

BIALYSTOKER CENTER AND HOME FOR THE AGED, 228 East Broadway (aka 228-230 East Broadway), Manhattan.

Built 1929-31; Architect Harry Hurwit

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 315 Lot 45

On February 12, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Public Hearing Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A representative testified that the owner did not oppose designation. 22 people spoke in favor of designation, including City Councilmember Margaret Chin, a representative of Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, and a representative of Manhattan Community Board 3, as well as representatives of the Friends of the Lower East Side, the Historic Districts Council, the Lower East Side History Project, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council. A letter in support of designation from State Senator Daniel L. Squadron was also entered into the record during the hearing.

Summary

The Lower East Side of Manhattan is one of New York's most storied neighborhoods, synonymous with the American immigrant experience and once home to the largest population of Jewish residents in the world. The Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged, built in 1929-31 and designed in a distinctive Art Deco style by architect Harry Hurwit, was one of the largest and most enduring *landsmanshaft*—or immigrant hometown association—established in the neighborhood and remains a significant landmark in the history of New York City's Jewish community.

New York's numerous *landsmanshaftn* developed during the rapid growth and diversification of the city's Jewish population during the mid 19th century. As an increasing number of immigrants arrived from the German states and Eastern Europe, many established associations named for their former hometowns. The Bialystoker Center takes its name from the town of Bialystok, an industrial city in what is now Poland. The Jewish Bialystoker immigrant community in New York City has a long and rich history, having established a number of mutual benefit societies and a synagogue as early as the 1860s.

The Bialystoker Center itself grew out efforts to provide foreign aid to the regions of Eastern Europe devastated by World War I. A Bialystoker Relief Committee was founded in 1919 to coordinate the work of existing Bialystoker *landsmanshaft*, and in 1921 this evolved into the Bialystoker Center, a new *landsmanshaft* created as an umbrella organization to oversee the other Bialystoker groups, provide a central meeting space, and direct their charitable and cultural programs. By the mid 1920s, with the recovery of Eastern Europe and the passage of national immigration restrictions, the Center's focus shifted to supporting the existing Jewish community in New York. A central component of this new mission was the creation of a Home for the Aged. Plans for a new building to house both the Bialystoker Center and the Home for the Aged were begun in 1927. The cornerstones were laid in 1929 and the completed building was inaugurated during a large ceremony in 1931.



The prominent nine-story structure was designed by architect Henry Hurwit (1888-1963). Its distinguished Art Deco style—characterized by its complex massing, patterned yellow brickwork, and highly stylized, geometric cast-stone ornament—is rare for the Lower East Side. The building’s primary decorative element consists of the elaborate main entrance enframingent. The spandrel immediately above the entrance is prominently inscribed with the English word “Bialystoker” rendered in letters resembling Hebrew characters, while bas relief roundels in the angled reveal depict symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Lower East Side has experienced significant changes in both its demographics and its physical fabric. The neighborhood, once dominated by the Jewish community, is now home to a diverse assortment of immigrant populations. Urban renewal projects, such as the Seward Park Houses that surround the Center, resulted in the demolition of many historic structures during the 1950s and 1960s. When the Bialystoker Center’s Home for the Aged closed its doors in 2011, it was one of the last remaining and longest-running *landsmanshaft* in New York. Its building, however, remains one of the Lower East Side’s prominent landmarks and recalls a vanished era when the Bialystoker Center and its distinguished Art Deco-style Home for the Aged played a significant role in the world’s largest Jewish community.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Early History and Development of the Lower East Side¹

The Lower East Side of Manhattan is one of New York’s, and the country’s, most storied neighborhoods. Historically defined as the area east of Broadway, extending from the vicinity of the Brooklyn Bridge north to 14th Street, its name is synonymous with the American immigrant experience. Although immigrants from around the world, from East Asia to Western Europe, have settled on the Lower East Side since the mid-19th century, the neighborhood is most strongly associated with Jewish history and culture. From the 1880s to the 1920s it was the country’s center of Jewish life and “the single largest Jewish community in the world, unrivaled...in terms of the sheer number of Jews who lived in close proximity to each other.”² The historic core of this community was present-day Straus Square, located at the intersection of Canal Street, Essex Street, and East Broadway, just west of the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged.

Today’s Lower East Side began developing as an urban neighborhood towards the beginning of the 19th century. Through the 1820s and 1830s it was a desirable area containing commercial buildings and residences for craftsmen and laborers. By the 1840s, affluent residents had started moving out of the area south of Houston Street and the neighborhood’s first purpose-built tenements were constructed as increasing numbers of immigrants settled on the Lower East Side. Many of these newcomers were Irish; Irish immigration to New York—and the settlement of Irish immigrants on the Lower East Side—rapidly increased following the beginning of Ireland’s Great Famine in 1845. Soon afterward, German immigrants, fleeing unemployment, religious oppression, famine, and the European Revolutions of 1848, also moved into the area. The city’s German population grew from about 24,000 in the mid-1840s to over 400,000 by 1880; by then, almost the entire Lower East Side was known as *Kleindeutschland*, or “Little Germany.” Many German immigrants, including German Jews, prospered in the manufacture and wholesaling of textiles and apparel, setting up businesses on Canal Street that served the department stores and other retailers of nearby Grand Street, which was then one of the city’s major shopping streets.³

Up to the 1870s, no distinctly Jewish neighborhood existed in New York; German Jews, who accounted for most of the city’s Jewish population, generally settled within the larger *Kleindeutschland* community. That would soon change, as hundreds of thousands of Jews, primarily from Russia and Poland, started fleeing pogroms and poverty in their homelands in the early 1880s. From 1881 to 1924, the year in which the so-called “Quota Law” drastically cut U.S. immigration from Eastern Europe, one-third of Eastern Europe’s Jews left their homes, with most seeking refuge in the United States. Between 1880 and 1910, approximately 1.1 million Jews moved to New York City, and between 1880 and 1890, three-quarters of these newcomers settled on the “East Side,” as the Lower East Side was commonly called at that time. Within the neighborhood, Jewish immigrants typically lived within defined ethnic quarters with others from their home regions; the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was erected within the largest of these enclaves, which housed Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Lithuanian Jews, and covered most of the area east of the Bowery and

south of Grand Street. Although late-19th- and early-20th-century transportation improvements efficiently dispersed the Lower East Side's Jewish population to Yorkville, Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, more than 300,000 Jews still filled the neighborhood's tenements at the dawn of World War I, with some living at densities of more than 1,000 persons per acre.

During this period East Broadway became the political, intellectual, and economic center of the neighborhood. Straus Square (then called Rutgers Square), at the intersection with Canal Street, was a locus of political activity and was known as the neighborhood's "Hyde Park."⁴ The stretch of East Broadway immediately across from Seward Park was considered the "Yiddish newspaper row" and was home, most famously, to the *Jewish Daily Forward*.⁵ The Education Alliance (Brunner & Tryon, 1889-91), stood at the corner of East Broadway and Jefferson Street, erected by German Jews to provide educational services to newly arrived Jewish immigrants and speed their assimilation into American life. The busy Seward Park Branch of the New York Public Library (Babb, Cook & Welch, 1909) was one of the city's largest branch libraries at the time of its opening. Financial institutions such as the S. Jarmulowsky Bank Building (1911-12, Rouse & Goldstone, a designated New York City Landmark), helped make the area "the financial and business center of the Jewish quarter on the East Side."⁶ The Bialystoker Center and Home for Aged, built in 1929-31 just east of these institutions on East Broadway, was one of the largest and most enduring *landsmanshaft*—or immigrant hometown association—created on the Lower East Side and remains a significant landmark in the history of New York City's Jewish community.

Landsmanshaftn and the Bialystoker Community in New York⁷

The term *landsmanshaft*, at its most basic, simply means an organization of immigrants who come from the same hometown.⁸ The word derives from the Yiddish *landsmán* (plural *landsláyt*)—denoting a person from the same city, region, or even country—and can be applied to a wide range of organizations, from religious congregations to radical political groups.⁹ Perhaps the most famous were the mutual aid societies that provided assistance to new immigrants in an era before government welfare programs. The aid provided by these groups often included financial assistance—particularly death benefits (*chevra kadisha*, or burial and cemetery services, *shiva* assistance, and life insurance programs), health benefits (contract doctors, disability insurance, *bikur cholim* or visits to the sick), and general benefits such as low- or no-cost loans and help finding employment and housing.¹⁰ The *landsmanshaftn* also provided a needed source of social involvement; during the winter many societies organized lavish balls, while picnics were a popular summer activity. Theater benefits helped raise funds and supported the burgeoning "Yiddish Rialto."¹¹ It is estimated that over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries thousands of such groups were established in New York, enrolling perhaps as many as a million people.¹² For many Jewish immigrants living on the Lower East Side, *landsmanshaftn* were as integral to their life in New York as the synagogues, the Yiddish press, or any other institution.

The creation of New York's numerous *landsmanshaftn* had its roots in the growth and diversification of the city's Jewish population during the mid 19th century. As late as 1825 there were only 500 Jews living in New York, served by a single synagogue, the Sephardic-rite Shearith Israel. By 1850, however, the first wave of mass immigration to America had swelled that number to approximately 10,000 Jewish residents in the city. The majority consisted of German-speakers escaping economic and social restrictions in the German states.¹³ A smaller number of Yiddish-speakers from Eastern Europe—particularly from Russian-occupied Poland—also arrived during this period. As the Jewish population of New York grew, the community divided into an increasing number of religious congregations and secular associations. The first schism occurred in 1825 when the Ashkenazic-right B'nai Jeshurun broke off from Shearith Israel. Other synagogues were soon established and by 1860 there were 27 congregations in the city. Fraternal orders and other secular groups were established at an even faster pace than their religious counterparts. The first and among the most important was the Independent Order B'nai B'rith, founded in 1843 by a group of German-speaking immigrants who had been members of the Masons and Odd Fellows. It was soon joined by the United Order of True Sisters (1846), the Free Sons of Israel (1849), the Order B'rith Abraham (1859), and many others. In 1860 there were 50 secular Jewish associations as compared to 27 synagogues.¹⁴

A number of the Jewish congregations and secular associations formed during the mid 19th century were named for the Old World hometown or region of their organizers—particularly those founded by immigrants from Russian-occupied Poland.¹⁵ The earliest recorded *landsmanshaft* associated with an Eastern

European city was the Krakauer Society, Chebra Raufei Chaulim of the State of New York, incorporated in 1855 and affiliated with the city of Krakow. Early *landsmanshaft* congregations included the Congregation Chevrah Kadisha B'nai Israel Kalvarier (1862, associated with Kalvarija in what is now Lithuania) and the Chevrah T'hilim Anshei Viskover (1860 or 1864, affiliated with Wyszaków in what is now Poland).¹⁶ As immigration from Eastern Europe quickened during the 1870s, and became a virtual torrent during the 1880s and 1890s, it was not uncommon for a single Eastern European town to be “represented by several *landsmanshaftn*, reflecting political, religious, and generational divisions among its former residents.”¹⁷

Jewish immigrants from the city of Bialystok—then located in the western part of the Pale of Settlement and now in the northeast corner of Poland—were amongst the earliest and most enthusiastic founders of *landsmanshaftn*; as one historian has noted, New York’s Bialystoker community in particular “created a sizable and remarkably active group of *landsmanshaftn*.”¹⁸ Perhaps the earliest was the Bialystok Unterstutzungs Verein, a mutual aid society incorporated with the State of New York in 1864 (although it was apparently active for only a few years). Congregation Beth Haknesseth Anshe Bialystok, frequently known by its English translation as the Bialystoker Synagogue, was founded the following year in 1865.¹⁹ The Bialystoker Unterstutzungs Verein was revived in 1877 and evolved into the Bialystoker Unterstutzungs Verein Somach Noflim in 1886. Other Bialystoker *landsmanshaftn* established in the late 19th century include the Ahavath Achim (1884), the Brotherly Love Association (1890), the Bikur Cholim Anshe Bialystok (1897), and the Bialystoker Bikur Cholim of Brooklyn (1898).

For much of its history, Bialystok had remained a small, relatively isolated hamlet within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It had an established Jewish community as early as the mid 16th century, which later thrived under the tolerant rule of Jan Klemens Branicki during the early 18th century.²⁰ In 1795 the town was annexed by Prussia during the third partition of Poland and in 1807 it came under the authority of the Russian Empire and was incorporated into the Pale of Settlement—the restricted area of the Empire in which Jewish residents were permitted to live and work under strict regulations. While under Russian control, Bialystok became an important industrial town and regional center of trade. It was particularly known for its manufactured textiles, which had been introduced in the early 1800s by the occupying Prussians but by mid century was dominated by the city’s Jewish community. Bialystok quickly became a “new city,” attracting significant numbers of internal Jewish migrants from elsewhere within the Pale of Settlement. This growth was further propelled by a general demographic expansion amongst the Jewish population of the Pale, as well as discriminatory state policies that limited economic opportunities outside large, industrializing cities. Russians officials also encouraged Jewish settlement in Bialystok and other urban centers to counter Polish nationalism following a series of Polish uprisings. By the later decades of the 19th century Bialystok was a prospering industrial center with “an unusually large Jewish population—both in absolute numbers and in its percentage of the total population.”²¹

The relative affluence of Bialystok’s Jewish community led to the founding of numerous charitable organizations in the city, including the Bikur Cholim (1826); the Gemilut Hasadim, or philanthropic fund (c. 1828); the *Hekdesh*, or Home for the Chronically Ill (1830); the Komitet (1869); and a Jewish old-aged home (1881). Perhaps the most significant was the Lines Hatsedek (Hospice for the Poor), which was formed in 1885 and provided a model for many of the Bialystoker *landsmanshaftn* in New York. Bialystok was home to so many philanthropic organizations that many proud residents referred to their hometown as the “City with the Golden Heart.”²²

While Bialystok’s Jewish community grew, and in many ways prospered, during the mid 19th century, the 1880s brought a series of upheavals that prompted increased immigration to New York and elsewhere. The assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 led to anti-Semitic pogroms and heightened restrictions against Jewish residents of the Pale. Bialystok was also plunged into a prolonged economic recession during the 1880s, leaving many Jewish residents without work. Bialystokers were therefore amongst the half million Eastern European Jews who arrived in New York during the last two decades of the 19th century. Anti-Semitic violence and oppression continued into the 20th century, particularly following the Russian Revolutions of 1905. Large pogroms were conducted in Bialystok itself in August 1905 and especially in June 1906. In the early decades of the 20th century approximately 1.5 million Jewish immigrants arrived in New York from the Pale of Settlement and other sections of Eastern Europe, and the Lower East Side definitely assumed its Jewish character. In the end, approximately 100,000 Jewish citizens emigrated from Bialystok, of which half came to the United States.²³ An article in the *New York Times* denouncing the 1906 pogroms noted that at that “there

are over 14,000 Jews from Bialystok in Greater New York,” and number that only continued to grow in the ensuing decade.²⁴

The Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged²⁵

World War I had a devastating effect on Eastern Europe and its Jewish communities. The conflict itself directly affected many towns with significant Jewish populations, while the region’s economy was left in shambles. Bialystok, for example, had been “at the center of heavy fighting” and “tactics employed by Russian and German armies devastated the local economy, uprooted thousands, spread famine and disease throughout the region, and decimated the local population.”²⁶ The number of Jewish residents in the city fell by almost half, from 70,000 before the war to fewer than 38,000 in 1921.²⁷ The Russian Civil War (1917-22) and the Russo-Polish War (1919-21) prolonged the crisis and further destabilized the economic and political position of Eastern European Jewry.²⁸

The plight of their former countrymen galvanized New York’s *landsmanshaftn* and led to an unprecedented level of cooperation amongst the various immigrant associations. Even before the cessation of hostilities many of the city’s immigrant associations had begun raising substantial sums for relief efforts. The crisis also “brought an unprecedented degree of unity among previously hostile segments of the Jewish community” and “hitherto competing organizations from the same town banded together in united relief committees to assist their beleaguered landslayt.”²⁹ The Bialystoker groups were no exception and on July 19, 1919—just weeks after the Treaty of Versailles symbolically ended the war—representatives from several organizations gathered in the basement office of the Bialystoker Bikur Cholim at 246 East Broadway to discuss the formation of a relief committee of their own.³⁰ One of the leading proponents of a unified Bialystoker response was David Sohn, a journalist who had arrived in the United States in 1912. His impassioned speech at that meeting is credited with spurring the creation of the Bialystoker Relief Committee, which over the course of its operations “remitted about five million dollars of relatives’ money and over \$160,000 as contributions for the institutions of Bialystok.”³¹ At the height of its activity the Bialystoker Relief Committee was sending a delegate every two or three months to Bialystok to disburse funds, distribute letters and packages from American family members, and collect news to bring back to New York.

While Sohn must have been pleased with the efforts of the ad-hoc Relief Committee, he also had greater ambitions for creating a formal umbrella organization to oversee all of the existing Bialystoker associations and direct their charitable and cultural activities.³² In 1921, under Sohn’s supervision, a new *landsmanshaft* was founded as the Bialystoker Center. Its mission statement noted that, “the Bialystoker Center is a body which comprises all the Bialystoker organizations and individuals in America...its aims consist in cultural, social and charitable work among our fellow Bialystoker wherever they may reside.”³³ Every Bialystoker group was invited to send three delegates to serve on its board of directors, and it appears that most did in fact participate in the new undertaking. In its first year of existence the Bialystoker Center was located in an old building at 228 East Broadway just few houses down from the basement location of the Bikur Cholim. In 1922-23 it replaced the aging structure with a new five-story headquarters, which included office space not just for its own use but also provided meeting rooms for affiliated associations.³⁴

In addition to overseeing the Bialystoker Relief Committee and providing a centralized home for existing Bialystoker *landsmanshaftn*, the Bialystoker Center also engaged in a number of its own programs. Sohn’s experience as a journalist may explain the organization’s decision to start publishing the *Bialystoker Stimme* (the Voice of Bialystok), a monthly newsletter sent to *landslayt* in New York and to Bialystoker communities throughout the United States as well as Argentina, Palestine, and Australia. The Bialystoker Center also encouraged the creation of a women’s group, which was founded in 1923 as the Ladies Auxiliary. At the same time, however, the Bialystoker Center, like many *landsmanshaftn*, was struggling to maintain its sense of purpose. As one historian noted, by the mid 1920s “it appeared that some semblance of normality has returned to Jewish Eastern Europe, and the American relief effort began to wind down.”³⁵ Sohn himself acknowledged the diminishing significance of foreign aid in the work of the Bialystoker Center and instead advocated that the group refocus its efforts on the Jewish community in New York by erecting a nursing home:

Soon all active in the Center realized that extending aid to compatriots overseas was not enough...they realized that Bialystoker children, growing up, faced the vexing question: how could they avert the embarrassment of placing ‘mother’ or ‘dad,’ advanced in years, into a charity Old Age Home?...They hit upon the answer: set up a Bialystoker Home of the Aged in

which the Bialystoker old folks would feel at home among their compatriots. The decision in Jan. 1927 to erect a Home for the Aged was greeted with an enthusiastic response.³⁶

The new direction of the Bialystoker Center was also informed by immigration policies passed by the United States in the mid 1920s—the so-called “Quota Laws” that severely limited the number of Southern and Eastern European immigrants who could be admitted to the United States. Sohn claimed these restrictions:

Resulted in a transformation of the programs of all Jewish social agencies in America. Instead of the social work affecting mainly the new-comers, adjusting them to the American scene, providing jobs for them, etc., now all Jewish philanthropy and cultural work took a new direction. Its chief aim has been now to strengthen the social and spiritual life of the Jewish-American community as a whole, to develop the consciousness of the American Jew, both as a member of our race and as a citizen of this country.³⁷

The proposal to construct a Home for the Aged took several years to fully realize.³⁸ The plan was initially discussed in June 1926 at a plenary session of the Bialystoker Center and a committee was appointed at time to investigate. The issue remained in committee for nearly a year until a concrete scheme was unveiled to the general membership in May 1927. Fund-raising quickly commenced, though progress was slow.³⁹ Towards the beginning of 1929 building plans were finally filed with the city. On September 16 of that year the construction contract to build the Home was signed; a week later on September 22 the official groundbreaking ceremony was held, featuring a parade of 5,000 people cheered on by nearly 25,000 spectators.⁴⁰ While the Great Depression slowed construction, the Bialystoker Home for Aged was officially dedicated at another large ceremony on June 21, 1931.⁴¹ When it opened, the Home contained space for 250 residents, an auditorium, synagogue, sun parlors, and hospital space.

Architect Harry Hurwit and the Design of the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged⁴²

When it was completed the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged stood in the middle of a crowded urban block, towering over the adjacent tenements. Before an urban renewal project altered the street pattern in the mid 20th century, the building occupied a through-block site with its primary facade fronting on East Broadway and a secondary facade facing Division Street. The upper portion of the side walls were set back from the neighboring buildings and were partially visible from the street, although its lower stories directly abutted adjoining structures.

Architect Harry Hurwit’s design is distinguished by its complex massing that included a number of visually exciting setbacks and dramatic chamfered corners.⁴³ While probably not required under the zoning code for a relatively short structure, these architectural flourishes lent the Bialystoker Center a sense of modernity and connected the building with the large Art Deco skyscrapers that were coming to dominate the Manhattan skyline in the late 1920s.⁴⁴ The ornamental program also reflects the influence of the Art Deco style, which had come into fashion in the United States following the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925. Art Deco was characterized by “hard-edged strong geometric patterns...augmented by strong, bold color.”⁴⁵ The typically Art Deco elements of the Bialystoker Center include the patterned yellow brickwork and the highly stylized, geometric cast-stone ornament—particularly the abstracted leaf motif found on the spandrels below the fourth-story windows, the chevroned spandrels above the upper story windows, and the bas-relief carving on the coping at the chamfered setbacks.

The building’s primary decorative element consists of the elaborate cast-stone main entrance enframingent. The spandrel immediately above the entrance is prominently inscribed with the English word “Bialystoker” rendered in letters resembling Hebrew characters. Within the angled door surround itself a series of roundels depict the symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel, which are read right to left according to the conventions of the Hebrew alphabet. The four rondels in the right panel depict Reuben (by the symbol of a mandrake), Simon (city gate), Levi (high priest’s breastplate), Judah (lion); those above the door portray Issachar (camel), Zebulun (ship), Dan (snake), Naphtali (stag); and the four on the left show Gad (tents), Asher (tree), Ephraim and Menashe (bull and ox), Benjamin (wolf).⁴⁶ Stylized menorahs grace the lower sections of the surround. The entrance was originally fitted with a pair of ornate bronze-and-glass doors set below a similar transom; these were decorated with sunburst and Stars of David, and medallions centered on the doors spelled out the initials of the Bialystoker Center.

Like his clients on the Bialystoker Center project, Harry Hurwit was a Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrant from the Russian-occupied Pale of Settlement. He was born in the city of Kovno, in what is now Lithuania, and in 1891—while he was still a young child—his family came to New York where they lived on the Lower East Side.⁴⁷ While census documents from the turn of the 20th century spell the family name as Hurwitz, it appears that Harry eventually adopted the alternate spelling Hurwit by the late 1920s.⁴⁸ According to family histories, Hurwit began his professional career working in the family insurance business. As early as 1915, however, his name began appearing in city directories as a practicing architect.⁴⁹ During World War I he enlisted in the Army and served in Europe; his draft card from 1917 also lists his profession as a self-employed architect.⁵⁰ Upon his return from duty he received a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs to study architecture and graduated from Cooper Union.

In this early period Hurwit was linked to the architectural firm Hurwitz, Landsman & Bartos.⁵¹ By the early 1920s it appears that he had established his own office, although he maintained a short-lived partnership under the name Whinston & Hurwitz in 1924.⁵² During his career Hurwit designed a range of buildings, including apartment houses, commercial stores and warehouses, and institutional structures. The Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was Hurwit's most prominent commission and demonstrated his eagerness to adopt a modern design aesthetic by employing the Art Deco style. It also showed his skill with polychromatic and textured brickwork, often laid in intricate patterns. The Art Deco style intricately patterned brickwork, also characterizes several of Hurwit's other extant buildings, such as the commercial structure at 457 West 46th Street (1928) and a warehouse at 112 West 31st Street (1937). He used a more restrained neo-Classical vocabulary on a pair of apartment houses he designed for the Bierman Realty Corporation at 89 Avenue A (1925) and 172 East 7th Street (1928), although these also employ patterned brickwork to similar effect.

Like many architects, Hurwit struggled during the economic slowdown of the Great Depression. During this time it appears that his practice consisted primarily of alterations to existing buildings.⁵³ He did file a number of New Building permits throughout the mid 20th century, mostly for small-scale commercial buildings. Hurwit remained active in the Lower East Side community, serving as a member of the Educational Alliance and the Grand Street Boys Association. He was also a member of the New York Society of Architects and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Subsequent History⁵⁴

The Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was completed at a time when the Lower East Side Jewish community was diminishing in size and geographical extent. With the passage of the Quota Law, the expansion of the subway system, the construction of affordable and more spacious housing in the Outer Boroughs and other areas of Manhattan, and the movement of the city's garment industry to the streets of the West 30s, the Jewish population of the Lower East Side—and the neighborhood's population in general—declined precipitously in the 1920s. An analysis of the neighborhood's real estate market in 1943 noted that, "it has lost more than 40,000 foreign-born since the previous Census (1930)" and that the "total population has dropped 225,000 in 20 years."⁵⁵ The area once dominated by New York's Jewish immigrant community also began to decrease in size as other immigrants began to move to the neighborhood, particularly in the years following World War II. In the mid 20th century thousands of Puerto Ricans, newly arrived in New York, settled on the Lower East Side, and they were joined, starting in the 1960s, by natives of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Chinatown, the formerly Cantonese enclave centered on Mott Street near Chatham Square, has boomed in the past four decades; with the arrival of immigrants from other areas of China and other East Asian countries, it has jumped Canal Street to claim much of Little Italy, and has spread along East Broadway to Straus Square. At the same time, in popular conception the Lower East Side has shrunk in geographical size as gentrified areas north of Houston Street have been renamed NoHo and the East Village.

The area immediately surrounding the Bialystoker Center has also undergone extensive physical changes in subsequent years. Much of the Lower East Side was transformed by government-owned or –financed urban renewal projects that resulted in the demolition of hundreds of buildings, the demapping of countless streets and the creation of large "superblocks," and the displacement of thousands of residents. The blocks immediately surrounding the Bialystoker Center were redeveloped in the late 1950s as part of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA).⁵⁶ This project was a private undertaking sponsored by Abraham Kazan and the United Housing Federation under the federal Title I program.⁵⁷ The initial urban renewal plan

was published in August 1956 and it received city approval in 1957. The removal of 1,481 families began in early 1958—half of these residents were Jewish and a third Puerto Rican—and construction on the Seward Park Houses took place in 1958-60.⁵⁸ As happened in several other urban renewal projects, some institutional buildings were allowed to remain and the Bialystoker Center, along with the Seward Park Branch of the New York Public Library, was spared the wrecking ball.⁵⁹

Throughout all of these changes the Bialystoker Center continued to serve its *landslayt* even as its mission increasingly focused on caring for elderly residents of Jewish origin in its Home for the Aged. In 1932, during the depths of the Great Depression, the Bialystoker Relief Committee was officially disbanded due to economic difficulties. The Depression also sounded the death knell for many of the mutual aid programs offered by the Bialystoker Center and other *landsmanshaftn*, as government-sponsored welfare plans became increasingly robust.⁶⁰

The terrible events of World War II and the Holocaust all but erased the Jewish population of Eastern Europe. Through the work of *landsmanshaftn* and similar organizations, the immigrant diaspora in New York and elsewhere took up the cause of aiding the survivors and maintaining the memory of lost motherlands.⁶¹ The Bialystoker Center itself assisted many displaced persons following the war and memorialized the Old World hometown by publishing stories of the Old World hometown in the *Bialystoker Stimme*; in 1982 it issued a full volume Bialystoker Memorial Book/*Der Bialystoker Yizkor Buch*.⁶²

When the Bialystoker Center's Home for the Aged closed its doors in 2011, it was one of the last remaining and longest-running *landsmanshaft* in New York. Its core membership had moved up, both geographically along Manhattan and beyond, and figuratively through the socio-economic strata of American culture. Still, the Lower East Side endures as a vibrant immigrant neighborhood and the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged remains one of its prominent landmarks, recalling a vanished era in which this distinguished Art Deco-style building was a significant component of the world's largest Jewish community.

Description

Historic: Nine-story Art Deco-style building with its primary facade facing East Broadway, a secondary facade facing towards the Seaward Park Cooperatives, and two tertiary side facades visible above adjacent buildings and lots. Yellow iron-spot brick with buff brick and cast-stone ornament. Complex massing with multiple setbacks and chamfered corners. Primary (south) facade: Base clad in limestone; divided into five bays with main entrance in center bay; English word "BIALYSTOKER," styled to resemble Hebrew characters, inscribed in spandrel above entrance; angled enframing features roundels depicting symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel in bas relief; bracketed balcony with incised ornament below third story windows; upper stories feature patterned buff brick and carved cast-stone spandrels set between vertical yellow brick piers; chamfered corners above sixth story; cast-stone coping and metal parapet railings; central tower with vertical brick piers extends above main roofline. Secondary (north) facade: Similar massing to primary facade with fewer ornamental details; facade, including lower stories, clad in yellow brick with patterned buff brick spandrels on the upper stories; stained glass window in recessed central bay; cast-stone medallion with large initial "B" set above this window; secondary entrances flank central bay; brick parapet with metal railing. Tertiary (east and west) facades: Central core built to lot line, with setbacks along the front and rear side walls; clad in yellow brick with patterned buff brick spandrels; some round-arched window openings at the eighth story.

Alterations: New entrance doors and frame (originally paired bronze-and-glass doors below similar transom); light fixtures replaced and signage installed beside entrance; windows replaced (originally multi-paned casements on lower stories, one-over-one sash on upper stories); some round-arched window openings shortened into rectangular openings on the eighth story; some window openings reconfigured; cast-stone ornament along building corners replaced with brickwork; antennas, ductwork, and gutters affixed to upper stories and side walls.

Sources: Historic photographs (tax photographs and images from a Federal Writers' Project series) in the collection of the New York City Department of Records Municipal Archives.

Report prepared by
Christopher D. Brazee
Research Department

NOTES

¹ Portions of this section were adapted from Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *511 Grand Street House Designation Report* and *513 Grand Street House Designation Report* (LP-2269 and LP-2270) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Marianne S. Percival; and LPC, *S. Jarmulowsky Bank Building Designation Report* (LP-2363) (New York: City of New York, 2009), prepared by Michael D. Caratzas. Information in this section is based on the following sources: Marc D. Angel and Jeffrey S. Gurock, "Jews," in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 620-23; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Marion R. Casey, "Irish," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*; Hasia Diner, "American Jewishness on the Lower East Side," in *The Lower East Side Historic District: A Request for Evaluation by the Lower East Side Preservation Coalition for the Landmarks Preservation Commission* (LPC files, August 2006); Andrew S. Dolkart, *Biography of a Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street* (Santa Fe, NM: Center for American Places, 2007); Dolkart, "A History of the Lower East Side," in *The Lower East Side Historic District: A Request for Evaluation by the Lower East Side Preservation Coalition for the Landmarks Preservation Commission*; Leslie Harris, "African-Americans and the Lower East Side," in *The Lower East Side Historic District: A Request for Evaluation by the Lower East Side Preservation Coalition for the Landmarks Preservation Commission*; Graham Hodges, "Lower East Side," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City* 2nd ed.; Joyce Mendelsohn, *The Lower East Side Remembered and Revisited* (New York: The Lower East Side Press, 2001); Henry Moscow, *The Street Book: An Encyclopedia of Manhattan's Street Names and Their Origins* (New York: Hagstrom, 1979); Ronald Saunders, *The Lower East Side: A Guide to Its Jewish Past in 99 New Photographs* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979).

² Diner.

³ One of the large stores on Grand Street was Lord & Taylor, which opened there in 1853; this store remained open until 1902. See LPC, *Lord & Taylor Building Designation Report* (LP-2271) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Marianne S. Percival.

⁴ Mendelsohn, 37.

⁵ The Forward Building (George A. Boehm, 1912) is a designated New York City Landmark.

⁶ "Banking on the Densely Populated East Side is a Serious Business, but Has Amusing Features," *New York Tribune*, March 15, 1903, B4.

⁷ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Sara Bender, *The Jews of Bialystok During World War II and the Holocaust*, trans. Yaffa Murciano (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008); Burrows and Wallace; Hannah Kliger, ed., *Jewish Hometown Associations and Family Circles in New York: The WPA Yiddish Writers' Group Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992); Rebecca Kobrin, "Bialystok," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Bialystok>; Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and its Diaspora* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010); Daniel Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880-1939: Jewish landsmanshaftn in American culture* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997); Soyer, "Landsmanshaftn," *The Encyclopedia of New York City* 2nd ed.; Michael R. Weisser, *A Brotherhood of Memory: Jewish Landsmanshaftn in the New York* (New York: Basic, 1985); Tomasz Wisniewski, *Jewish Bialystok and Surroundings in Eastern Poland*, trans. Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pedich (Ipswich, MA: The Ipswich Press, 1998).

⁸ Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 1.

⁹ According to Soyer there were four basic categories of *landmanshaftn* in New York: religious congregations (sometimes referred to as the "Ansheys"), fraternal lodges (modeled after established order such as the Masons), ideological orders (focusing on political issues such as Socialism or Zionism), and independent societies. Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 56-74.

¹⁰ Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 81.

¹¹ New York's original "Rialto," its first major theater district from the 1870s to about 1900, was located around Union Square and 14th Street. Yiddish Rialto was originally located along the Bowery south of Houston Street in the late 19th century, and moved to Lower Second Avenue north of Houston Street in the 1910s.

¹² Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 1-2, citing statistics compiled by the Yiddish Writers' Group of the Federal Writers' Project.

¹³ Burrows and Wallace, 748.

¹⁴ Burrows and Wallace, 748.

¹⁵ As Soyer notes, "by the 1860s small numbers of Jews from Russian Poland began to form congregations and societies named for their hometowns." Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 46.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Soyer, "Landsmanshaftn." Soyer also notes that "groups [of *landslayt*] created as many organizations as were necessary to enable all of the townspeople to find their appropriate niche" Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 55.

¹⁸ Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 55-56.

¹⁹ The Bialystoker Synagogue was initially located on Hester Street and later in a tenement building on Orchard Street. In 1905 the congregation purchased the former Willett Street Methodist Episcopal Church (1826, a designated New York City Landmark), which they still occupy.

²⁰ Under Branicki's rule Jews were granted significant legal privileges and given financial assistance to erect their first dedicated synagogue. In the 1740s they were allowed to participate in town elections and offered most rights of citizenship.

²¹ Kobrin, "Bialystok."

²² See Masha Gessen, *Ester and Ruzya: How My Grandmother Survived Hitler's War and Stalin's Peace* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2004); and Mimi Sheraton, *The Bialy Easters: The Story of a Bread and a Lost World* (New York: Broadway Books, 2001), 15.

²³ Argentina received approximately 20,000 immigrants, many of whom who established settlements at Mosesville and Villa Lynch. Palestine also accepted about 20,000 Bialystok immigrants while Australia took 5,000. Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*, 7.

²⁴ "Natives of Bialystok Urge Roosevelt to Act" *New York Times*, July 11, 1906.

²⁵ Information in this section is based on the following sources:

Bialystoker Memorial Book/Der Bialystoker Yizkor Bukh (New York: The Bialystoker Center, 1982);

Kobrin, "Bialystok"; Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*;

David Sohn, *Activities of the Bialystoker Community in America: A Historical Outline* (New York: The Bialystoker Center, 1934)

Soyer, , *Jewish Immigrant Associations*

²⁶ Kobrin, "Bialystok."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The economic crisis was confounded by the fact that following World War I, many banks refused to send money to Eastern European because of continuing chaos in the region. The Red Cross refused to distribute aid to Bialystok due to corruption of the *kehilla* (local Jewish council). Russia also closed its borders to foreign trade, limiting economic opportunities for Bialystok's Jew industries. The political situation was complicated by the fact that many of Bialystok's Jewish residents felt more loyalty to the new Lithuanian state (where many were born) than the new Polish state. The Polish government did eventually pass a Minority Rights Treaty that granted some rights to minority groups including the Jews, but they were not very robust. Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*, 136-140.

²⁹ Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 162.

³⁰ Sohn, 8.

³¹ Sohn, 12.

³² The Bialystoker Center was not the first attempt at unifying disparate *landsmanshaftn*. As Soyer notes, “by 1917 a number of movements had been actively promoting the consolidation of Jewish communal life for over a decade.” Some were organized around political boundaries, such as the Federation of Galician and Bucovinean Jews of America (1904), the Federation of Russian-Polish Hebrews of America (1908), the Federation of Hungarian Jews in America (1909), the Federation of Bessarabian Organizations (1911), and the Federation of Oriental Jews in America (1911). Others purported to serve the entire Jewish community regardless of origin, including the American Jewish Congress (1906), the American Jewish Committee (1906), and the Federation of Jewish Organizations (1906), and the New York Kehillah (1908-09). Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 117-121.

³³ Sohn, 14.

³⁴ Ibid. A rendering of this building was published on the cover of the *Bilaystoker Stimme* in December 1926 (reproduced in Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*, 132). The Bialystoker Center apparently had a special relationship with the existing Bialystoker Bikur Cholim and the building was frequently referred to by the combined name Bialystoker Center and Bikur Cholim.

³⁵ Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 188-89.

³⁶ Sohn, “A Half Century of Bialystoker Activity in America, 5 (quoted in Kobrin, 89).

³⁷ Sohn, 13.

³⁸ Just as the Bialystoker Center was preceded by earlier federations of *landsmanshaftn*, the Bialystoker Home for the Aged was not the first nursing home established by a Jewish immigrant association. “Each of the major *landsmanshaft* federations sponsored a hospital or similar social welfare institution. The Federation of Galician and Bucovinean Jews of America lead the way with its Har Moriah Hospital, which was dedicated in 1908.” The Federation of Roumanian Jews established its Jewish Home for Convalescents in 1916, and Warsawer and Mohilever societies also opened old-aged homes before the Bialystoker group. “By developing these local institutions, the federations responded to their members’ primary interest in American conditions rather than in the needs of their former towns in Europe.” Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations*, 143.

³⁹ Kobrin posits this may have been due to the fact that the Home for Aged was to serve general Jewish community, not just Bialystokers. Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*, 90.

⁴⁰ “5,000 See Stone Laid for Bialystoker Home,” *New York Times*, September 23, 1929, 2.

⁴¹ “Jews Hail Opening of Home for Aged,” *New York Times*, June 22, 1931, 28.

⁴² Information in this section is based on the following sources: *1910 United States Federal Census*, New York City, Manhattan Ward 10, Enumeration District 209, 7b; *1915 New York State Census*, Assembly District 8, 58; *1920 United States Federal Census*, New York City, Manhattan Assembly District 2, Enumeration District 138, 4a; LPC, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051) (New York: City of New York, 1981); Richard McBee, LPC Public Hearing Testimony (February 12, 2013); McBee, “The Twelve Tribes at the Bialystoker Home” (blog), March 6, 2012, <http://richardmcbee.com/writings/jewish-art-before-1945/item/the-twelve-tribes>; Obituary, *New York Times*, September 9, 1963, 27; Office of Metropolitan History, “The Building Permits Database, 1900-1986,” <http://www.metrohistory.com/searchfront.htm>; Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001); *United States World War I Draft Registration Card, 1917-18*, New York, Bronx County, 261; James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (Union, NJ: J&D Associates, 1989).

⁴³ There is some speculation that Louis Aidak, an immigrant from Bialystok and a prominent member of Bialystoker Center, was in fact the designer of the Bialystoker Center. There is no documentary evidence of this, however, and anecdotal evidence indicates his involvement was more likely as a building contractor or construction manager.

⁴⁴ The majority of the setbacks were in fact located along the interior lot lines, where zoning allowed the building to rise straight up.

⁴⁵ Roth, 374.

⁴⁶ Richard McBee, LPC Public Hearing Testimony; McBee, “The Twelve Tribes.”

⁴⁷ Transliterated from Yiddish, the name of Hurwit’s birth city was often spelled Kovne or Kovna. It is now Kaunas, Lithuania. See Dov Levin, “Kaunas,” *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*.

⁴⁸ City directories listed him under Hurwitz through 1925; by 1928 he is generally listed as Hurwit. Ward, 39. Harry's brothers adopted a range of spellings for the family name. Robert and David both used Hurwitz, while Charles apparently went by Horowitz; see Death Notices, *New York Times*, September 10, 1963, 39.

⁴⁹ In 1915 he was listed under the name Harry Hurwitz practicing at 270 Grand Street. The following year he was listed at 230 Grand Street. Ward, 39. The 1915 New York State Census also lists his profession as architect.

⁵⁰ According to family recollections he was one of the first Americans to land in Europe and participated in several major battles. Friends of the Lower East Side, "Harry Hurwit, Architect of the Center and Home" (blog), http://www.friendsofthelowereastside.org/?page_id=62.

⁵¹ The firm filed buildings plans for three small, one-story structures in 1916—their only known commissions. City directories continued to list the partnership at least until 1921. Landsman was likely George M. Landsman, who later was a partner with Landsman & Smith.

⁵² Whinston & Hurwitz filed one new building permit in 1924 for a group of one-story stores on Seventh Avenue (NB 328-24). The firm was also responsible for alterations to 41 Bleecker Street (within the NoHo East Historic District).

⁵³ He was responsible for two facade updates in the Upper East Side Historic District at 31 East 73rd Street (facade alterations in 1928) and 5 East 63rd Street (facade alterations and additions in 1942).

⁵⁴ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007); *Bialystoker Memorial Book/Der Bialystoker Yizkor Bukh*; *New York City Market Analysis* (1943), www.1940snewyork.com; Sam Solasz, LPC Public Hearing Testimony (February 12, 2013).

⁵⁵ *New York City Market Analysis*.

⁵⁶ Ballon and Jackson, 289-91.

⁵⁷ Kazan had already been involved in the creation of several private, middle-income cooperatives on the Lower East Side including the Amalgamated Dwellings (1930), the Hillman Houses (1947-50), and the East River Housing (1954-56), the latter also a Title I project. He also developed several other cooperatives throughout Greater New York including Co-Op City in the Bronx and Rochdale Village in Queens. The architect of the Seward Park Houses was Herman J. Jessor.

⁵⁸ The Seward Park Houses were so popular that "during construction Kazan conceived of an addition, called Seward Park Extension, for a site to the immediate north, bounded by Willett, Grand, Essex, Broome, and Delancey streets." The Seward Park Extension Urban Renewal Area (SPEURA) was officially created in 1965, but by that time there was substantial organized opposition to urban renewal projects and the plan was never fully realized. A portion of the site was cleared in 1967 and several large blocks have remained undeveloped since. The SPEURA plan expired in 2005, forty years after its adoption. Ballon and Jackson, 290-91; New York City Economic Development Corporation.

⁵⁹ The Bialystoker Center itself later filed plans to demolish its Home for the Aged and replace it with a 14-story tower. The proposed building, to be designed by W.N. Berger (NB 156-76), was never built.

⁶⁰ Speaking of mutual benefit societies in general, "the Depression was a watershed for the city's fraternal organizations, as the New Deal made the benefits offered by most voluntary associations superfluous. Many organizations established hospitals and foundations as a means of maintaining their sense of purpose." Marc Ferris, "Fraternal Organizations," *The Encyclopedia of New York City* 2nd ed.

⁶¹ "After World War II they [the *landsmanshaftn*] absorbed many survivors of the Nazi persecution and published memorial books (or *yizker-bikher*) to record for posterity the local history and folklore of former Jewish towns. There were never many American-born members of the *landsmanshaftn*, and as the immigrant generation vanished, so did most of the associations." Soyer, "Landsmanshaftn."

⁶² One of these Displaced Persons, Sam Solasz, later served as president of both the Bialystoker Center and as president of the book committee that produced the Memorial Book. His testimony relating to the potential designation of the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged as New York City Landmark gave a personal account of the aid offered by the Center to survivors of World War II and the Holocaust.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the buildings and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest, and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was constructed in 1929-31 to the designs of Harry Hurwit; that the Lower East Side of Manhattan is one of New York's most storied neighborhoods, synonymous with the American immigrant experience and once home to the largest population of Jewish residents in the world, and that the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was once of the largest and most enduring of the *landsmanshaftn*, or immigrant hometown associations, established in this neighborhood and remains a significant landmark in the history of New York City's Jewish community; that New York's numerous *landsmanshaftn* developed during the rapid growth and diversification of the city's Jewish population during the mid 19th century and that immigrants from the town of Bialystok were amongst the earliest and most enthusiastic supports of these organizations; that the Bialystoker Center itself grew out of efforts to provide foreign aid to the regions of Eastern Europe devastated by World War I, that a Bialystoker Relief Committee was founded in 1919 to coordinate this work among the existing Bialystoker *landsmanshaftn*, and this work evolved into the Bialystoker Center—a new *landsmanshaft* created as an umbrella organization—in 1921; that by the mid 1920s, with the recovery of Eastern Europe and the passage of national immigration restrictions, the Center refocused its mission to supporting the existing Jewish community in New York, which resulted in the creation of its Home for the Aged; that the prominent nine-story structure built to house the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged is a distinguished example of the Art Deco style of architecture, characterized by its complex massing, patterned yellow brickwork, and highly stylized, geometric cast-stone ornament, and by its elaborate entrance enframing that prominently displays the name “Bialystoker” and symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel; that while the Lower East Side has experienced significant changes in both its demographics and physical fabric, the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged was one of the longest-running *landsmanshaft* in New York, and that its building remains one of the neighborhood's prominent landmarks and a reminder of a vanished era when it played a significant role in the world's largest Jewish community.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged, 228 East Broadway (aka 228-230 East Broadway), Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 315, Lot 45 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum, Christopher Moore, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
228 East Broadway (aka 228-230 East Broadway)
Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 315 Lot 45
Built: 1929-31; Architect Harry Hurwit
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
Entrance enframingent

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



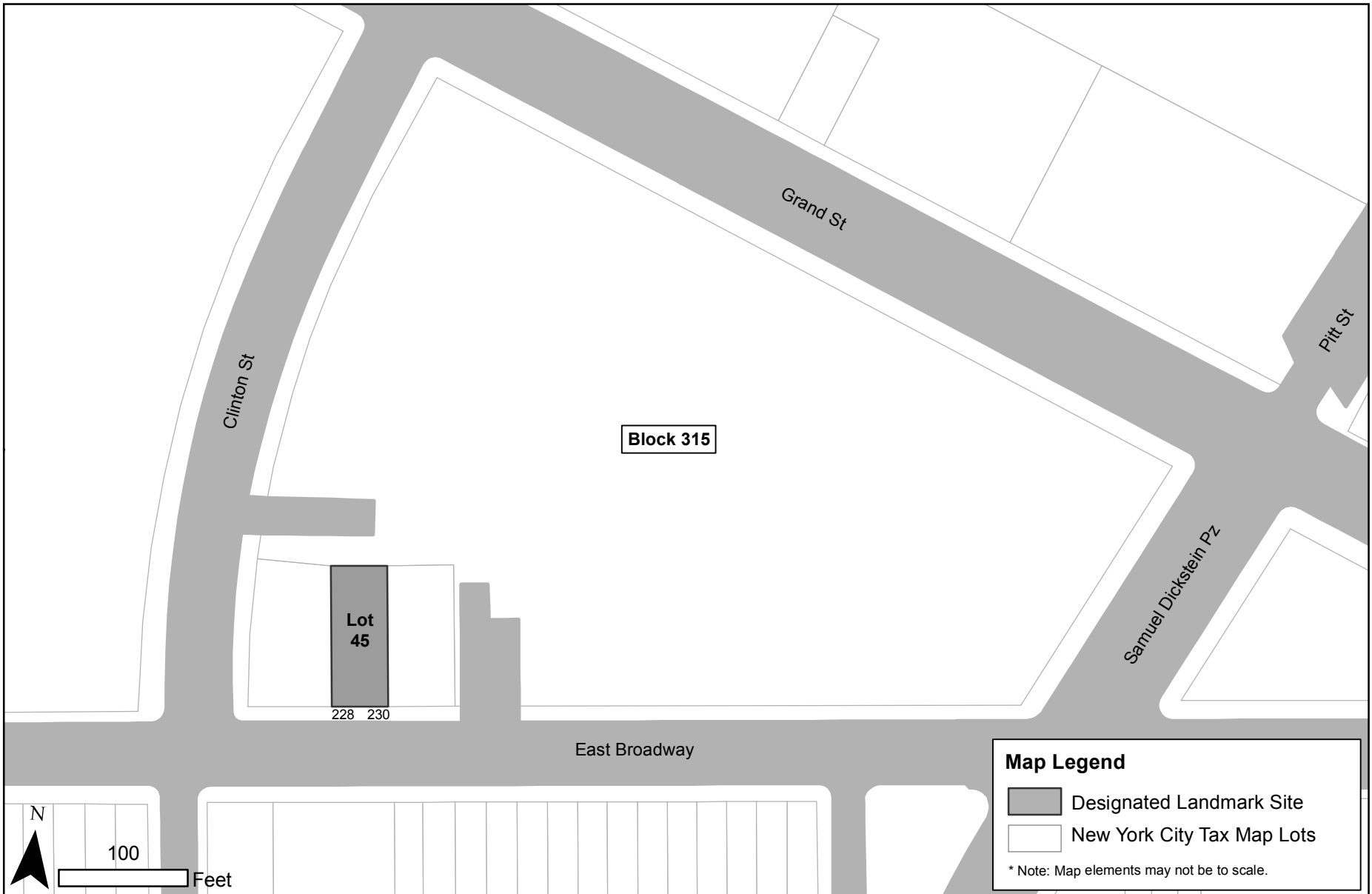
Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
Photo: Federal Writers' Project (1935-41)
Courtesy New York City Municipal Archives



Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee (2013)



Bialystoker Center and Home for the Aged
Photo: Federal Writers' Project (1937)
Courtesy New York City Municipal Archives



BIALYSTOKER CENTER AND HOME FOR THE AGED (LP-2529), 228 East Broadway (aka 228-230 East Broadway)
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 315, Lot 45

Designated: May 21, 2013