

Former Greenbank Synagogue, Sefton, Liverpool Heritage Statement



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March 2016

**Greenbank Synagogue
Heritage Statement**

Prepared for Greendrive Liverpool Ltd

by

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March 2016

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2015 by Greendrive Liverpool Ltd. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the Grade II* listed former Greenbank Synagogue and its setting within the Sefton Park Conservation Area and to assess the impact of proposals to convert the Synagogue for residential use and construct a residential block within the grounds. The building was listed in 1983 and upgraded to II* in 2008.

Sections 3 and 4 of this report provide an assessment of the significance of the former Greenbank Drive Synagogue and its setting. The Synagogue dates mainly from 1936-37 although it has been through several phases of extension and alteration which reflect the changing aspirations of the Greenbank Drive Hebrew Congregation. It is considered to be of **exceptional** significance overall and the setting makes an overall positive contribution to the significance of the listed building although Shalom Court and the late 20th century buildings on Gorsebank Road are negatively affecting its significance.

Section 5 outlines the heritage planning policy context. The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act is the primary legislative document; there is a presumption in favour of preserving and enhancing heritage assets. The NPPF provides national policy on heritage assets and development, and sets out a proportionate approach taking account of significance. The public benefits of a proposal likely to affect the character of a designated asset should be balanced against the harm to heritage assets.

Section 6 assesses the impact of the proposals which will have the very significant public benefit of securing the building's optimum viable use in accordance with paragraphs 132-134 of the NPPF. Although the preferred option would be re-use as a place of worship, this has not been possible and Liverpool City Council has approved the conversion of the former synagogue to residential use with enabling development in principal. Although the proposals will cause harm to the building, this is considered to constitute **less than substantial harm and should be offset against the significant public benefit of securing the building's optimum viable use** in accordance with paragraphs 132-134 of the NPPF, as well as important conservation and repair work.

Considered overall and taking account of the benefits outlined in Section 6, the impact of the proposals on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area will be **beneficial**.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2015 by Greendrive Liverpool Ltd. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the Grade II* listed former Greenbank Synagogue and its setting within the Sefton Park Conservation Area and to assess the impact of proposals to convert the Synagogue for residential use and construct a residential block within the grounds. The NPPF requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

2.2 Acknowledgements

Jenny Wetton would like to thank the staff at the Liverpool Record Office for their assistance with the research for this report.

2.3 Purpose of the Report

The report is designed to provide the author's professional opinion of:

- An assessment of the significance of the exterior and interior of the building and of the contribution made by the setting;
- An assessment of the impact of the proposals.

This report has been written by Jenny Wetton, BA MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Consultant, based on evidence from documentary sources and a survey of the site.

2.4 Copyright

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3 HISTORY AND CONTEXT

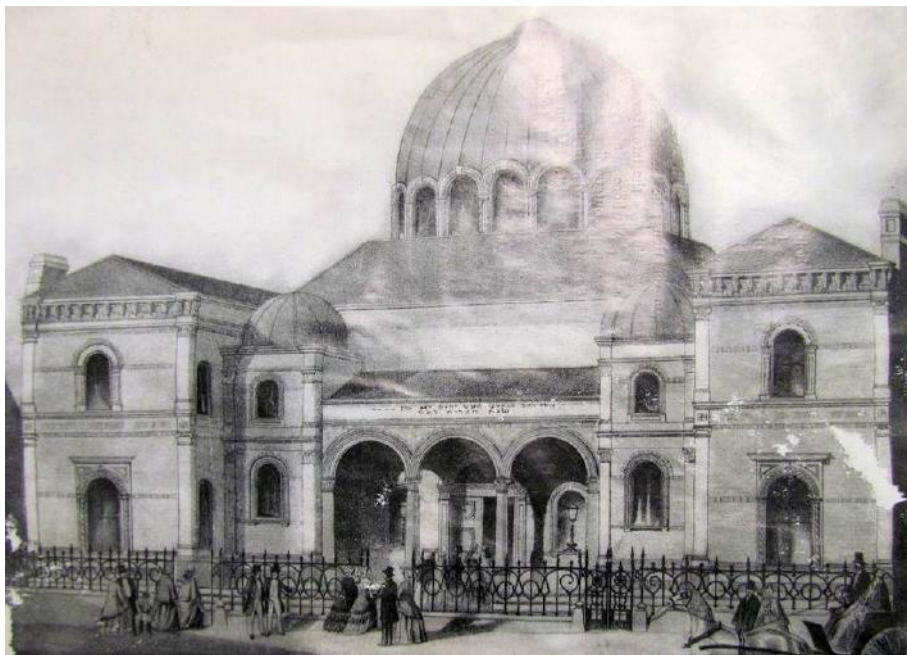
3.1 Early History and Commission

Greenbank Drive developed in the later 19th century as part of a belt of boulevards and parks around the City of Liverpool proposed during the 1850s. A public park to the south opened in 1872, to a design by the important French designer, Edouard André and is now registered at Grade I.

The listing description for the building has a useful summary of the early history of the Liverpool Hebrew Congregation which

‘...was founded in the C18 at the Stanley Street/Cumberland Street Synagogue. Over the years it moved to various premises before construction of a purpose-built synagogue at Seel Street in 1807. A schism in 1838 led to the division of the congregation into the Old Hebrew Congregation (which remained at Seel St until new premises were constructed at Princes Road in 1872-4) and the New Hebrew Congregation. The latter congregation established a synagogue in a warehouse on Hanover Street and subsequently in a building on Pilgrim Street. A purpose-built synagogue was constructed at Hope Place in 1857.’

The synagogue at Hope Place was designed by Thomas Wylie of Liverpool.

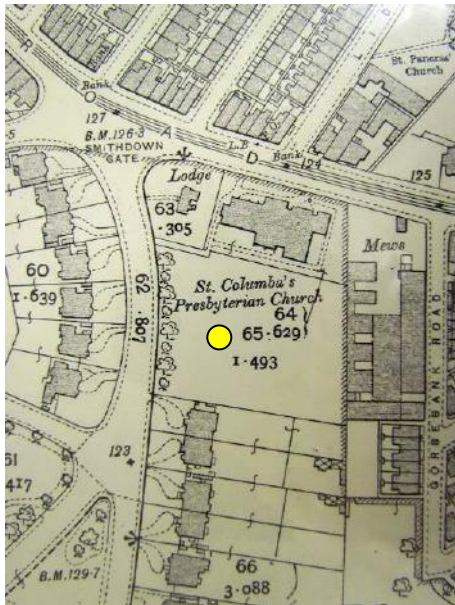


Hope Place Synagogue

During the early 20th century, the Jewish population of Liverpool began to move away from the city centre to the wealthier suburbs, especially the Sefton Park area. In 1928, 321 Smithdown Road was acquired as a place of Hebrew Education and a small congregation held religious services there. In 1928, the Hope Place Congregation began looking for a site for a new and larger synagogue. In 1935, the site of Greenbank Drive near the entrance to Sefton Park was chosen and the lease for the site obtained from the City Corporation. The new synagogue was built to a design by Alderman Alfred Ernest Shennan of Liverpool and the foundation stone laid on 14 June 1936 by Baron Tobias Globe attended by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Dr J H Jenny Wetton Conservation

Hertz. The building was consecrated on August 15 1937 and opened by Professor Henry Cohen, a member of the congregation and later Lord Cohen of Birkenhead.

Historic plans from 1936 show that the prayer hall was originally intended to accommodate 540 on the ground floor and 470 in the first floor ladies' gallery; the design was evidently altered as these numbers were reduced later to 480 people on the ground floor and 450 in the a gallery. The Hall in the basement was named the Max Morris Hall. Rabbi Dr S. M. Lehrman was appointed Senior Minister and the Rev. S. Wolfson as Second Reader.



OS 1908 Showing Site of Synagogue



Baron Tobias Globe Laying the Foundation Stone, 1936

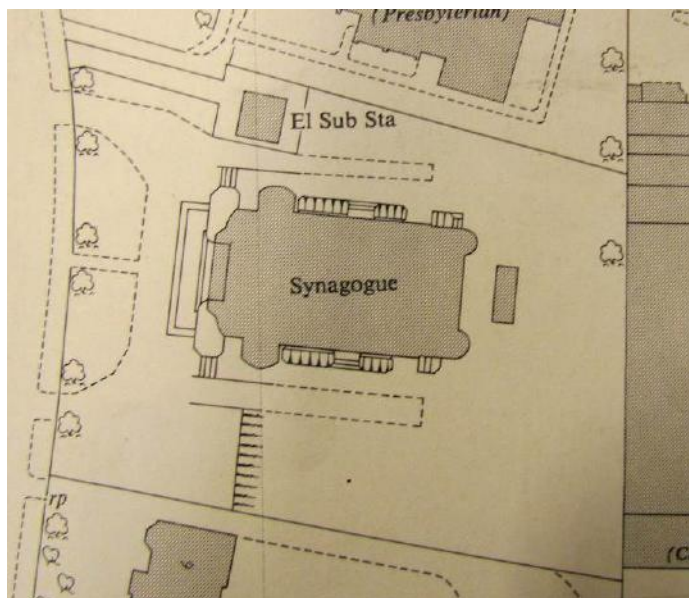


The New Synagogue, 1937



Consecration, 1937

'In 1937 on completion of Greenbank Drive Synagogue the main migration of the Hope Place congregation took place. The congregation re-joined with the Sefton Park Hebrew Congregation and the two reverted to their original name of the New Hebrew Congregation. The basement area of the building was originally used as a youth centre and the synagogue had its own scout troop (the 22nd Wavertree).



OS 1953

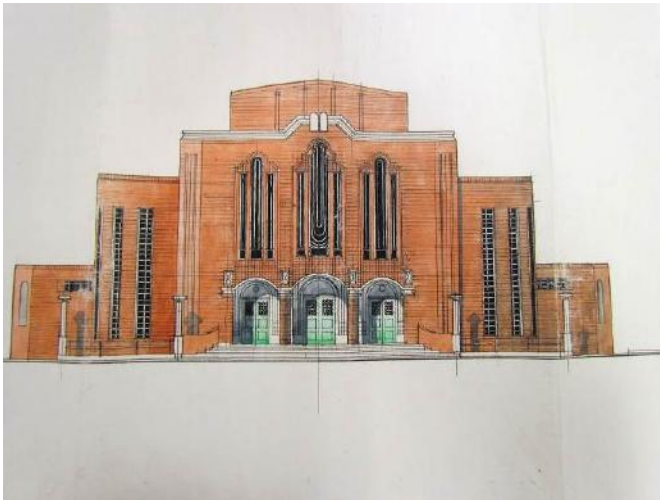
3.2 The Design

Exterior

Historic building plans show the new synagogue aligned east-west roughly centrally within the plot, with an electricity sub-station to the north.

Constructed of reinforced concrete and steel with Upholland golden brown brick facings and a tiled roof, the building has a rectangular basilica plan form. Set on sloping ground, there is a ground floor basement and a raised ground floor to the rear. All the windows are metal-framed with leaded lights. The main front or west elevation has a projecting 3-bay square central section with splayed corners. A triple-arched arcade with circular brick piers and carved capitals forms the porch, with three main entrance doorways set to the rear with doors incorporating elliptical panels. Tall paired windows with decorative metalwork flank the central door. There are semi-circular lunette windows to each end of the entrance porch with metalwork design in the form of a Menorah. The entrances are approached by two flights of shallow stairs with curved flanking brick walls to the upper flight and Art Deco style metal balustrades divide the flights into three sections. There are three tall tripartite windows with arched centre lights and carved rubbed brick surrounds to the first floor above the entrances with raised brick decoration below the windows. A decorative brick parapet with a raised centre and angled sides contains a stone relief inscribed with Tablets of the Law. Lower 2-storey wings to each side form the prayer hall's gallery side aisles, with paired tall slender stair windows to the front with projecting angled glazing and small paired square windows to the returns at basement, ground, half-landing, & first floor levels. Low 2-storey projections are set back behind to each far side with small paired horizontal windows to the basement and ground floor with the library to the left end and Beth Hamidrash to the right) with three tall round-headed windows to each ground floor bowed return with slender hoodmoulds, horizontal windows below with projecting angled glazing.

The side elevations feature eight buttresses to each side, those to the end being gabled buttresses and those to the centre being stepped. There are tall round-headed windows to the bays in between. At basement level are smaller paired vertical square-headed windows and access doorways. The rear elevation has a central section with three vertical windows flanked by slender paired windows (all with a central transom) to basement level and taller windows in line above to the ground floor (those to the centre with round heads). Angled towers to each side rise above a parapet with a gable set back behind with a large stepped 7-light lancet east window. Two bowed 2-storey projections project from the corners of the elevation rising to the mid-ground floor level with vertical 7-light windows to the upper level and smaller windows to the basement. The side aisles behind are in the same style as the front elevation.



Front Elevation, 1936



Front Elevation



Foundation Stone



Tablets of the Law



Side Elevation

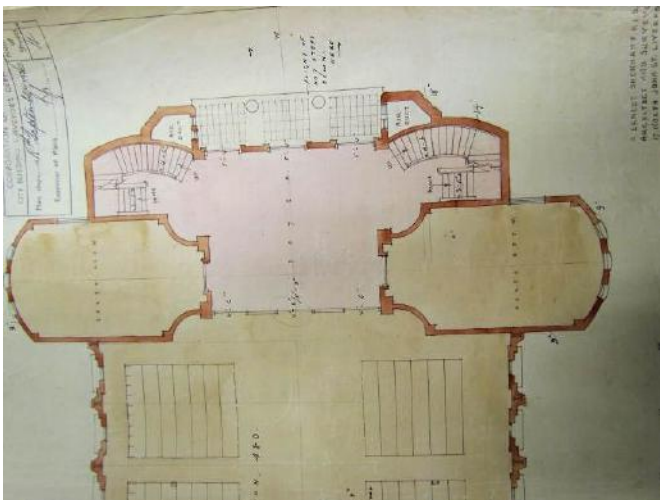


Rear Elevation

Interior

Internally, the building features a large basement function space, a full-height ground floor prayer hall with ancillary spaces, a first floor ladies' gallery and rear storage and office areas. The building is designed in Art Deco style with carved light oak woodwork and original doors and wooden parquet floors survive throughout.

The entrance vestibule has a shallow moulded ceiling decoration with a central lozenge design and semi-circular wall-mounted uplights. Sweeping cantilevered concrete stairs with Art Deco pierced metal balustrades to each end lead up to the ladies' galleries and down to the basement (the handrails to all balustrades have now gone). Three plain double doors with large arched hoods lead into the prayer hall. Doors to the left and right of the prayer hall entrance within arched recesses lead to the library and small Beth Hamidrash (Schul) respectively.



Ground Floor Plan, 1936



The Foyer, 2005¹

¹ McLoughlin, J. *Greenbank Drive Hebrew Congregation, Photographs* (unpubl., 2005)



Entrance Vestibule

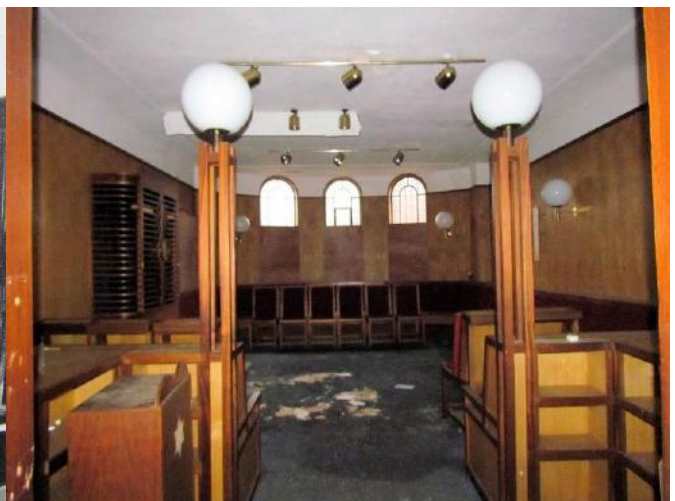


Staircase

At the time of the upgrade in 2008, the Beth Hamidrash had curved panelled walls with name plaques flanking the doorway but these have now gone. There is a wooden wall-mounted Torah scroll cabinet/Ark to the east wall with pierced lattice woodwork to the curved sides and doors incorporating a Magen David symbol and a gilt Hebrew inscription above. A double- arched panel, originally fixed to the top and inscribed with the Ten Commandments in Hebrew and the Magen David is now stored in the entrance vestibule. A historic photograph from around 1937 shows the Torah scroll cabinet/Ark with a balustrade either side, a curtained front and pews before it. The ceiling is plain plastered with coving. The benches shown in the historic photograph from 1937 came from the Sefton Park Hebrew Congregation in Smithdown Road². Four timber canopy poles, also decorated with a Magen David and currently stored in the entrance vestibule, may have come from here.



Beth Hamidrash as it was in 1937 and Inset in 1987³



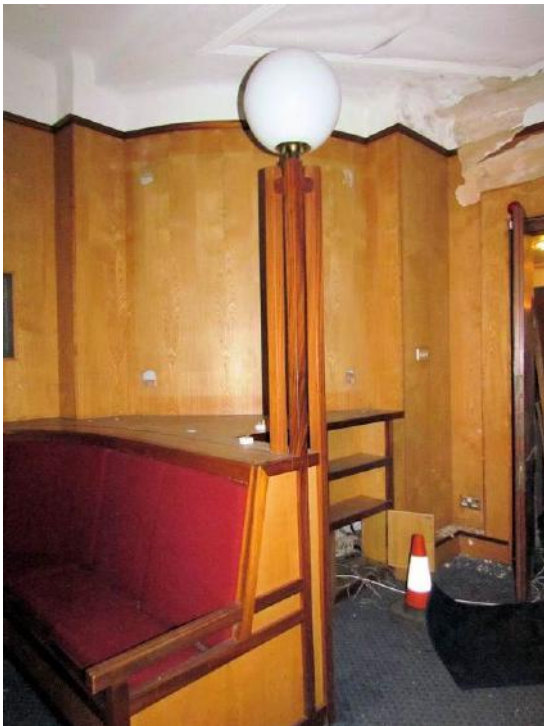
Beth Hamidrash

² Pers. Comm. Manchester Jewish Museum, 19.01.16

³ Greenbank Drive Synagogue Golden Jubilee Souvenir Brochure, 1987



Arched Panel



Curved Wall



Canopy Poles

The Library has plain plastered and painted walls with similar curves to the Beth Hamidrash and a plain plastered ceiling. Large bookcases have survived on the east and west walls. Although dates for these are uncertain, those on the east wall may date from around 1962, when the Synagogue received a bequest of £400 for the Abraham Yaffe Library⁴. A large boardroom table is also stored here and may have been used within the Library or elsewhere within the former Synagogue.

⁴ *Greenbank Drive Synagogue Golden Jubilee Souvenir Brochure*, 1987



The Library in 2004⁵



The Library in 2004



The Library



1930s Bookcase



Board Table

The Prayer Hall retains whitewashed walls and a pale blue barrel-vaulted reinforced concrete ceiling with moulded decoration on the vaulting and a canopied clerestory supported on concrete girders with striped moulded brackets. A cantilevered ladies' gallery with an oak balustrade survives to three sides with a segmental curve to the west end. A stepped 7-light lancet window dominates the east end, with simple

⁵ McLoughlin, J. *Greenbank Drive Hebrew Congregation, Photographs* (unpubl., 2005)

stained glass and leaded decoration including a stained glass Magen David to the centre light. Below this, a stone platform is approached by five steps with a pulpit at the south side. A partition wall at the west end behind the ladies' gallery provided a Guild Room behind. A historic photograph of the interior from 1957 appears to show a metal balustrade with a geometric pattern incorporating the Magen David to the choir loft above and behind the Ark but the balustrade appears to be backed with a solid material. Seating to the ground floor side aisles and ladies' gallery has survived, those to the ladies' gallery with small nameplates. Heating is provided by radiators with timber surrounds set into niches along the side walls.

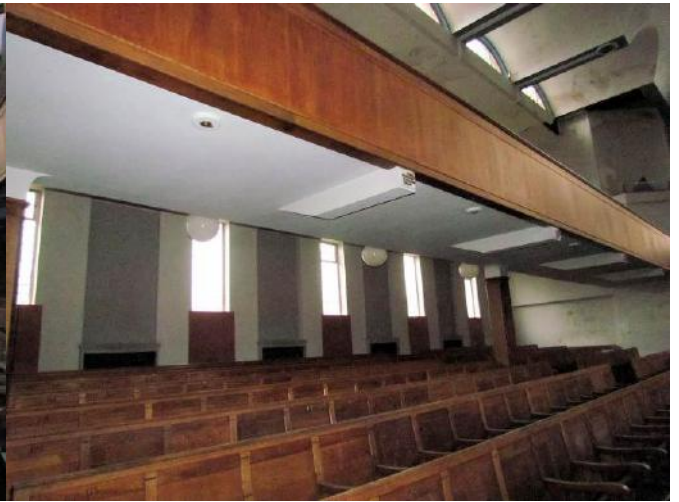
The historic photograph also shows large horizontal vents in the curved walls at the east end and square leaded Art Deco style lamps along the centre and above the gallery.



The Prayer Hall in 1957



Prayer Hall Looking East



Seating and Side Aisle



Gallery Looking West



East Window



Platform and Pulpit



Ground Floor Radiator



Ceiling Decoration



Decorative Bracket



Gallery Seating



Nameplate on Seat

Doors to the left and right of the Ark lead to the rear stairs, which are similar in style to the main front stairs and are of concrete with a simplified Art Deco balustrade, although most handrails have now gone. There are plain ancillary storage/robing/office rooms to both floors. A simple narrow passage behind the Ark provides access between the north and south sides. On a plan from 1935, the western stairs are shown as curved and running alongside the exterior wall; by 1936, this had changed to the present layout, with toilets inserted on either side. The choir loft is another very simple space lit by the east window but the metal balustrade above the Ark has now gone. A short staircase at the north side of the east end retains the only surviving length of metal handrail, with a decorative bracket.

Access to toilets at the west end and the Guild Room (later office space) behind the ladies' gallery is provided by similar concrete staircases and two glazed doorways each with a large leaded glass panelled surround. The space is divided into two by a more recent part-glazed timber partition.



Robing Room/Office



Passage Behind Ark



Staircase



Staircase



Surviving Length of Handrail



Detail of Bracket



Choir Loft



Doorway at North End



Office



Doorway at South End

The basement consists largely of the Max Morris Hall, a large open function space with a pierced wooden suspended ceiling supported on timber clad pillars, a small stage to the west end with large internal horizontal windows with leaded light glazing to a porch behind and a very plain large kitchen to the east end. Stairs to each side behind the stage lead up to the basement foyer which, in 2008, had a metal balustrade in the same style as the external entrance balustrades. There is a later lobby and small bar

at the east end, shown on plans from 1980. The basement foyer has a later linoleum floor, cloakrooms to each side beneath the library and Beth Hamidrash and access to the main side stairs. A staircase in the south-east corner retains a timber fitted cupboard with shelves.



Kitchen



Max Morris Hall



Internal Lights



Cupboard

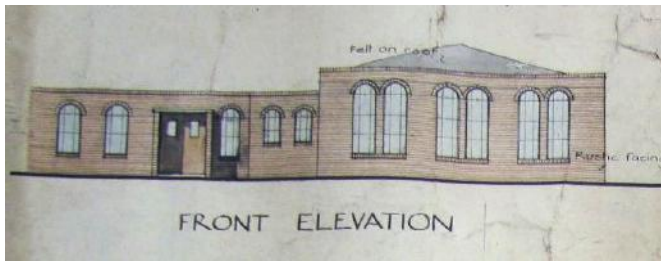
3.3 Alterations to the Building

Extension for Classrooms, late 1950s

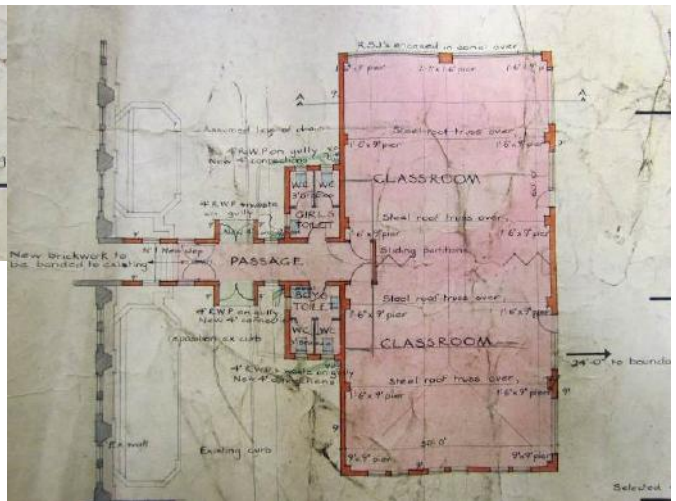
During the Liverpool blitz in 1941, the Synagogue windows were blown out and most services were held in the Beth Hamidrash⁶. After the Second World War, the Rabbi M. Nemeth was appointed Senior Minister.

In the late 1950s, a single storey annexe, to a design by architect Walter Lewis of Liverpool, was added to the south side linked to the basement level of the synagogue by an enclosed walkway. This provided classrooms and toilets. An enclosed porch was added to the south wall of the Max Morris Hall.

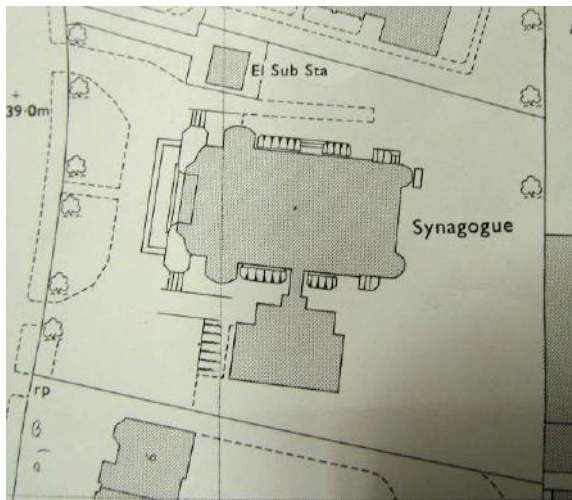
⁶ *Greenbank Drive Synagogue Golden Jubilee Souvenir Brochure*, 1987



Front Elevation of Classrooms, 1958



Plan of Classrooms, 1958



OS 1974



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Porch in Max Morris Hall

Reconstruction Following Fire, 1959-1961

In May 1959, a burglar started a fire that destroyed the Ark and Torah scrolls and around a third of the roof structure. The building was subsequently restored by the original firm of architects at a cost of £50,000 and re-consecrated in 1961. Due to increasing competition, the youth centre closed at this time.

Following the 1959 fire, the Ark was replaced and the metal balustrade to the choir loft above and behind was fitted with a glass front, shown in an undated historic photograph below. New similar style balustrades were also fitted to the corner walls at first floor height, of which one in the north-east corner survives. Some of the seating at the east end was replaced and the square Art Deco lamps replaced with central brass chandeliers and smaller 3-light lamps along the gallery, all with the Magen David. The lead-lighted windows also suffered heat damage in the fire. The ashes of the destroyed Sifrei Torah and Ark were interred at the Long Lane Cemetery.



The Prayer Hall, 1959



The Prayer Hall, 1959



The Choir Loft, Post 1960



The Ark



Glass Balustrade to Corner Wall



Replaced Chandelier



Replaced Lamp

A further fire occurred in two first floor offices behind the ladies' gallery in 1965 but damage was confined to the office and part of the gallery. It is possible that the part-glazed timber partition dates from this period.

Modernisation of Max Morris Hall, 1973

The Max Morris Hall was modernised in 1973 and the suspended ceiling, stage and bar may date from this period.



Ceiling



Stage



Bar

Renovation of Beth Hamidrash, 1981

The Beth Hamidrash was renovated in 1981 by Harold and Irvine Glassman and a commemorative plaque survives on the east wall. Architects Richard O'Mahony and Partners designed new fixed bench seating for the sides and, probably at the same time, the curtaining and steps were removed from the Torah Scroll Cabinet/Ark and the candle-style lamps replaced with globe lamps. The same lamps may also have been fitted under the balcony in the prayer hall. Historic plans from 1980 show that, at this time the room in the north-east corner was used as the Cantor's room and a small room off the staircase below that was used as the silver room. In the basement, a room in the south-east corner was used as the Ladies' Guild Room and the heating was located in the north-east corner.



Commemorative Plaque



Torah Scroll Cabinet/Ark



Benches



Globe Lamp Under Gallery



The Beth Hamidrash in 1987

The architects also prepared a full survey of the structure, resulting in an estimate of £120,000 for necessary repairs, and an appeal was launched. The Synagogue received a grant of £21,735 from the Department of the Environment and another of £22,500 from the local authority through the Inner City Partnership. However, the roof was found to be in an unsafe condition and close to collapse. Once the buttresses were removed, it was found that steel works within which constituted the tie for the main roof trusses had been so badly corroded by penetrating dampness that, in places, there was very little steel left. Structural engineers advised exposure of all the affected steel work, involving the roof slab on either side of each truss, and welding on new steel sections to strengthen the structure. The roof was propped beforehand to support the structure and no-one was allowed to use the gallery whilst the work was under way. The Department of the Environment made a further grant of £22,500. Works commenced in November 1983 and included work to the roof, rainwater goods, re-pointing, repair of metal windows, eradication of damp to the stairs and hall area and repairs to dwarf walls. Landscaping was also carried out and the gates replaced and railings repaired.

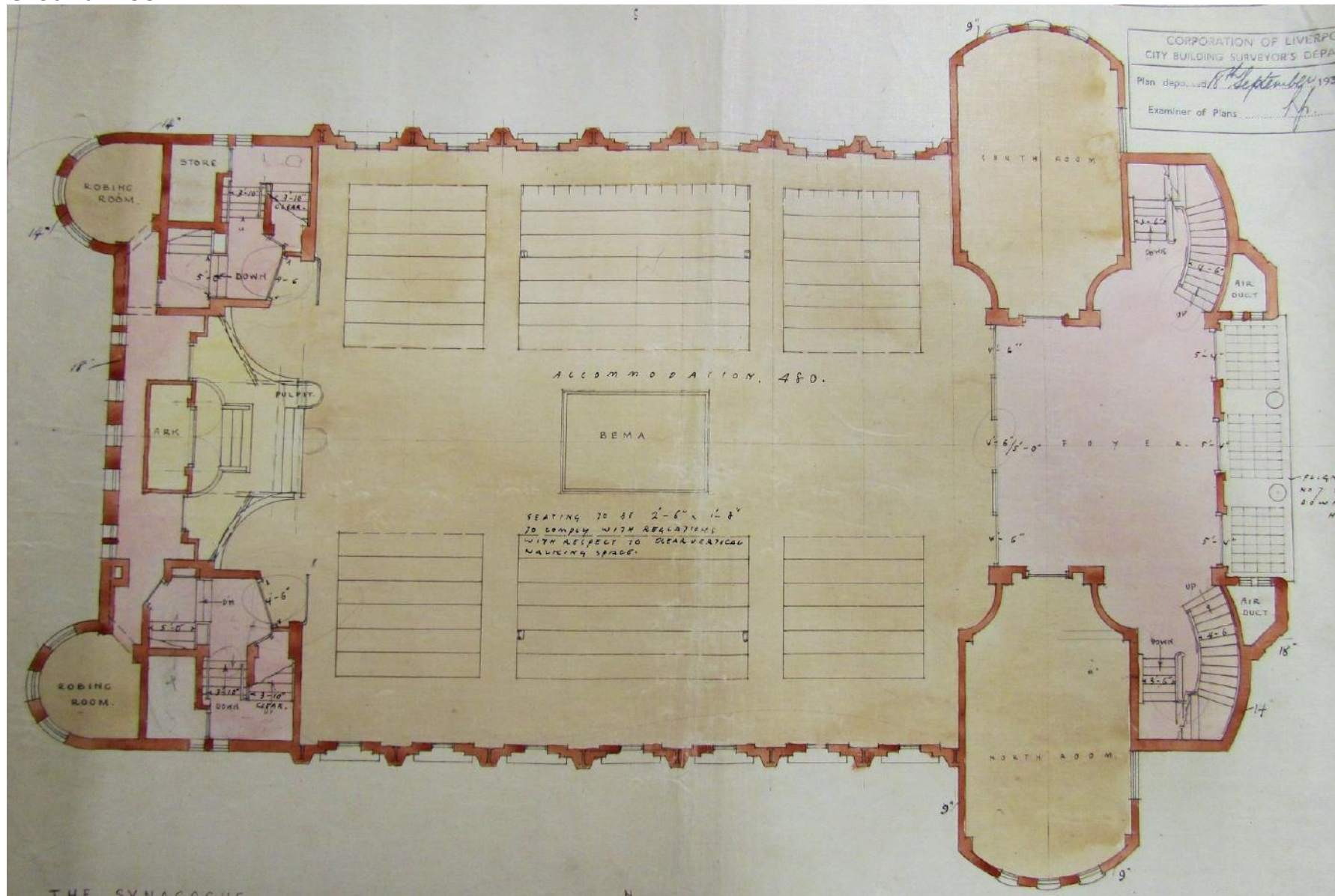
The annexe was converted to a suite of rooms for functions, thanks to a donation from Barney Ross. The main Synagogue was also redecorated at a cost of £20,000.

The Congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary at Greenbank Drive in 1987 and its souvenir brochure featured letters of congratulations from the Chief Rabbi and the Israeli ambassador.

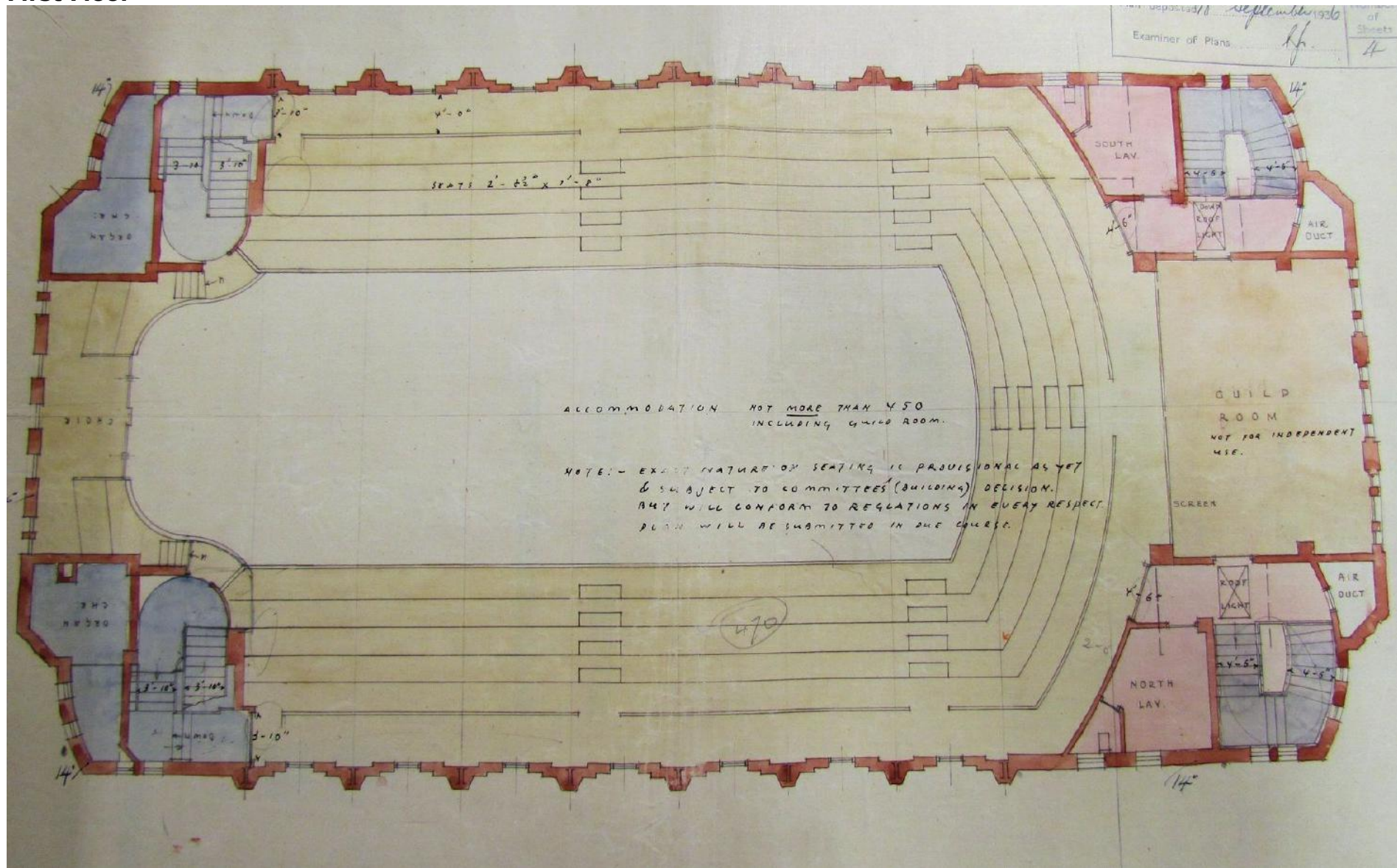
The gradual movement of the Jewish population still further south reduced numbers and the synagogue was closed in 2008.

3.4 Building Plans, 1935/6

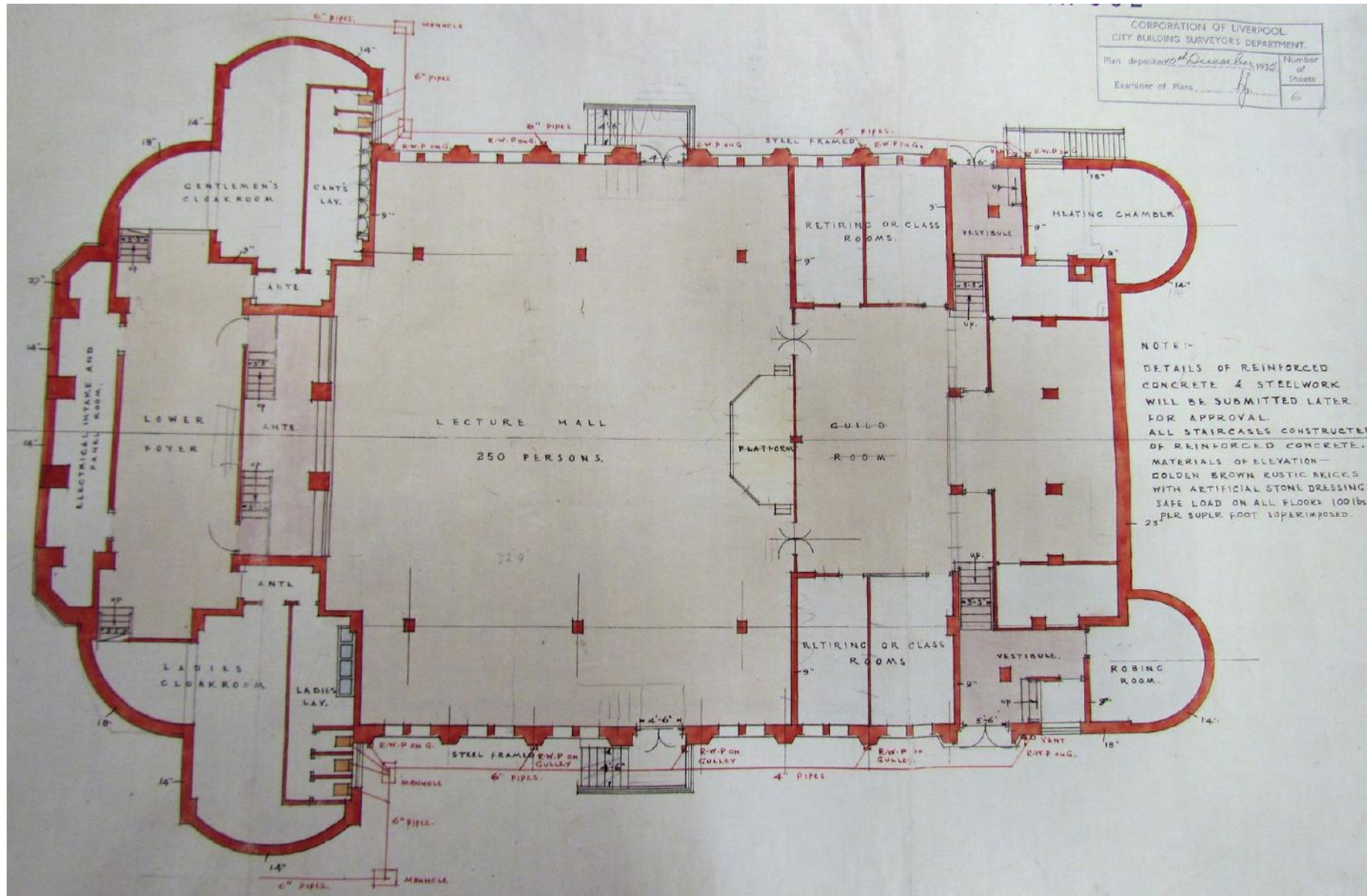
Ground Floor



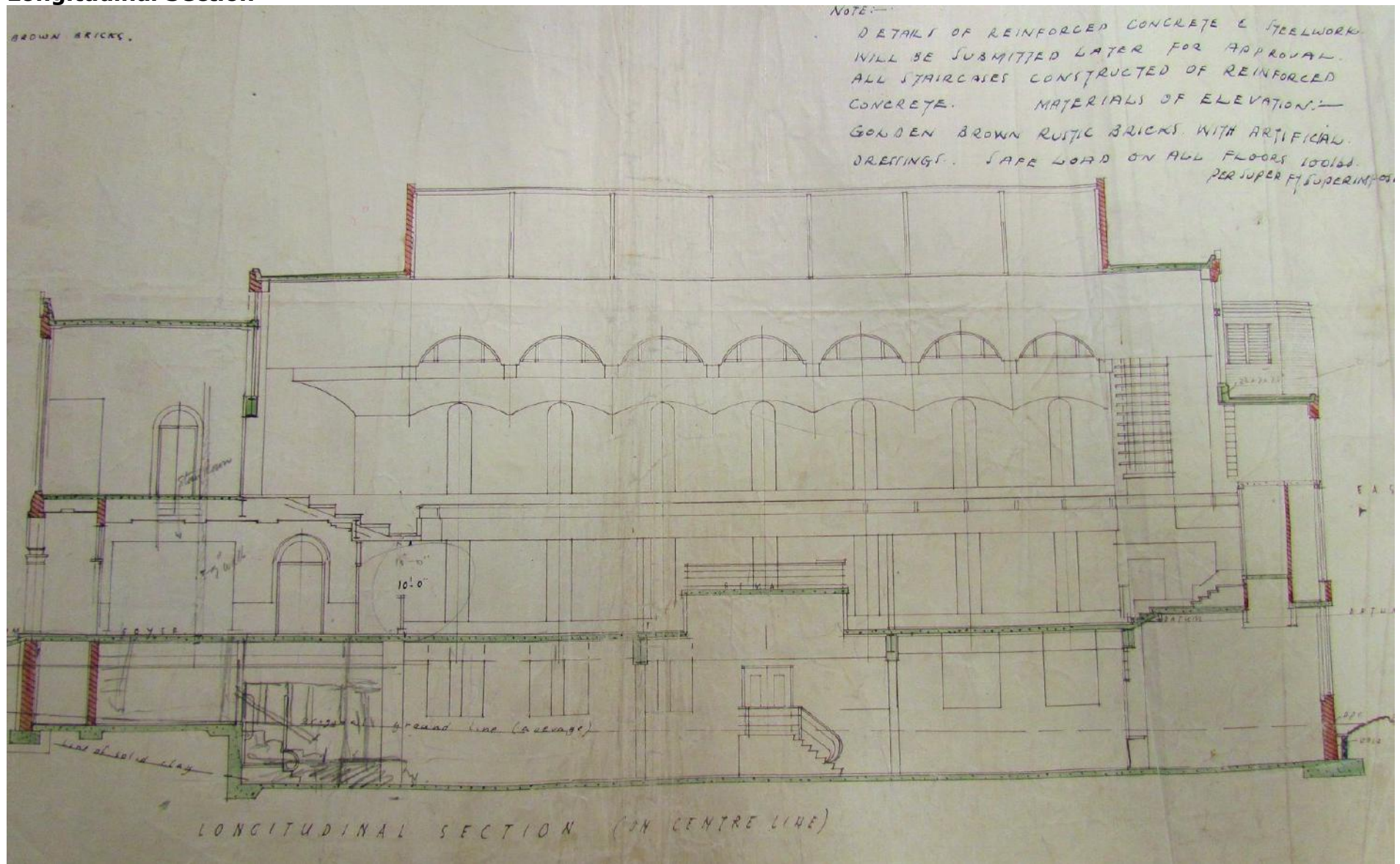
First Floor



Basement



Longitudinal Section



3.5 Architectural Context: English Inter-War Synagogues

The English Heritage selection criteria for *Places of Worship* contain a useful summary of synagogue architecture:

'The synagogue is a sanctuary providing shelter for three functions: worship, study and community meetings. While patterns of synagogue worship reflect those of the rituals observed in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, to which all synagogues are oriented (facing south-east in England), the synagogue is a place of prayer, not a place of sacrificial ritual, and there is no altar. The sanctity of the building derives from the activities pursued in it, and in particular from its housing of the Torah scrolls, so that once this ceases the building loses much of its religious importance to the community...

'The synagogue is usually rectilinear in plan, the prayer hall being entered via a vestibule. The ark (*Aron Kodesh*, *Aron HaKodesh*) containing the Torah scrolls, the most important focus of worship, is located against the east wall. This usually occupies a shallow niche or apse and is often embellished. A perpetual light, first lit at the dedication of the building, is placed before it. The other ritual requirement is for a raised platform (*bimah*), usually placed centrally with rails, from which officiants can read scripture and address the assembly. Different traditions place it further west (Sephardic) or east (Reform). Synagogues are always well lit, with plenty of windows (symbolically twelve) or generous top lighting, and with ample provision of candelabra or lamps. Seating is essential during long services, generally arranged on an east-west axis, with reading desks and storage space raised off the ground (usually under the seat) for prayer books and shawls, which cannot be carried to and fro between home and the synagogue on a Sabbath. Consequently synagogue seating is always numbered or identified by an occupant's name, with some free seating for visitors or strangers. Women and girls are traditionally seated apart from men and boys, usually in a gallery running round three sides of the building. In the most Orthodox synagogues women may be hidden from sight by a screen or grille (*mehitzah*). Ancillary spaces and structures can include a subsidiary prayer hall, study hall (*Bet HaMidrash*), tabernacle for the Succot holidays, and residences for the rabbi and caretaker.⁷

The selection criteria go on to describe the architectural development of synagogues in the inter-war period:

'Although not at the architectural cutting edge, significant numbers of synagogues were constructed between the wars as communities moved from city centres to leafy suburbs: Golders Green, in North London, became a preferred area and a new synagogue was accordingly built in 1921 in a Neo-Georgian style by Digby Solomon (listed Grade II). Many were built in a modest brand of Art Deco, while others opted for more historicist styles, and a significant number now face a precarious future.'

⁷ English Heritage. *Designation Listing Selection Guide: Places of Worship*. (English Heritage, 2011), 14-15

Carol Krinsky describes architects in the 1920s and 1930s using contrasts and larger windows than pre-War. Willesden Green in London and Greenbank Drive were 'eclectic and retrospective in approach, simplifying older styles.'⁸ Facades were often symmetrical with projecting ends and entrances, although simpler than formerly. Interior surfaces were 'generally smooth and sparsely decorated in paler and clearer tones...' Hendon United Synagogue, in London, is more Modernist in style, being based on horizontal sliding blocks. Dollis Hill, also in London, was designed by E. Owen Williams in 1933-34 using entirely cast-concrete with accordion-pleated sides which did away with the need for interior supports and enabling good sightlines and hexagonal windows.

The former Greenbank Synagogue is a typical Art Deco design, in its symmetrical front, projecting ends and smooth simple interior but is unusual in its use of patterned brickwork.

3.6 Architectural Context: Alfred Ernest Shennan

Ernest Alfred Shennan (1887-1959) established a leading architectural practise in the North West of England, with offices in North John Street, Liverpool. Most of his surviving work is in the Merseyside area and comprises a wide diversity of buildings.

An early commission was the village hall at West Derby (1913) in a Domestic Revival style. His pre-War work included a parish hall at St John the Baptist in Tuebrook (1931, re-built 1949), Westminster Banks at Dingle and Crosby in Liverpool (both 1931) and at West Kirby in Cheshire (1931) and Birkenhead (1932). He excelled in pubs and Art Deco cinemas and designed The Carlton (1932), Plaza (1933), Mayfair (1938), the Abbey in Wavertree (1939) and the Forum Cinema on Lime Street (now the ABC and listed at Grade II); restaurant interiors at The French Café and Arabic Café in Liverpool (both 1933); dance halls including the Grafton Rooms in Liverpool (1934) and various Art Deco hotels and office blocks.

After the Second World War, his practice designed a number of headquarters office buildings including Spinney House for Littlewoods (1951-5), Pearl Assurance House (1959) together with a range of industrial and other buildings, including a printing works extension for Charles Birchall & Son Ltd (1950), almost all on Merseyside. His practice designed many churches on Merseyside including the RC Church of Our Lady of Assumption in Liverpool (1950) and restored St Matthew and St James in Mossley Hill in 1950-2 after war damage. He became an Alderman and the Conservative Leader of Liverpool City Council, serving as the Chairman of the Post-War Redevelopment Committee. He was appointed as Lord Mayor in 1946 and was knighted for his efforts towards the construction of the Mersey Tunnel in 1952.

The former Greenbank Synagogue was Shennan's only synagogue and represents a departure from the style of Art Deco that he used before the War, as it incorporates elements from Sweden.

⁸ Krinsky, Carol Herselle. *Synagogues of Europe* (New York, Architectural History Foundation, 1985), 94
Jenny Wetton Conservation

3.7 Social and Cultural Context

The new Synagogue importantly provided Hebrew classes in the Schul and also provided a meeting place for communal organisations such as the Ladies' Guild, a Cultural and Social Society and Greenbank Jewish Youth Society.

Services continued at the Synagogue throughout the Second World War. During the Liverpool blitz in 1941, Greenbank Drive Synagogue was used as a reception centre for homeless families in Liverpool and held a non-Jewish service at Christmas. The Hall also provided a social centre during the War for American Jewish GIs stationed at the air base in Burtonwood, Warrington, with weekly dances organised by the newly-formed Young Ladies Guild. After the War, they presented a plaque to the congregation (displayed in the entrance hall).

The Max Morris Hall was later used for large community meetings during the campaign for a state of Israel by prominent Zionist leaders and was the venue for a celebration of Israel's statehood in 1948. In 1949, the Council of the Jewish Chronicle held a reception in honour of advocate, Rose Heilbron, in the Max Morris Hall.

In around 1960, the Synagogue youth club closed, due to competition from other youth organisations in the city.

Greenbank Synagogue members played prominent parts in the local community and Lord Mayors of Liverpool have included Sir Harry Livermore and Louis Caplan. Dr Israel Harris was Mayor of Bootle and Jack Pollecoff Mayor of Pwllheli. Presidents of the Merseyside Jewish Representative Council have included Ben Nagley, Louis Caplan, Dr Mervyn Goodman, Arnold Austin and Michael Silverbeck.

The former Greenbank Synagogue played a very important part in the cultural and social life of the Jewish community in Liverpool

4 SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current government policy; NPPF policies 127 and 128 (CLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012). A key objective in the NPPF is 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation ...' (NPPF Para. 126). The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy 132). English Heritage issued *Conservation Principles* in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. There are three levels of significance as well as neutral and an intrusive grade:

Exceptional Level of Significance

The element is relatively intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site. This would correspond to an individual grade I or II* listing. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High Level of Significance

A designated asset important at national and regional level, including Grade II listed buildings. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including locally (non-statutory) listed buildings. The element has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local level, including buildings which make a positive contribution to a conservation area. The element has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is more scope for adaptation.

Neutral

The element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

Intrusive

The element is historically unimportant and has a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

4.2 Significance of Former Greenbank Synagogue

The former Greenbank Synagogue is listed at Grade II* and is one of ten in the country listed at this grade. Only 5.5% of all listed buildings are Grade II* and only 3% date from 1900-1944. Following the methodology for assessment of cultural significance set out in the English Heritage *Conservation Principles*, the former Greenbank Synagogue can be identified to have the following heritage values:

Evidential Value:

The former Greenbank Synagogue dates mainly from 1936-37 although it has been through several phases of extension and alteration which reflect the changing aspirations of the Greenbank Drive Hebrew Congregation.

At the time of its construction and until around 1950, the Max Morris Hall was the only Jewish Communal centre of any size available for large assemblies.

The former Synagogue has fallen victim to vandalism and theft and all the metal staircase handrails have now gone, with the exception of one short section which could be used to replicate others. Glass balustrades within the Prayer Hall have also been broken and only one short balustrade survives. This factor has had a negative effect on the significance of the building.

Historical Value:

The former Greenbank Synagogue has an important historical association with the regionally significant architect, A. E. Shennan.

The former Greenbank Synagogue also has an important historical association with Baron Tobias Globe and Dr J H Hertz, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, who attended the ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone. The building was opened by Professor Henry Cohen (a member of the congregation and later Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, the first Jewish member of the House of Lords).

Architectural Value:

The former Synagogue retains much of the highly significant design by Shennan. The 20th Century Society says:

‘It was designed by an architect whose work was synonymous with Merseyside, Alfred Shennan. In this daring, innovative design he abandoned the art deco style he usually favoured, and drew on Swedish Functionalism to create a

thoroughly modern building. It is one of the most architecturally important synagogues in the country.⁹

Carol Krinsky refers to Greenbank Drive Synagogue as one of several buildings 'showing contemporary tendency towards simplicity and clarity'¹⁰, in the interwar period.

The former Synagogue is also selected as one of four of the best architect-designed synagogues by BDOonline, along with Beth Sholom, Pennsylvania, USA by Frank Lloyd Wright (1953-59), Synagogue and Jewish Community centre, Mainz, Germany by Manuel Herz (c2010) and New Synagogue, Dresden, Germany by Rena Wandel-Hoefer and Wolfgang Lorch (2001).¹¹

Sharman Kadish describes Shennan's use of facing bricks:

'...laid in intricate patterns, reminiscent of Dutch and Scandinavian modernism of the era. Structurally, it made extensive use of reinforced concrete and steel. The (by this period) 'traditional' tripartite façade was given an original treatment through the use of tall vertical windows, plus a series of stepped and gabled buttresses on the long walls.

She describes the interior as:

'Light and airy thanks to the generous glazing. The cantilevered gallery wraps itself around the three sides, with a graceful segmental curve mirrored in the curve of the oak pews facing the Ark. The barrel-vaulted ceiling has an unusual clerestory arcade carried on continuous concrete girders. The building was twice damaged by fire, in 1959 and 1965 and the current Ark is not original, although its art deco style is in keeping with the building.¹²

In a hierarchy of significance, the west front of the former Synagogue should be considered as of exceptional significance as this was designed as the front entrance and retains significant historic detail. Views of the north and south elevations are more constrained by the plot boundaries but contain some important architectural detail; the east elevation is relatively plain but does retain the highly significant east windows; all are of high significance.

The late 1950s annexe to the south side is acknowledged not to be of special interest in the listing description.

⁹ *Exemplary Inter-War Synagogue in Liverpool gets listing upgrade* [online]. Available at: <http://www.c20society.org.uk/news/exemplary-inter-war-synagogue-in-liverpool-gets-listing-upgrade/> [accessed 5.01.16]

¹⁰ Krinsky, Carol Herselle. *Synagogues of Europe* New York, Architectural History Foundation, 1985, 94

¹¹ Winston, A. Four of the best architect-designed synagogues [online]. Available at: <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/four-of-the-best-architect-designed-synagogues/5061093.article> [accessed 5.01.16]

¹² Kadish, S. *Jewish Heritage and Britain and Ireland: an architectural guide* (Swindon, Historic England, 2015), 168

Social Value:

The former Synagogue was a Jewish centre of worship for over seventy years and played a very important cultural and social role in the Liverpool Jewish community.

4.3 Schedule of Significance

The table below details the levels of significance of the interior, using the room names on the latest set of plans.

Interior Element	Significance Level
<u>Ground Floor:</u>	
Entrance Vestibule	High
Western Staircases	High
Schul	Exceptional
Library	High
Prayer Hall	Exceptional
Eastern Staircases	High
Passage Behind Ark	Medium
Storage/robing rooms	High
<u>First Floor:</u>	
Western Staircases	High
Office	High
Prayer Hall Gallery	Exceptional
Eastern Staircases	High
Choir Loft	High
<u>Basement:</u>	
Entrance Vestibule	High
Max Morris Hall	High
Eastern Staircases	High
Kitchen	Medium
Gents and Ladies Cloaks	Medium

4.4 Summary of Significance

The building was listed in 1983 and upgraded to II* in 2008. The decision to upgrade was made for the following principal reasons:

- It is one of the finest Art Deco synagogues in the country;
- Its design by Sir Ernest Alfred Shennan is an original treatment of a traditional basilica plan form and tripartite façade to produce a confidently modern religious building in terms of styling, massing and composition;
- The light and airy interior of the prayer hall contains a highly unusual reinforced concrete canopied clerestory and a cantilevered segmental curved ladies' gallery;
- The materials and craftsmanship employed throughout the building are of the highest quality;
- Symbolism is clearly evident in the building's design in the form of the 7-bay prayer hall and 7 light E window each representing the Menorah, and the incorporation of the Magen David into internal decorations and fittings;

- Stylistic continuity can be found throughout the building both externally and internally;
- It has important socio-historic significance as an inter-war synagogue of 1936-7 that represents one of the last free cultural expressions of European Jewry before the Holocaust.

The former Synagogue is considered to be of **exceptional significance overall**; the 1950s extension to the south is of no interest.

4.5 Contribution Made by Setting to Significance

The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'.

The former Greenbank Synagogue lies within the Sefton Park Conservation Area, which forms its setting. The Synagogue was built in a suburban environment, with terraced houses and shops facing onto Smithdown Road to the north and the Church of St Columba's and its lodge immediately adjacent on the north side. To the south and west were, and still are, detached and semi-detached houses set within large or substantial gardens to front and back. The setting of the site can now be defined as Greenbank Drive in both directions, Lathbury Lane and the northern entrance to Sefton Park to the west and south and Gorsebank Road to the east.

The Synagogue is approached by a curved asphalt-surfaced driveway behind an iron fence and hedge with more recent iron gates and brown brick piers. The area in front of the Synagogue is landscaped with planted beds and mature trees. The areas along the sides and at the rear are now very overgrown but retain historic brick rear and southern boundary walls with stone copings and an area of trees in the south-eastern corner. The northern boundary is largely formed by a poor quality steel fence.



***View North-east From Junction with
Lathbury Lane***



View South Across Rear

Although there is no Conservation Area Character Appraisal, the boundary runs along the south side of Smithdown Road and south along the eastern boundaries of Shalom Court and the Synagogue, behind the property boundaries on Greenbank Drive. Smithdown Road is a busy road with a variety of late 19th, early and later 20th century buildings on the north side. At the junction with Greenbank Drive lies the Grade II listed surviving church tower of St Columba's and Greenbank Lodge. The remainder of the church has been replaced with the late 20th century Shalom Court, built to an appropriate height and massing but of an inappropriate style out of keeping with either the tower or the Synagogue. The 1930s electricity sub-station is barely noticeable between the taller buildings. On either side of Greenbank Drive are large, three-storey red brick houses in an English Domestic Revival style with front and back gardens set behind hedged boundaries. There are attractive views south towards the Grade I registered Sefton Park.



View North-west Along Smithdown Road St Columba's Tower, Greenbank Lodge and the Synagogue



Houses to West of Greenbank Drive

View South from Along Greenbank Drive

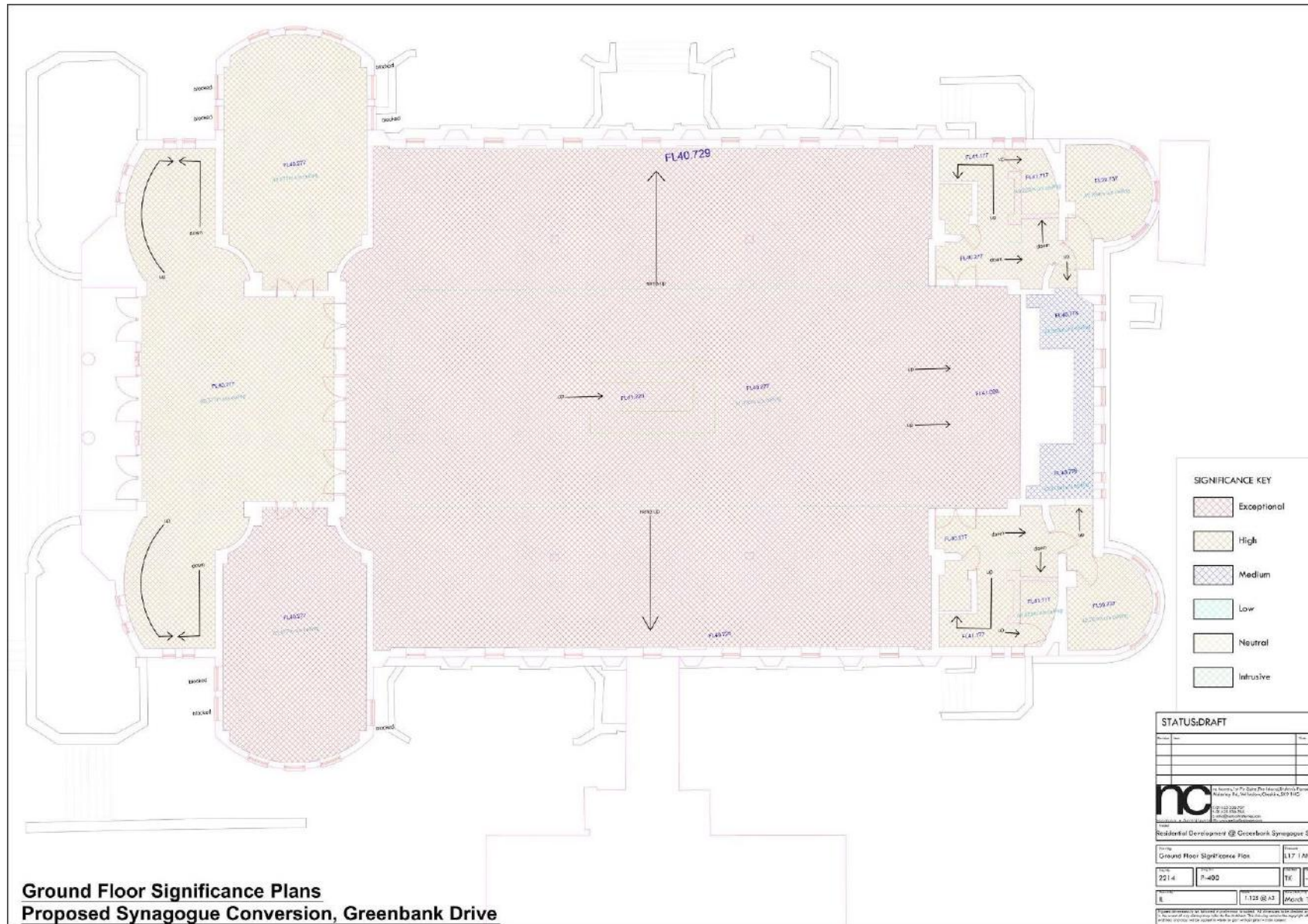


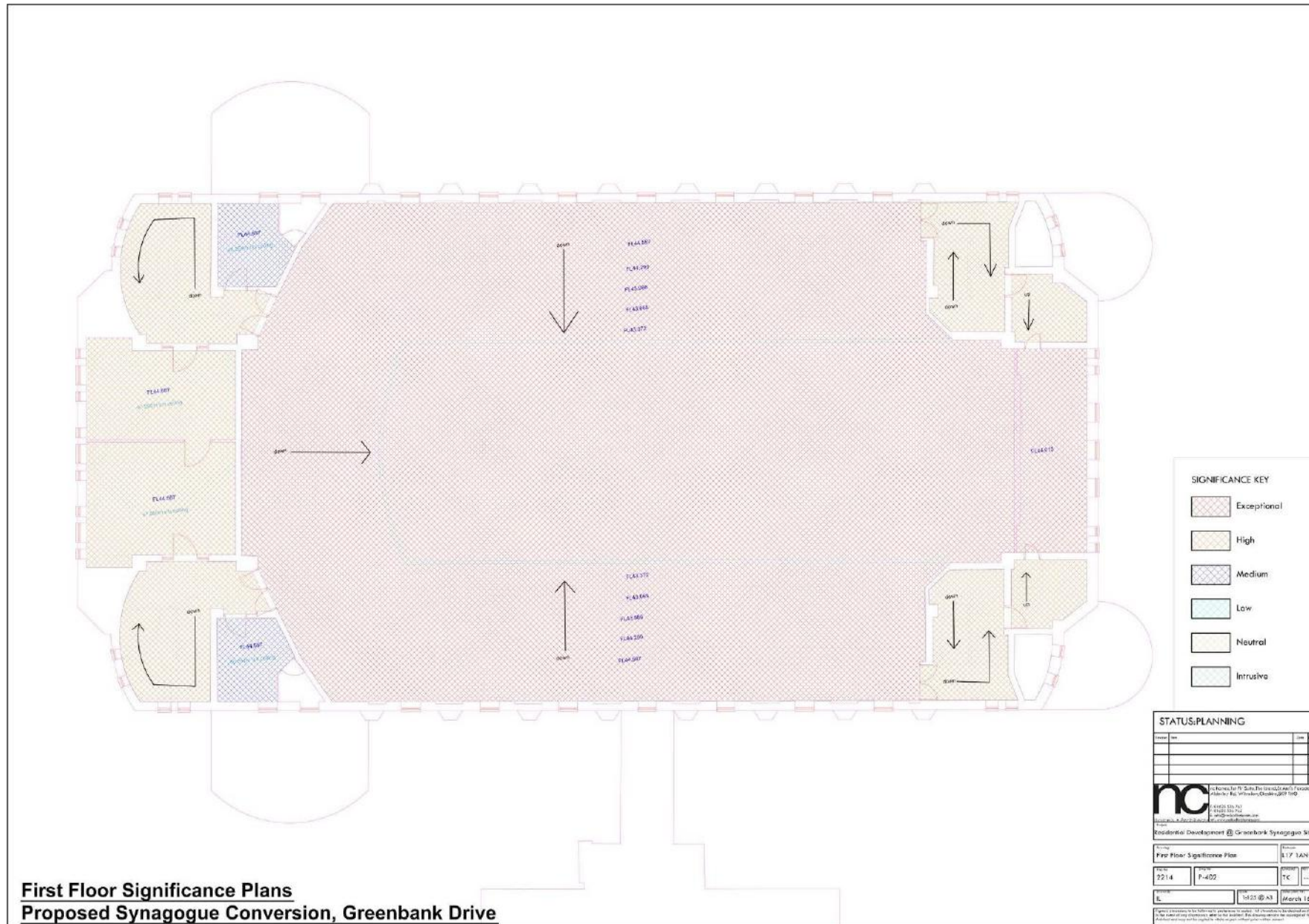
View South-east from Gorsebank Road

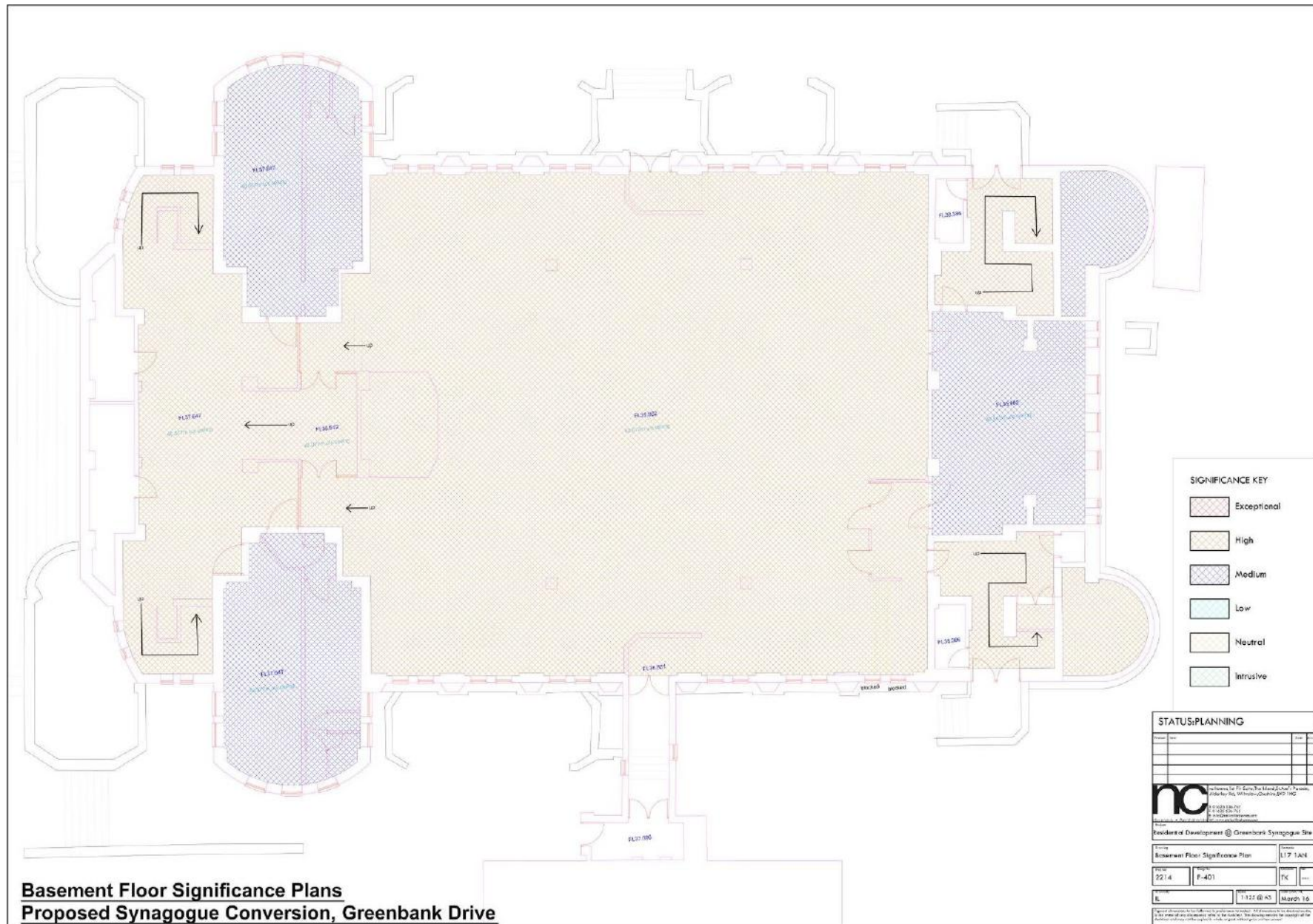
The former Synagogue is prominent in views in either direction along Greenbank Drive, due to its size and having the open area in front. There is a further, although partially, obscured view, from Gorsebank Road, which has a mixture of late 19th and late 20th century houses and a filling station at the northern end. This road lies outside the Conservation Area and the buildings are intrusive. However, the upper part of the rear elevation can be seen from here.

The setting of the former Synagogue is **considered to make an overall positive contribution to its significance, although Shalom Court and the late 20th century houses and filling station on Gorsebank Road have a detrimental effect.**

4.6 Significance Plans







5 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The national legislative framework for development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; often referred to as the Listed Buildings Act. This sets out the duty on local planning authorities with regard to listed buildings and any buildings or land within a conservation area, when determining applications for planning permission. It is essential that these legal duties are considered, alongside the contents of the NPPF and other planning policies and guidance.

For listed buildings, the planning authority *'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses'* (section 66).

Listed building consent is required for alterations which are likely to affect the character and special interest (significance) of the building. It is not required for like-for-like repairs, nor for alterations to modern fixtures and fittings which will not affect historic fabric, such as the removal of a modern partition.

Section 72 (1) of the same Act places a duty on local authorities if the development is in a conservation area - *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'* (section 72(1)).

Planning permission is required for work which is likely to affect the character and special interest (significance) of the conservation area.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is also relevant. Under Section 70 (2), a local planning authority must have regard to any *'material considerations'* when determining an application for planning permission. Under Section 70 (3), the general power to grant planning permission under Section 70 (1) is expressly subject to sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Historic Environment Policies included in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012) replaced *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5). *The Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, which accompanied PPS5, has recently been replaced by the *Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, though this should be read in the light of the NPPF, and does not comprise policy.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government sees three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and these roles should be regarded as mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. The planning system is therefore expected to play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy

Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in Paragraphs 6-10). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles' (Paragraph 17 bullet 10) that underpin the planning system. Policies 126-141 are related to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The *Planning Practice Guide* states: 'In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.'

Policies 128 and 129 of the NPPF require planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be appropriate to the assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when the potential impact of proposed development to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Policy 131 states: 'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Policy 132 states: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

The *Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, provides guidance on determining substantial and less than substantial harm:

'In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic

interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

'While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.'¹³

Policy 133 states: 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Policy 134 states; 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.'

Policy 141 states: 'Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'

5.2 Liverpool Unitary Development Plan Policies

HD4 Alterations to Listed Buildings

HD4 Consent will not be granted for:

- i. extensions, external or internal alterations to, or the change of use of, or any other works to a listed building that would adversely affect its architectural or historic character;

¹³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/> [Accessed 7.03.16]

- ii. applications for extensions, alterations to, or the change of use of, a listed building that are not accompanied by the full information necessary to assess the impact of the proposals on the building; and
 - iii. any works which are not of a high standard of design in terms of form, scale, detailing and materials.
2. Where the adaptive reuse of a listed building will be used by visiting members of the public, the needs of disabled people should be provided for in a manner which preserves the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

HD5 Development Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings

Planning permission will only be granted for development affecting the setting of a listed building, which preserves the setting and important views of the building. This will include, where appropriate:

- i. control over the design and siting of new development;
- ii. control over the use of adjacent land; and
- iii. the preservation of trees and landscape features.

HD11 New Development in Conservation Areas

1. Planning permission will not be granted for:
- i. development in a conservation area which fails to preserve or enhance its character; and
 - ii. applications which are not accompanied by the full information necessary to assess the impact of the proposals on the area, including all details of design, materials and landscaping.
2. Proposals for new development will be permitted having regard to the following criteria:
- i. the development is of a high standard of design and materials, appropriate to their setting and context, which respect the character and appearance of the conservation area;
 - ii. the development pays special attention to conserving the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character and does not introduce changes which would detract from the character or appearance of the area;
 - iii. the proposal protects important views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area;
 - iv. the proposal does not lead to the loss of open space or landscape features (trees and hedges) important to the character or appearance of the area;
 - v. the development does not generate levels of traffic, parking, noise or environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area; and
 - vi. the proposal has a satisfactory means of access and provides for car parking in a way which is sympathetic to the appearance of the conservation area.

HD22 Existing Trees and Landscaping

1. In order to protect and integrate existing trees and landscape features within new developments, the City Council will:
- i. require the retention of key ecological and natural site features, such as trees, hedges, walls and ponds;

- ii. require the submission of a full independent tree survey to enable the effect of the proposal on the trees to be fully assessed;
 - iii. refuse planning permission for proposals which cause unacceptable tree loss, or which do not allow for the successful integration of existing trees identified for retention following consideration of the tree survey;
 - iv. require layouts to provide adequate spacing between existing trees and buildings, taking into account the existing and potential size of trees and their impact both above and below ground level; and v. require retained trees and woodland to be protected and managed during construction, preventing all site works within the branch spread of any retained tree.
2. The City Council will protect existing trees and woodland areas by:
- i. making tree preservation orders on trees or groups of trees, where appropriate;
 - ii. only allowing the removal of any protected tree in exceptional circumstances, such as where the tree is a danger to public safety or is diseased, and on condition that appropriate replacement planting takes place;
 - iii. ensuring the proper and beneficial management of trees and woodland areas in its ownership; and
 - iv. carrying out a review of existing Tree Preservation Orders.

Buildings of Architectural and Historic Importance

BE15 The repair and enhancement of buildings of architectural and historic importance (listed buildings) will be encouraged. Development in accordance with the development plan which secures such improvements will normally be permitted.

BE16 Development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will not normally be approved.

BE17 Consent for the demolition of a listed building will not normally be granted.

BE18 Listed building consent for alteration, including partial demolition and extensions, will only be granted if the borough council is satisfied that the architectural and historic integrity of the building will be maintained, and that no original or other important features of the building will be destroyed. Proposals to alter or extend should normally satisfy the following criteria:

- 1 extensions must respect the character and scale of the original building and not be allowed to dominate it
- 2 replacement doors, windows and other features in non traditional materials will not be permitted
- 3 particular attention must be paid to the retention of the original plan form, roof construction and interior features, as well as the exteriors of listed buildings
- 4 extensions will normally be required to be built of materials matching those of the original building
- 5 flat roofed extensions to pitched roof buildings will not normally be permitted

Archaeology

BE23 Developments which would affect other sites of archaeological importance may be refused. Permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that measures of mitigation will ensure no net loss of archaeological value.

BE24 Developments which would affect sites of known or suspected archaeological importance, or areas of archaeological potential, may require the submission by the applicant of an archaeological evaluation of the site or area, prior to the application being determined.

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

The former Synagogue is listed on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register as being in very bad condition in a Priority Category of A - Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric with no solution agreed. The proposals represent an opportunity for a new use of the building which could result in its removal from the Register. Consent has already been given in 2013 for the removal of the Ark and Bimah (13L/262).

The preferred option would be the repair of the building for re-use as a place of worship or as a more commercial multi-function space. However, the City Council has found that cost of such refurbishment is unlikely to provide a sufficient return without some enabling development within the curtilage of the property. No private benefactor or end user has been found since the building was vacated nine years ago and the building has deteriorated considerably during that time, causing the cost of refurbishment to rise dramatically. The building has also been widely marketed but has generated little serious interest or realistic solutions.

6.2 Summary of the Proposals

Neil Collins Homes has designed a scheme for the conversion of the former Synagogue for residential use and a new residential block within the grounds.

There are further details in the Design and Access Statement and the drawings which accompany the application.

The former Synagogue is of exceptional significance, confirming its status as a designated heritage asset and substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

6.3 Impact of Changes on the Significance of the Listed Building

The impact of proposals has been considered in the context of the significance of the building as a whole, and the relative significance of affected fabric and areas. The impact of each principle alteration is summarised below:

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Significance of affected area</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
<u>Synagogue Exterior</u>			
Demolish extension to south	Exceptional/High	Beneficial – building added late 1950s in style out of keeping with that of listed building.	N/A
Landscaping with parking for residents	Exceptional/High	Beneficial – existing landscaping overgrown and	Retain trees where good quality and repair

		neglected. Area at front formerly used for parking.	and retain railings and gates.
Remove window on west side of library projection and replace with door; add platform lift with timber sides.	Medium	Mildly harmful - although will result in some loss of historic fabric, window on less important elevation and will be replaced with door to provide disabled access; platform lift to be screened with natural timber.	Door to be good quality timber if possible.
Remove external staircases and adjacent walls at north and south sides of west end and another on north side and replace with platform lift and vehicular access to east end of site.	Exceptional/High (elevations)	Mildly harmful - staircases in poor condition and will enable access to rear of site	N/A
<u>Synagogue - Ground Floor</u>			
Entrance Vestibule – side doors to Prayer Hall to be retained and sealed	High	Neutral	N/A
Library – insert lift to all floors	High	Mildly harmful – although will result in loss of historic fabric, lift will be free-standing to maintain much of volume of space; seating from Prayer Hall to be re-used.	Retain bookcases against wall identified as historic.
Prayer Hall – sub-divide for 6 apartments under gallery, remove Ark and insert light well under Bimah position	Exceptional/Medium	Moderately harmful – apartments will sub-divide volume of space but new walls are positioned away from windows and sub-division kept to a minimum; outline	Repair and retain timber floor if possible; re-decorate public spaces to historic simple colour scheme.

		of balcony to be retained above; seating to be re-used in centre of Hall. Steps and plinth by Ark to be retained for café area.	
Staircase 8 to be covered with new floor and partitioned to provide toilet	High	Neutral – although will change historic floor plan, staircase to be retained.	Partition to be of removable stud wall to reduce impact.
Room in north-east corner to be converted to hold water tanks	High	Mildly Harmful	Use existing voids for new services where possible
<u>First Floor</u>			
Office – convert to apartment	High	Mildly harmful – although the space will be sub-divided, the space is already partitioned. Historic glazed panels and doorway to be repaired and retained.	N/A
Prayer Hall – insert lift to north-west corner and sub-divide for 6 apartments on gallery	Exceptional	Moderately harmful – apartments will sub-divide volume of space but new walls are positioned away from windows and sub-division kept to a minimum; balcony to be extended inwards and to existing openings by staircases at east end with loss of the choir but balustrade to be repaired and retained; seating to be re-used in retained segmental arch at west end; area where lift to be inserted currently used as toilets.	Repair and retain central lamps if possible; re-decorate public spaces to historic simple colour scheme. Retain surviving glass balustrade and provide suitable protection; replicate on opposite side.

<u>Basement/Lower Ground</u>			
North toilets - Insert lift, remove door and remodel remainder to convert to apartment	Medium	Mildly harmful – although will involve some loss of historic fabric, space already sub-divided. Leaded windows at west end of Hall to be removed and stored.	Re-use door elsewhere if possible
South toilets – remodel to convert to apartment	Medium	Neutral – space already sub-divided. Leaded windows at west end of Hall to be removed and stored.	Re-use door elsewhere if possible
Max Morris Hall – sub-divide for 6 apartments and raise floor level, existing steps to be retained under	High	Moderately harmful – apartments will sub-divide volume of space but new walls are positioned away from windows and sub-division kept to a minimum; bar and lobby at east end later additions	Retain timber floor under new floor if possible and repair and retain ceiling in centre of space if possible. Re-hang radiators nearby where new partitions are to be located.
Kitchen – insert partition and steps for access corridor and convert to apartment with insertion of new openings in north and south walls	Medium	Mildly harmful – although apartment will sub-divide volume of space, new walls are positioned away from windows and full height retained.	N/A
South-eastern room – remove small wall and wall nib	High	Mildly harmful – although will result in some loss of historic fabric, existing door to be retained and sealed	N/A

Clearing out stored furniture in the entrance vestibule and library – beneficial.

Much of the furniture here is late 20th century office furniture of no interest. One set of bookcases in the library with leaded lights is of a different wood from the 1930s cases, appears to have been moved from elsewhere and is of little interest. The arched panel is to be repaired and restored to its rightful place in the Beth Hamidrash and the four poles will also be retained in Beth Hamidrash.

Overall

It is recommended that paint analysis is carried out to determine the historic decoration scheme and the results used to inform the new paint scheme for public areas.



Bookcases

6.4 Impact of Changes on the Setting of the Listed Building and the Significance of the Conservation Area

Impact on Key Views

This analysis uses the methodology set out in the English Heritage guidance, *Seeing the History in the View*, where the overall impact on significance is a combination of the importance of the view and the magnitude of impact.

Two viewpoints have been selected for consideration: the view towards the site north-east from the junction with Lathbury Lane and that south-west from Gorsebank Road. These views illustrate the character of the setting of the building and of the Conservation Area. There is a view towards the north side of the Synagogue from the northern end of Greenbank Drive but the development is obscured by the electricity sub-station.

North-East from the Junction with Lathbury Lane



Importance of the Viewpoint

This view is taken looking north-east towards the Synagogue from the junction with Lathbury Lane.

Description of the View

The view shows the Synagogue in the middle ground with the tower of the Church of St Columba to the left and the late 20th century Shalom Court in between. The Synagogue is fronted by iron railings and a low hedge with mature trees by the property boundary. Late 19th century houses appear on the right hand side.

Heritage Attributes of the View

The view includes the Synagogue in the centre and the Grade II listed tower to the left and illustrates the character of the Conservation Area.

Changing Aspects of the View

Many of the trees in the view are deciduous and allow more light through in winter. The viewer can walk along the road in both directions so the viewpoint will change as the viewer moves, allowing different information to be gained. At night, light comes from street lighting and occupied buildings.

Overall Heritage Significance of the View

The view provides information about the important front and south elevations of the Synagogue, the upper parts of the Grade II listed tower and forms part of the setting of the Grade I registered Sefton Park, although it is negatively affected by the asphalt street surfaces.

Magnitude of Impact on Setting of Building and Character of the Conservation Area

The plans and elevations which show the proposed development show a number of changes, as follows:

- Firstly, the extension to the south will be demolished;
- Secondly, there will be a new apartment block to the south of the Synagogue;
- Thirdly, there will be parking within the grounds of the Synagogue;
- Fourthly, there will be landscaping to the front and the lower levels around the Synagogue.



Proposed Streetscene



Proposed Context South Side Elevation

Overall Impact on Significance

The former Greenbank Synagogue is listed at Grade II* and lies within the Sefton Park Conservation Area and the NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The question to be addressed is how far the proposed change impacts on the setting of the designated asset, and in that respect what effect it would have on its significance.

It is the degree to which the change of environment would impact on the values identified in the sections above.

The proposals will change the character of the setting and the Conservation Area but not substantially. The extension to the south dates from the late 1950s, is of no architectural interest and its demolition will enhance the site. The apartment block has been located on much the same site, as far away from the listed building as possible and keeps views of the other three sides entirely open. The new block is in a high quality simple contemporary design clad in muted colours and with strong vertical lines which mirror those of the front elevation of the Synagogue. The flat roof reflects the Synagogue parapet which is at the same height and the building line is the same as the Jenny Wetton Conservation

front of the Synagogue. The main blocks of windows on the south side have been designed to alternate, thereby adding interest to this side. The site layout also mirrors that of the building plots to the south. In longer views from the south, the roof of the Synagogue will still be visible. Although there will be parking on the other three sides, this will be landscaped to a high quality design with the retention of the trees at the front and additional planting at the sides and rear.

The development has been carefully designed to minimise its impact on the setting.

Towards the Site South-west from Gorsebank Road



Importance of the Viewpoint

This view is taken looking south-west from the north end of Gorsebank Road which is a residential street of late 19th and late 20th century houses and a filling station at the north end.

Description of the View

The view shows the housing and filling station in the foreground, with the canopy of the filling station partially obscuring the Synagogue in the middle distance and mature trees to the left.

Heritage Attributes of the View

The view shows a characteristic of the setting and a view into the Conservation Area.

Changing Aspects of the View

The trees in the view are deciduous and allow more light through in winter. The viewer can walk along the road in both directions so the viewpoint will change as the viewer

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moves, allowing different information to be gained. At night, light comes from street lighting, the filling station and occupied buildings.

Overall Heritage Significance of the View

The view includes the upper part of the rear of the Synagogue.

Magnitude of Impact on Setting of Building and Character of the Conservation Area

The plans and elevations which show the proposed development show a new apartment block to the south of the Synagogue, parking within the grounds and landscaping to the lower levels around the Synagogue.



Proposed Rear Context Elevation



Proposed North Side Context Elevation

Overall Impact on Significance

As before, substantial harm should be wholly exceptional. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is again the degree to which the change of environment would impact on the values identified above.

The development will again change the character of the setting and the Conservation Area but not substantially. It has been located well to the side of the Synagogue and will keep views of the rear and north side open. Although the block will project beyond the rear of the Synagogue, it is the same height as the rear parapet and has been designed in a simple contemporary design with strong vertical lines which reflect those of the Synagogue. The grounds to the side and rear have been neglected and are very overgrown, negatively affecting the setting in this area. There will be parking with high

quality landscaping and new planting along the side and rear boundaries which will also help to obscure the poor quality metal fence along the northern boundary.

Again, the development has been carefully designed to minimise its impact on the setting.

6.5 Overall Impact on Significance

In October 2014, the Twentieth Century Society placed the former Synagogue on its list of top 10 Buildings at Risk. Its current poor condition is having a negative effect on its significance and, the longer the building remains without a use, the more likely it is that it will continue to deteriorate from the effects of both water ingress and potential vandalism.

Although the preferred option would be re-use as a place of worship, a feasibility study by Historic England and Liverpool City Council concluded:

'The conclusion of the study / appraisal is that simple refurbishment of the listed building plus enabling development would not generate sufficient return to establish commercial viability. Without beneficial ownership, public funding or a non-commercial end user, the only realistic alternative was therefore to consider a more commercially viable development of the synagogue itself. Hence, the present scheme now under consideration.¹⁴

Pre-application advice on the conversion of the former synagogue to residential use from Historic England and Liverpool City Council supported the proposed conversion in principle and it is considered that the proposed scheme design largely meets the guidance. The only alterations to the exterior are minor changes to allow disabled access to the building and remove steps in poor condition and to provide vehicular access to the rear of the site.

Although the proposals will have some harmful effects on the listed building, this is considered to constitute less than substantial harm and should be offset against the very significant public benefit of the building being brought back into use. Some of the most significant areas will be re-used or kept publicly accessible, such as the entrance vestibule and staircases, the Small Schul and library, the central part of the Prayer Hall and the steps and platform of the Ark and eastern staircases. Internally, the full height and length of the Prayer Hall will be retained along the centre, together with views along the east-west axis. The outline and segmental arch of the ladies gallery will be retained and some of the seating re-used elsewhere. The proposed apartments are drawn back to the current line of the balconies which will retain the legibility of the main space. The position of the Bimah will be marked with a new light well to the basement. There will also be very important conservation and repair work, including investigation and repair of sources of water ingress, repair and retention of all rainwater goods, like-for-like repairs to external windows, replacement of all the stolen staircase handrails and of the smashed glass balustrade in the south-east corner above the choir.

¹⁴ Liverpool City Council. Urban Design & Heritage Conservation Team Consultation Response, 31st October 2014

The enabling development is required to fulfil a number of tests, which were also outlined by the City Council. These have been addressed by the Quantity Surveyor. The Council concluded:

'Finally, the public benefit of securing the future of Greenbank Synagogue is considered to decisively outweigh the disbenefits of breaching other public policies owing to the outstanding significance of the heritage asset and the limited harm that would arise on account of the enabling development proposed in accordance with the submitted outline plans.

'In conclusion, the proposed enabling development in terms of volume, scale and outline detail can be support by Heritage Conservation *provided* independent verification of the development appraisal to accompany the planning application shows that the proposed quantum of enabling development is the minimum necessary to make the scheme financially viable.¹⁵

The design of the new development has been significantly altered to minimise its impact on the setting of the listed building and the Conservation Area. It has been carefully located as far away from the listed building as possible, concentrated in one area and designed in a high quality contemporary style in muted colours which will add interest to the Conservation Area but is subservient to the listed building.

The *Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, advises that:

'It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.'

Considered overall, and taking account of the benefits outlined above, the impact of the proposals on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area will be beneficial.

¹⁵ Liverpool City Council. Urban Design & Heritage Conservation Team Consultation Response, 31st October 2014

7 CONCLUSIONS

The information in Sections 3 and 4 of this report provides an assessment of the significance of the former Synagogue and its setting. The Synagogue dates mainly from 1936-37 although it has been through several phases of extension and alteration which reflect the changing aspirations of the Greenbank Drive Hebrew Congregation. It is considered to be of exceptional significance overall and the setting makes an overall positive contribution to the significance of the listed building although Shalom Court and the late 20th century buildings on Gorsebank Road are negatively affecting its significance.

Section 5 sets out the legislative and planning policy framework and gives guidance on the circumstances in which consent may be required. Policy 131 of the NPPF sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to heritage assets. This should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significance, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to the establishment of sustainable communities and economic vitality and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The assessment of impact on the significance of the heritage assets and their setting is set out in Section 6. Although the preferred option would be re-use as a place of worship, this has not been possible and both Historic England and Liverpool City Council have approved the conversion of the former synagogue to residential use with enabling development in principal. It is considered that the proposed scheme design for the conversion and new development largely meets the guidance given at the time.

The *Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, advises that:

...‘the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.’¹⁶

Considered overall and taking account of the benefits outlined in Section 6, the impact of the proposals on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area will be beneficial. Policy 134 sets out that where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposals will result in the significant public benefit of securing the building’s optimum viable use in accordance with paragraphs 132-134 of the NPPF, as well as important conservation and repair work.

This report could be added to the Historic Environment Record as a permanent publicly-accessible record, in keeping with the requirements of Policy 141.

¹⁶ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/> [Accessed 7.03.16]

With the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF, the proposals are considered to be compliant with national and local planning policy.

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19/3 and 4 photos of bar mitzvah
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30/4 Laying of the Foundation Stone at Greenbank Drive Synagogue, 1936
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30/7 Fire at Greenbank Drive Synagogue 1959
30/9 25th anniversary, 1962
30/10 Fire at Greenbank Drive Synagogue 1959
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9 APPENDIX – LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

G.V. II*

Synagogue of the Liverpool New Hebrew Congregation, 1936, by Alfred Ernest Shennan. Reinforced concrete and steel with buff brick facings, tiled roof. Art Deco style with Swedish architectural influences.

PLAN: Rectangular basilica plan form, c.1950s annexe to right (S) side (not of special interest). Set on sloping ground with ground floor basement and raised ground floor to rear. Large basement function space, ground floor prayer hall and ancillary spaces, first floor ladies' gallery and rear storage areas.

EXTERIOR: All windows are metal-framed with leaded lights. Main front (W) elevation facing Greenbank Drive with projecting 3-bay square central section with splayed corners. Triple-arched arcade with circular brick piers and carved capitals forming porch, three main entrance doorways set to rear with doors incorporating elliptical panels. Tall paired windows with decorative metalwork flank central door. Semi-circular lunette windows to each end of entrance porch with metalwork design in form of Menorah. Entrances approached by two flights of shallow stairs with curved flanking brick walls to upper flight, Art Deco style metal balustrades divide flights into three sections. Three tall tripartite windows with arched centre lights and carved rubbed brick surrounds to first floor above entrances. Raised brick decoration below windows. Decorative brick parapet with raised centre and angled sides containing stone relief inscribed with Tablets of the Law. Lower 2-storey wings to each side form prayer hall's gallery side aisles, paired tall slender stair windows to front with projecting angled glazing, small paired square windows to returns at basement, ground, half-landing, & first floor levels. Low 2-storey projections set back behind to each far side with small paired horizontal windows to basement and ground floor (library to left end, Beth Hamidrash to right), three tall round-headed windows to each ground floor bowed return with slender hoodmoulds, horizontal windows below with projecting angled glazing. Side elevations: 8 buttresses to each side; those to end being gabled buttresses, those to centre being stepped. Tall round-headed windows to bays in between. Smaller paired vertical square-headed windows and access doorways to basement level. Rear elevation: Central section with three vertical windows flanked by slender paired windows (all with central transom) to basement level, taller windows in line above to ground floor (those to centre with round heads). Angled towers to each side rise above a parapet, gable set back behind with large stepped 7-light lancet E window. Two bowed 2-storey projections project from corners of elevation rising to mid-ground floor level with vertical 7-light windows to upper level and smaller windows to basement. Side aisles behind in same style as front elevation. c.1950s single storey annexe to S side linked to basement level of synagogue by enclosed walkway not of special interest.

INTERIOR: Art Deco style with carved light oak woodwork. Original doors and wooden parquet floors survive throughout. Entrance vestibule: Shallow moulded ceiling decoration with central lozenge design, semi-circular wall-mounted uplights. Sweeping cantilevered concrete stairs with Art Deco pierced metal balustrades to each end lead up to ladies' galleries and down to basement. Three plain double doors with large arched hoods lead into prayer hall. Doors to left and right of prayer hall entrance within arched recesses lead to library and small Beth Hamidrash (Schul) respectively. Beth Hamidrash (renovated in 1981) has fixed bench seating to sides and curved walls with name plaques flanking doorway, wooden wall-mounted Torah scroll cabinet/Ark to E wall with pierced lattice woodwork to curved sides and doors incorporating Magen

David symbol, gilt Hebrew inscription above and double arched panel to top inscribed with Ten Commandments in Hebrew and Magen David. Prayer hall: Whitewashed walls and pale blue ceiling. Barrel-vaulted reinforced concrete ceiling with canopied clerestory supported on concrete girders. Cantilevered ladies' gallery to three sides with segmental curve to W end. Stepped 7-light lancet window to E end with simple stained glass and leaded decoration including stained glass Magen David to centre light. Partition wall to W end behind ladies' gallery (office behind). Glass-fronted metal balustrade (glass replaced c.1959/1960 after fire) with geometric pattern incorporating Magen David to choir loft above and behind Ark. Similar style balustrade to corner walls at first floor height. Seating to ground floor side aisles and ladies' gallery. Doors to left and right of Ark lead to rear stairs (in similar style to main front stairs - concrete with simplified Art Deco balustrade) and ancillary storage/robing rooms to both floors. Stair to rear right also leads to choir. Basement Max Morris Hall: Large open function space with pierced wooden suspended ceiling, small stage to W end with large internal horizontal windows with leaded light glazing to porch behind, large kitchen to rear (E end). Enclosed porch to S wall leads to later annexe (not of interest). Stairs to each side behind stage lead up to basement foyer, metal balustrade in same style as external entrance balustrades. Basement foyer with later linoleum floor, cloakrooms to each side beneath library and Beth Hamidrash, main side stairs.

FIXTURES & FITTINGS: Art Deco panelled Ark (rebuilt to original design c.1959/1960 after original destroyed by fire) of light oak with inlaid ebony, gilt metalwork decoration to central double doors incorporating Magen David. Set upon original Travertine marble platform with simple metal balustrade. Marble pulpit to centre front of platform flanked by two narrow flights of 5 steps. Hebrew inscription in gilt relief lettering above Ark doors roughly translates as 'The Lord will keep the light lit everlasting', Ner Tamid above. Book-shaped oak tablet to top of Ark inscribed with Ten Commandments in Hebrew. Centrally placed original Bimah (Almemar) of light oak with metal railings and tall 5-branch candelabra to each corner. Oak pews with individual arm rests to ground floor side aisles and first floor ladies' gallery, pews to W end of ladies' gallery follow curve of balcony. Art Deco style metal chandeliers to centre of ceiling and smaller light fittings beneath galleries incorporate Magen David symbol.

HISTORY: The Liverpool Hebrew Congregation was founded in the C18 at the Stanley Street/Cumberland Street Synagogue. Over the years it moved to various premises before construction of a purpose-built synagogue at Seel Street in 1807. A schism in 1838 led to the division of the congregation into the Old Hebrew Congregation (which remained at Seel St until new premises were constructed at Princes Road in 1872-4) and the New Hebrew Congregation. The latter congregation established a synagogue in a warehouse on Hanover Street and subsequently in a building on Pilgrim Street. A purpose-built synagogue was constructed at Hope Place in 1857. After WWI and by the mid 1920s the Jewish population began to move away from the city centre to the wealthier suburbs (in particular Sefton Park) and fewer members of the congregation lived within walking distance of Hope Place. School classes were established by the New Hebrew (Hope Place) Congregation in the Sefton Park area and in 1928 no.321 Smithdown Road was acquired as a place of Hebrew Education. A small congregation also began holding religious services there, which became known as the Sefton Park Hebrew Congregation. In 1928 the Hope Place Congregation began looking for a new site to build a larger synagogue and in 1935 the site of Greenbank Drive near to the entrance to Sefton Park was chosen and the lease for the site obtained from the City Corporation. In 1937 on completion of Greenbank Drive Synagogue the main migration of the Hope Place congregation took place. The congregation re-joined with the Sefton Park Hebrew Congregation and the two reverted to their original name of the New Hebrew Congregation. The foundation stone for Greenbank Drive Synagogue was laid

on 14 June 1936 by Baron Tobias Globe attended by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Dr J H Hertz. The building was consecrated on August 15 1937 and opened by Professor Henry Cohen (a member of the congregation and later Lord Cohen of Birkenhead). The basement area of the building was originally used as a youth centre and the synagogue had its own scout troop (the 22nd Wavertree). During the blitz in 1941 Greenbank Drive Synagogue was used as a reception centre for bombed out families in Liverpool and held a non-Jewish service at Christmas. It was also used as a social centre during the war by American Jewish GIs stationed at an air base in Burtonwood, Warrington. After the war they presented a plaque to the congregation (displayed in the entrance hall). In May 1959 a burglar started a fire that destroyed the Ark and Torah scrolls and part of the roof structure. The building was subsequently restored by the original firm of architects at a cost of £50,000 and re-consecrated in 1961. Due to increasing competition the youth centre closed at this time. A further fire occurred in two first floor offices behind the ladies' gallery in 1965 but damage was confined to the former areas. The building ceases active use on January 5 2008.

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REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION: Greenbank Drive Synagogue is designated at grade II* for the following principal reasons:

* It is one of the finest Art Deco synagogues in the country * Its design by Sir Ernest Alfred Shennan is an original treatment of a traditional basilica plan form and tripartite facade to produce a confidently modern religious building in terms of styling, massing and composition * The light and airy interior of the prayer hall contains a highly unusual reinforced concrete canopied clerestory and a cantilevered segmental curved ladies' gallery * The materials and craftsmanship employed throughout the building are of the highest quality * Symbolism is clearly evident in the building's design in the form of the 7-bay prayer hall and 7-light E window each representing the Menorah, and the incorporation of the Magen David into internal decoration and fittings * Stylistic continuity can be found throughout the building both externally and internally * It has important socio-historic significance as an inter-war synagogue of 1936-7 that represents one of the last free cultural expressions of European Jewry before the Holocaust

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