

Saving or Replacing Historic Windows: Advice from the Historic Preservation Office

by Carin Ruff

On June 12th, Cleveland Parkers met at the Cleveland Park Club to hear a presentation from Amanda Molson and Anne Brockett, Cleveland Park specialists with the D.C.'s Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Amanda and Anne presented HPO's revised guidelines for window repair and replacement in historic districts and shared some of their accumulated wisdom about replacement products and weatherization strategies. (You can download the complete guidelines from <http://planning.dc.gov/DC/Planning/Historic+Preservation>.)

Here are some of the most important take-aways from the presentation:

First of all, Amanda and Anne are helpful, friendly, knowledgeable, and ready to answer your questions! They can recommend specific products, provide suggestions for saving your windows and saving you money, help walk you through the permitting process, tell you what *doesn't* need a permit, visit your building to offer an on-site evaluation – you name it, just ask! They are the first people you should contact if you are planning any kind of work on your historic district property. Email Anne at anne.brockett@dc.gov or call her at (202) 442-8842; Amanda is amanda.molson@dc.gov or (202) 442-8827.

Anne and Amanda are eager to save you time and money. Did you know that screens and storm windows

don't even require a permit? Storm windows are a great way to extend the life of your historic windows while increasing energy efficiency. The new window guidelines provide suggestions on choosing the right storms and screens for your historic home.

It's no longer true that all-wood windows are the only option for window replacement in historic districts. HPO staff continually review new products as they come on the market to evaluate their quality and suitability for use in historic properties. Staff are now routinely approving the use of some aluminum-clad or fiberglass replacement window products, rather than requiring wood windows across the board. Some of the newer products do an excellent job of simulating the look of wood while providing better quality and longer lifespans than lower-quality modern wood windows. Anne and Amanda have recommendations for specific product lines; give them a call and they'll give you the very latest information.

That said, HPO staff are looking with increased scrutiny at any application to replace original windows in an historic property. If your house has its original wood windows, the quality of the original materials almost certainly means that they can be rehabilitated and made weathertight at much lower cost than that of new windows. HPO staff will want to see evidence that your windows are severely deteriorated before

approving replacement. If your windows can be repaired and weatherized, they will work with you to find the best way to save and restore your windows while improving the energy efficiency of your home.

One option for upgrading the energy efficiency of older windows is to have double-paned glass installed in your historic window frames. A company called Bi-Glass (bi-glass.com) specializes in this kind of retrofit. Not all windows have muntins thick enough to accept double panes, but this can be a good solution for larger-paned historic windows.

Large apartment buildings have more leeway in terms of permitted materials and justification for replacement of windows. The preservation of the building as a whole, in terms of both appearance and integrity of the historic fabric, is sometimes best served by installing lower-maintenance replacement windows. Contact Anne or Amanda for details.

A directory of tradespeople experienced in historic home restoration work, including windows, is available on the D.C. Preservation League's website at dcpreservation.org/contractors. The listings are a collaborative project of DCPL and HPO. If you're looking for the right person for your project, start with that database and then check with Anne or Amanda for their latest intelligence.

Adas Israel Congregation: A Synagogue Moves Uptown at Mid-century

by Carin Ruff

Adas Israel Congregation sits just east of Connecticut Avenue, where Quebec and Porter Streets meet, its imposing front looking towards the avenue. The Cleveland Park Historic District takes a westward bend at that point and excludes the synagogue. In 1987, when the boundaries were drawn, Adas Israel's 1951 building, designed by the Newark firm Frank Grad & Sons, was well under the 50-year mark required for National Register nomination, and few recognized the importance of mid-twentieth-century architecture. However, Adas Israel is an important part of Cleveland Park, and its story mirrors the larger story of Washington's Jewish community at mid-century.

Washington's first synagogue, founded in 1852, was Washington Hebrew Congregation, which now also stands just outside the Cleveland Park Historic District. Mark Ozer, author of *Northwest Washington, D.C.: Tales from West of the Park*, writes that Adas Israel was founded in 1869 by members of Washington Hebrew Congregation who wished to maintain an Orthodox mode of observance as Washington Hebrew moved in the direction of Reform Judaism.

In the 20th century, Adas Israel became Conservative. Its rabbis, Ozer says, "were trained at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York, the center for the idea of a historically evolving Judaism but less radical than either German or American versions of Reform Judaism. Solomon Schechter, the scholarly Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge University, was recruited in 1902 to lead the JTS in a direction blending tradition and innovation that was characteristic of

American Conservative Judaism. Schechter recruited a faculty that were products of East European rabbinical schooling but had continued their studies in more modern German or American universities. The goal was to help immigrants cross over to the American mainstream from Orthodox Judaism toward a form of Judaism more compatible with their background. The JTS began to shape its own identity and, in 1913, formed the United Synagogue of America, composed of Conservative congregations such as Adas Israel compatible with its principles."



The evolution of Washington's Jewish community is reflected in the successive moves of Adas Israel. Ozer writes, "Its first building was in the midst of the then Jewish immigrant community. Its small two-story building, the first constructed specifically as a synagogue in Washington, was rescued from demolition and reincarnated as the Jewish Museum." The rescue involved moving the building three blocks

from its original location at Sixth and G Streets, NW, to its current location at Third and G. (You can see a picture of the move in progress at jhsgw.org/about.) Ozer continues, "Adas Israel's second, substantially larger building at Sixth and I Streets, built in 1908, complete with dome suggestive of Byzantine influences, reflects a second and more prosperous generation. It also remains, now restored, to serve an expanding non-denominational in-town Jewish community. The present-day, very large art deco building was built in 1951. It reflects the move of its congregants to the more fashionable upper northwest and a large expansion in synagogue membership in the post-World War II era."

The move uptown of Washington's Jewish congregations was driven not just by upward mobility, but by changes in the city's neighborhoods. In the late 1940s, a series of court decisions struck down the restrictive covenants that had kept Jews out of many of the neighborhoods of Upper Northwest, opening up to Jewish families the possibility of moving out of the city core. Then, in the 1950s, urban renewal completely destroyed the neighborhoods of Southwest that had housed African-Americans and new immigrants. Many from the displaced communities moved north into what had been the Jewish area of near-Northwest. The movement of more affluent Jewish families into Upper Northwest is reflected in a number of grand new synagogue buildings of that period – not only Adas Israel's Cleveland Park home, but others like Tifereth Israel and Ohav Shalom on upper 16th Street.