sponsored service programs devoted to this purpose, it has much in common with similar efforts in New York. For example, the New York Landmarks Conservancy is the only other organization in the country that offers comprehensive and wide-ranging services for historic religious properties. HRPP's philosophy and approach to solutions is similar to that described in Change and Decay: collect information and educate, encourage, and organize the public. Its staff realizes that the evaluation and preservation of these buildings is a highly empirical process. One of its most important tasks is stimulating interest in the preservation of churches and synagogues and presenting examples of successful shared or new uses to as many interested people as possible to enlist their support.

Rectory and bell tower are all that is left of the Church of St. Agnes on Euclid Ave.
A major function of HRPP is to provide struggling congregations with the information they need to maintain their houses of worship. The organization has an inventory of over eight hundred architecturally and historically important religious buildings in Philadelphia, Camden, and Chester. It also subsidizes congregations that want to hire qualified engineers, architects, and other professionals to provide diagnoses and consultation regarding repair and maintenance problems, and it offers information on building repair, maintenance, restoration, and architectural history in its magazine, *Inspired*.

Because resources of the magnitude necessary to preserve a church or synagogue are usually beyond the means of individuals, efforts like HRPP encourage concerned citizens and clergy to organize so problems may be approached collectively. A few preservation-oriented groups or agencies already exist in other parts of the country and can serve as models for the many more that are needed. For example, in 1968 the Roman Catholic bishop of Albany, New York, established a commission on architecture and building to work with the diocese’s approximately one thousand structures. The commission includes laity, clergy, and paid consultants who have put together guidelines and procedures based on the “Standards of Rehabilitation” issued by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Similarly, the Commission for the Preservation of Historic New Mexico Churches guides the management of that archdiocese’s historic structures.

**Solutions for the Cleveland Area**

There is some evidence that people are interested in cooperating to save threatened cultural resources in Cleveland. In 1979, the staff of the Cuyahoga County Archives, in collaboration with area historians and architects, organized an exhibit about sacred landmarks in the Sanford House in Ohio City and produced a handsomely illustrated guide to accompany it. Since then, two Cleveland-area groups, the Cleveland Restoration Society and the City of Cleveland Landmarks Commission, have shown increasing interest in sacred landmarks. The Restoration Society publishes newsletters and sponsors tours, talks, and symposia that provide the public with information about religious architectural landmarks as well as other buildings of architectural and historical merit. It actively lobbies for the preservation of particular buildings. The Landmarks Commission has been helping to preserve churches, synagogues, and other buildings by designating them as landmarks and offering guidance concerning their restoration and preservation. In addition, it administers a special fund that provides congregations with grants of up to five thousand dollars to help support restoration efforts. A third organization, the Cleveland State University Sacred Landmarks Research Group, was established in 1986 to help inform the Cleveland-area
public of the significance of their churches and synagogues and to promote the preservation of information concerning them.

Some progress in arresting the demolition of certain structures in Cleveland has been made. The recent history of several buildings used for religious purposes illustrates both real solutions and remaining problems. These include the Civic, formerly a synagogue in Cleveland Heights, St. Joseph Franciscan Church, and the Church of St. Stephen.

Adaptive Reuse as a Multipurpose Facility: The Civic

The Civic is a large and imposing Byzantine-style building. Originally the synagogue for the Conservative congregation B'nai Jeshurun, it was known informally as the Temple on the Heights. The temple was dedicated in 1926, sixty years after the congregation was organized and began its existence in temporary quarters in California Alley. By the 1950s, the congregation had grown to about two thousand families and was perhaps the largest Conservative congregation in the country. Nevertheless, continued movement of the Jewish community toward the eastern part of the county led to a decline in Temple membership in the 1960s and 1970s. A gift of thirty acres of land in Pepper Pike resulted in the congregation's choosing that site for the building of its new temple, which was dedicated in 1980.
The new building in Pepper Pike left the old one available for some type of adaptive reuse, and the former Temple on the Heights is now one of the few examples in northeastern Ohio of a sacred structure leading a new life in the secular world.

The former synagogue was preserved because a group of Cleveland businessmen was interested in finding a new way for it to continue serving the community. The Temple complex contained a two-thousand-seat auditorium, a ballroom, a twelve-hundred-seat lecture hall, forty classrooms, a library, a gymnasium, and bowling alleys; its interior has been transformed into office space, a theater, and halls for banquets, weddings, and community functions. While the return on investment was not as high as the return on some of their other business ventures, the Civic's continuing service to the community is an important dividend for the investors.

Thus the Temple continues to live. One can still climb the broad stairs and enter through any of five doors recessed behind a row of large columns supporting round arches. Above the arches, marble slabs display the Ten Commandments, while the windows repeat the round-arched detail. The red brick, Indiana limestone, polychrome terra cotta, and colored marble exterior of the building add to its Byzantine character, as does its shallow dome, set on a polygonal drum, and its shallow gable roofs.

Proposed Preservation as a Monument and Cultural Center:
St. Joseph Franciscan Church

St. Joseph Franciscan Church, on Woodland Avenue near East 23rd Street, is probably the most visible church in Cleveland. Its Gothic facade and tall steeple can be seen from most of the main approaches to the city. Dedicated in 1873, it served successive waves of immigrants and dominated one of the city's most crowded and colorful neighborhoods. When the neighborhood community was lost to urban renewal in the late 1960s, St. Joseph's was left behind, its only remaining landmark. Those who continued to attend its services commuted from other neighborhoods and suburbs. By 1986, their number had declined to about two hundred, prompting the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to withdraw parish status from the church and make plans to demolish it unless an alternative use could be found. 13

After a public outcry, many individuals and groups worked together to try to save the church. Parishioners and friends formed the "Friends of St. Joseph Franciscan Church, Inc.," publicized its plight, and helped convince both the diocese and the greater Cleveland community that it was worth saving. This group enlisted the support of the media, interviewed and met with architects, artisans, historians, and preservationists, and conducted an open house at the church that was attended by over three thousand people. Other interested parties also contacted developers and served as a liaison between them and diocese officials.
to investigate possible new uses for the structure. Finally, the Landmarks Commission contracted a study, funded in part by donations, that resulted in the proposal for the building’s adaptive reuse as a monument and cultural center.14

In December 1987 the diocese suspended its plans for demolition to study several development proposals. In November 1988 it announced that the church might be leased to a private, non-profit group that would undertake to restore it and convert it into office space and a performance center for sacred music and lectures.15

Although St. Joseph Franciscan Church has remained intact long after its original deadline for demolition has passed, its continued existence is not assured. The effectiveness and durability of the partnership among the diocese, the city, and interested citizens will determine the future of the building. In addition, of course, adequate funding—approximately $2.5 million—is required. This money has not been raised.

Maintaining an Inner-City Landmark: The Church of St. Stephen

St. Stephen’s towers over houses in one of Cleveland’s poorest neighborhoods like a medieval cathedral over its village. In its spacious interior, most of its multicolored statuary consists not of the plaster usually associated with Victorian statues but of hand-carved wood. Its oak carvings come from Munich, Germany, as do its stained glass windows. Commissioned by the Bavarian Institute of Art and executed by the Mayer Studios, the windows depict Biblical scenes in luminous color and finely-wrought details. A tornado shattered many of them in 1953, but an artisan who helped install them nearly fifty years earlier carefully salvaged and reconstructed the windows.

Father Michael Franz spends the greater part of his time and energy maintaining the property of St. Stephen’s parish. Its magnificent church is worth saving, he says, for the sake of its community, its history, and its beauty, which helps the faithful with their religious devotions—the intention, after all, of its design. Many former parishioners who have moved to more affluent neighborhoods say they return to St. Stephen’s periodically to experience feelings not inspired by some more modern structures. Father Franz also believes he has a great responsibility toward his neighbors, many of whom are not Catholic.

As is the case for all of Cleveland’s inner-city Catholic churches, the main burden of caring for St. Stephen’s falls on the parish pastor, not on the organization as a
whole. Help is minimal. Although two priests in addition to the pastor live in the rectory, their duties are primarily liturgical. The Notre Dame Sisters, who share the responsibilities of the parish, have much of their time consumed by the Metro Catholic School. Cleaning, small repairs, and general physical maintenance are carried out once a week by several dedicated parishioners. Few operating funds are available for major painting and repair or for professional restoration.

As happened with St. Joseph’s some years ago, a campaign was started with the goal of raising two million dollars for restoration and repair. Collection boxes labeled “Restoration Fund” are inconspicuously placed around the interior, but funds only trickle in. Concerts held in December 1988 brought in some money. Programs featuring the University Circle Chorale and Chamber Orchestra, the Ohio Boychoir, and the Singers Club of Cleveland were attended by over seven hundred people and raised nearly $4,500. A special benefit program in July 1988 succeeded in raising $28,000, the largest donation the fund has received so far. Unfortunately, the exemplary hard work and generosity has raised just one hundred thousand dollars toward the goal, enough only to slow down deterioration of the structure. To check and reverse the process, considerably more money must be found.

Conclusions: Information for the Future

No solution to the problem of preserving churches and synagogues is yet available. Younger generations of the dying congregations—those who originally supported the churches—are part of mobile America, far removed from their original homes and cities or residing in separate suburbs. Architects are now designing for wealthy congregations who want expansive new structures of glass panels and precut materials to attract and accommodate large audiences. Highly competitive ministries, like business branches and franchises, gather the fleeing dollar elsewhere, often out of state.

The attraction of religion remains very great in the inner city. The buildings used for worship, however, are often the smaller churches of the long-established minority communities or the buildings recently transferred to the congregations that are taking the place of the old. These very sturdy brick and wood structures, many built in the first third of this century, are easier and less expensive to maintain. Storefront churches, mainly for Protestant congregations, are also proliferating. These facts seem to indicate that in the future the grand architectural wonders among sacred
Old Buildings

Old Buildings will be demolished or adapted for reuse because no congregations can afford to run them or desire to take them over.

Perhaps, then, adaptive reuse will have to be the ultimate focus for preservation, although no unanimity of opinion exists regarding the appropriateness of this solution.

Recently, a number of journals and newsletters that provide information regarding cost-efficient restoration, building maintenance, and guidelines for fund raising have appeared. Many articles relate instances of buildings successfully preserved, either as houses of worship or as structures put to new uses.16

Several major resource centers for historical preservation have taken additional steps to educate congregations and disseminate information. A two-year-old Coalition for the Preservation of Religious Buildings has helped to form Partners for Sacred Places, a new National Center for the Stewardship and Preservation of Religious Properties.17 This service organization will provide clergy, lay people, and preservation professionals with information and assistance through workshops, publications, and conferences; it will also try to increase the pool of resources available for the maintenance and repair of religious properties. On another level, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a non-profit organization chartered by Congress for the purpose of encouraging public participation in the preservation of objects, sites, and buildings significant in American culture and history, is planning ways to help congregations in Chicago improve the management of their buildings. “Inspired Partnerships,” a special project based in the National Trust’s Midwest Regional Office in Chicago and funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., encourages creative stewardship of religious properties so that these buildings can be an asset to the communities and the areas they serve. The project provides a technical services center for architectural, engineering, and space planning consultation, a clearinghouse for building conservation and property management information, training programs for clergy and laity, a public education program, and a capital loan program. Helping local congregations to utilize their properties for broader community purposes contributes to neighborhood vitality and also expands the potential of the congregation for securing support.18 The Midwest Regional office also maintains an extensive vertical file on examples and approaches for adaptive reuses of churches and synagogues.

Spreading information regarding realistic economic solutions to the problems of preservation is a means of explaining to the public the problems caused by ever-changing environments. This in turn may allow for some cautious optimism about the future of some currently and potentially threatened sacred structures.
The authors wish to thank the following people who contributed information on these topics for this article: on the Church of St. Stephen, Father Michael Franz; on the Civic, Mr. Robert Solitz, Ms. Helen Wolf, and Ms. Helen Klein; on the preservation of inner-city churches, Ms. Holly Fiala, Mr. A. Robert Jæger, Ms. Sally Sims-Stokes, and Ms. Judith Vance. Background information on churches of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese was provided by Ms. Christine L. Krosel.

Notes


2. Anne O’Hare McCormick, St. Agnes Church, Cleveland, Ohio: An Interpretation (Cleveland, 1920); Story of St. Agnes Parish, 1893-1937 (Cleveland, 1937). Both books privately printed by the congregation of St. Agnes, Gilbert P. Jennings, pastor; Eric Johannesen, Cleveland Architecture, 1876-1976 (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979).

3. Catalogue for the exhibition, “Sacred Landmarks: A Selected Exhibit of Existing Ecclesiastical Structures in Cuyahoga County” (1979); copyright by the Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners.


7. Powell and Delahey; Binney and Burman.

8. Powell and Delahey; Binney and Burman.


13. Thomas A. Hallet, script for “A Survivor Threatened,” a one-half hour videotape documentary on St. Joseph Franciscan Church. (Available from the C.S.U. Sacred Landmarks Research Group, collaboratively produced and distributed by Viacom [now Cablevision], Cleveland Heights, Ohio.)


18. Ms. Holly Fiala, Assistant Director for the Midwest Regional Office of the National Trust, is also Project Director for Inspired Partnerships, a collaborative effort of clergy and lay people to design a special pilot program to assist local congregations in the Chicago metropolitan area with creative approaches to managing and maintaining their properties. Ms. Fiala may be reached at The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1135, Chicago, IL, 60604. Phone: 312-939-5547.
CLEVELAND'S SACRED LANDMARKS
Elaborated upon in this issue (current names given)

1. Trinity Cathedral, Euclid and E. 22nd
2. Bethany English Lutheran Church, Triskett Road at Rockport
3. The Church of the Saviour, Lee Road between Bradford and E. Monmouth
4. Wade Memorial Chapel, Lakeview Cemetery
5. Amasa Stone Chapel, Euclid between Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Adelbert
6. St. Stephen's Church, W. 54th between Bridge and Lorain
7. The Church of the Covenant, Euclid between Abington and Cornell
8. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Corner of Coventry and Fairmont (Cleveland Hts.)
9. Old Stone Church (First Presbyterian), Corner of Ontario and Frankfort on Public Square
10. St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Corner of Clark and Scranton
11. St. Joseph Franciscan Church, Woodland, near E. 240th
12. St. Stanislaus, E. 80th between Forman and Baxter
13. Our Lady of Lourdes, Corner of E. 59th, Hamm and Dellef
14. Holy Name, Broadway-Harvard at E. 81st
15. First Methodist Church, Corner of Euclid and E. 30th
16. Epworth-United Methodist Church, Corner of Chester and E. 307th
17. Pilgrim Congregational, Corner of W. 18th and Starkweather
18. North Presbyterian Church, Corner of E. 40th and Superior
19. Friendship Baptist Church (formerly Temple Tifereth Israel), Corner of E. 55th and Central
20. Antioch Baptist Church (formerly Bolton Ave. Presbyterian), Corner of E. 80th and Cedar
21. East Mount Zion Baptist Church (formerly Euclid Avenue Christian Church), Corner of E. 100th and Euclid
22. Lane Metropolitan C.M.E. (formerly First Church of Christ Scientist), Corner of E. 46th and Cedar
23. Church of God and True Holiness (formerly Second Church of Christ Scientist), Euclid at E. 77th
24. Shiloh Temple (formerly B'Nai Jesduchoh), E. 55th and Sec oil
25. First Church of Christ Scientist, Corner of Overlook and N. Edgehill
26. Temple Tifereth Israel, Corner of E. 109th and Parklane
27. St. Andrew's Abbey Church, Martin Luther King Blvd. behind Benedictine High School
28. The Civic, Mayfield Road east of Lee
29. Park Synagogue, Mayfield Road between Ivydale and Compton.
In Memoriam
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
A Friend
1928–1989

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GAMUT