



News Release

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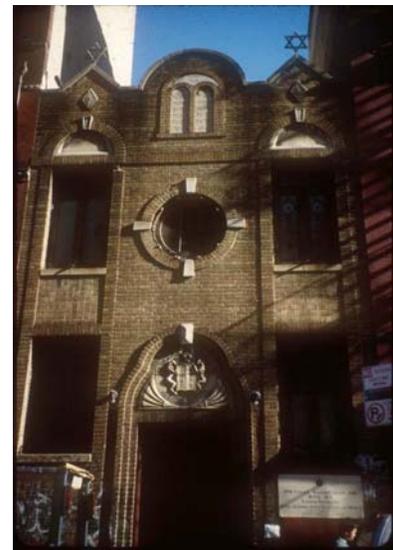
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES TWO RARE SURVIVORS

On **May 11, 2004** the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the Kehila Kadosha Janina Synagogue in Manhattan and the F.J. Berlenbach House in Brooklyn.

Kehila Kadosha Janina Synagogue (280 Broome Street, Manhattan)

“Kehila Kadosha is a jewel that captures the excitement of cultural life in New York City and contributes to the vibrant history of the Lower East Side,” said Robert B. Tierney, Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Kehila Kadosha Janina Synagogue was constructed in 1927 for a small group of Romaniote Jews who had emigrated from the town of Ioannina in northwestern Greece. They began moving to the United States in 1905 and established a small community on the Lower East Side, along with numerous other recent Jewish immigrants. Adhering to neither the Ashkenazy nor the Sephardic traditions, this group came with their own religious and social customs developed in Greece over the course of many centuries. Romaniote synagogues were established in Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn but Kehila Kadosha Janina is the only synagogue to survive.



Designed by architect Sydney Daub, the Kehila Kadosha Janina Synagogue is a two-story brick-faced structure. In the style of traditional New York synagogue buildings of the late nineteenth century, the three-bay wide facade is symmetrical with a central entrance and a raised basement. Its brick and cast stone facade uses elements from both the Classical and Moorish traditions, including semi-circular, keyed arches over the windows of the second story and a cusped arch motif around the main entrance.

F.J. Berlenbach House (174 Meserole Street, Brooklyn)

“This wonderful building is a reminder of the quality of residential architecture New York City possesses,” said Robert B. Tierney. *“This is a treasure in Williamsburg.”*

Located in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, the Berlenbach House is an extraordinary Queen Anne-style survivor from the last decades of the nineteenth century. The three-story frame building was built in 1887 by local carpenter Franz J. Berlenbach, a German immigrant,

from plans drawn by his son, F.J. Berlenbach, Jr., a young architect who had recently opened a design office nearby. The Berlenbach family occupied the house until 1899.

While most of the older wood-frame buildings in this section of Brooklyn have been resurfaced with new materials, this house retains its original clapboard siding and is alive with inventive wood carving. The design exhibits an exuberant use of ornament and an animated treatment of the wall surface. The densely textured carving, including an entrance hood, bands of foliate ornament, incised sun designs, and vertical and wavy half-timber forms sets this house apart from others in the city. Crowning the building is a bracketed cornice with a paneled frieze, above which is a pediment with a carved band ornamented by a mask and a sunburst tympanum. Adding to the texture of the facade are a segmental-arched stained-glass transom at the first story and tinted small-paned windows in the upper sash.



The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency responsible for designating and regulating New York City's landmarks.