

**FIRST GERMAN BAPTIST CHURCH (LATER UKRAINIAN AUTOCEPHALIC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. VOLODYMYR/LATER CONGREGATION TIFERETH ISRAEL - TOWN AND VILLAGE SYNAGOGUE)**, 334 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 334-336 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street), Manhattan  
Built 1866-69; Julius Boeckell, architect

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 455, Lot 24 in part, beginning at a point at the northwest corner of lot 24, proceeding south along the western lot line for 69 feet 8 inches, then east at a 90 degree angle through the lot to the eastern lot line, then north along the eastern lot to north east corner of the lot, then west along the northern lot line of the lot to the point of beginning.

On March 25, 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the First German Baptist Church (later Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr/ later Congregation Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1).<sup>1</sup> The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were 11 speakers in favor of designation: including representatives of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Congregation Kehila Kedosha Janina, the Historic Districts Council, the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative, and the East Village Community Coalition. There were eight speakers in opposition to designation including the president and rabbi of the Town and Village Synagogue and five members of the congregation. Several members of the congregation testified in opposition to the designation, including the president and chairman of the board of the synagogue, requested that if the designation were to go forward, that the rear addition, known as the “back building,” be excluded from the designation. At the hearing Chair Tierney read into the record a letter from State Senator Brad Hoylman and Council Member Rosie Mendez supporting the designation but asking the Commission to only designate the original front section of the building and exclude the rear building. The Commission also received a letter from New York State Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh asking the Commission to designate only the original front of the building. The commission received approximately 410 letters and emails in support of designation. One letter expressed sympathy with the desire to preserve the building but voiced concerns about the impact of designation and asked that the back building be excluded. There were 45 letters and emails in opposition to the designation, 21 of which requested that if the designation took place, that the back building be excluded from the site. The Commission notes that during the course of consideration of designation some people have expressed their opinions (in support or in opposition) more than once through various forms of media.

Summary

The First German Baptist Church, located at 334 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street, is a significant reminder of the evolving character of the Lower East Side and an excellent example of the *Rundbogenstil* style of architecture. The church was erected in 1866-69 at the northern boundary of *Kleindeutschland*, the thriving mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century German community. The building’s architect, Julius Boeckell was a talented and prolific designer who worked almost exclusively for German clients within the German enclaves of New York. This is an early example of his work and is his only known church design. The building’s *Rundbogenstil* design incorporates such typical German Romanesque features as roughly coursed stone facings, large round-arch openings, arcuated corbel tables, belt and string courses, a central gable pierced by an ocular window, corner buttresses with carved finials, columned window frames, and slender multi-storied towers, which were originally



capped by tapered spires. The use of specifically German sources and restrained handling of detail sets this apart from other many of the other surviving Rundbogenstil churches in New York. The German Baptist church emphasized the affirmation of German cultural identity and had roots in the Pietist theological movement, which favored basilican church designs with simple forms and chaste ornament, in keeping with the apostolic simplicity of the Early Christian Church.

The First German Baptist Church was a vital social and spiritual center for its largely poor and immigrant congregation and an important center and training ground for the German Baptist Church in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, by the 1920s the German presence on the Lower East Side had declined, replaced by a new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe and new communities such as Little Ukraine. In 1926 the First German Baptist Church leased, and later sold, its building to the newly formed Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr. Located in the heart of the Ukrainian community in the largest city in the country, St. Volodymyr's was one of the most important Ukrainian Orthodox churches in North America and the site of some of the most significant events in Ukrainian Orthodox church history, including the installation of Joseph A. Zuk as Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America in 1932 and the unification of the Autocephalic Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States of America and Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America in 1950. In 1939-40 the church was refurbished and altered to give it a more Eastern appearance. The original windows were replaced by stained-glass lights and the original spires were modified to create small chambers topped by copper-clad onion domes. A larger copper-clad dome was also installed behind the front gable.

In 1962 the Church of St. Volodymyr sold the building to Congregation Tifereth Israel - Town and Village Synagogue. Founded in 1948, in the apartments of returning war veterans and their families living in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, this Conservative congregation had met at several locations over the years, including the Labor Temple and a social hall over a local saloon, before acquiring this, its first permanent quarters. Tifereth Israel – Town and Village Synagogue has earned a reputation for social activism, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness, and has played an important role in the social framework of the East Village. The synagogue made some changes to the façade of the building, notably signage, the installation of iron menorahs at the first story, and a Star of David to the center second-story window lighting the sanctuary. The building survives today as a largely-intact and fine example of Rundbogenstil architecture and as a significant reminder of the rich cultural and social history of the Lower East Side.

## **BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

### Description

Located on a midblock site, the First German Baptist Church building is comprised of a T-shaped two-story gable-roofed church (now synagogue) building, which has a frontage of 60 feet on East 14<sup>th</sup> Street and is 69 feet 8 inches deep. Designed in the German Romanesque variant of the *Rundbogenstil*, the church/synagogue is faced with picked ashlar Tuckahoe marble and features a double-storied arcaded design with narrow towers flanking the central entrance bay, which is crowned by triangular pediment pierced by an oculus window. In an historic alteration the top chambers of the towers were modified, and the small wood central tower behind the pediment, and copper sheathed onion domes were installed in 1939-40 by the Ukrainian Autocephalic Church of St. Volodymyr. The building's leaded diamond-pane stained glass windows were installed at the same time by St. Volodymyr's, replacing the church's original diamond-pane lights and a traceried rose window in the oculus. Historic modifications for Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue include the installation of menorahs on the lower façade and of a Star of David in the central second-story window. All of the doors are non-historic.

### **East 14<sup>th</sup> Street Façade**

*Historic:* Picked white ashlar Tuckahoe marble cladding; symmetrical tripartite two-story design featuring round arches; triple arch entrance in center section façade at first story; triple arches with taller, wider center arches in all three bays at second story; central section capped by gable with oculus window; slender projected multi-storied towers with round-arched windows flanking central section of façade; narrow projecting stone buttresses with carved finials at ends of façade; menorahs on the lower façade; belt and string courses; simple hood moldings with foliate label stops; wood window frames featuring jamb shafts with simple Romanesque capitals and bases; arcuated stone corbel table extending along pediment and roofline; arched marble chambers with dentil-skirted copper-clad hipped roofs and onion domes terminating the towers; frame tower (non-historic cladding) supporting copper-clad onion dome above center of façade; gabled roof with front hip and dormer.

*Alterations:* Iron fence; doors and transoms replaced both in center and outer bays; diamond-pane stained-glass windows; message boards beneath tower windows; emergency lights flanking towers at first story; base of center tower and roof reclad.

### **East and West elevations (visible from side courts)**

*Historic:* Brick (painted) clad walls capped by decorative brick corbelling; square-headed windows at first story with stone sills; tall round arched windows for second-story sanctuary; wood brick moldings at second story.

*Alterations:* Metal grills at first story windows; electrical conduits and lights; second story stained glass windows replaced; outer glass liners.

## **SITE HISTORY**

### *Kleindeutschland*<sup>2</sup>

From its founding in 1626 by Peter Minuit, a native of the German town of Wesel am Rhein, New York City has had a significant German population. During the 1820s, the first German neighborhood and commercial center developed in the area southeast of City Hall Park and by 1840 more than 24,000 Germans lived in the city. During the next 20 years, their numbers increased dramatically as “mass transatlantic migration brought another hundred thousand Germans fleeing land shortages, unemployment, famine, and political and religious oppression.”<sup>3</sup> To accommodate this growth, a new German neighborhood developed east of the Bowery and north of Division Street which became known as *Kleindeutschland*, Little Germany, Dutchtown, or *Deutschlandle*. In the 1870s and 1880s, dislocations caused by the growth of the German Empire brought 70,000 immigrants to the area while thousands of American-born children of German immigrants established their own homes in the neighborhood. By 1880, the German-speaking population of *Kleindeutschland* exceeded 250,000, making up approximately one-quarter of the city’s population, and the neighborhood’s boundaries had expanded north to 18<sup>th</sup> Street and east to the East River. *Kleindeutschland* was “the first large immigrant neighborhood in American history that spoke a foreign language,” and remained the major German-American center in the United States for the rest of the century.<sup>4</sup> According to historian Stanley Nadel “only Vienna and Berlin had larger German populations between 1855 and 1880,” making Gotham “the third capital of the German-speaking world.”<sup>5</sup>

Most of *Kleindeutschland's* residents worked in neighborhood factories and shops in what came to be regarded as German trades -- as tailors, bakers, grocers, shoemakers, brewers, cigar makers, piano and furniture makers, and dressmakers. They worshipped in German-speaking churches and synagogues, took part in benevolent and fraternal organizations like the Harugari, Vereinigte Deutscher Bruder and B'nai B'rith, were served by several German-language newspapers and journals, and created such institutions as the German-American Saving Bank at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Avenue and the Germania Life-Insurance Company (later Guardian Life Insurance Company), which was originally located on Nassau Street but later moved to East 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue South.

In the late 1840s and 1850s most of the block between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, First and Second Avenues was built up with houses. In 1865 New York City purchased the lot at 340 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street for Engine Company No. 5. In 1866, the First German Baptist Church purchased the 85 feet x 103.3 feet lot extending from 334 to 338 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>6</sup> On July 3, 1866, the congregation sold the eastern portion of its new lot (338 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street) to William Diehl, a hat and cap manufacturer who resided in Bushwick and was a member of the First German Baptist Church's building committee.<sup>7</sup> With the proceeds of the sale in hand, the congregation had architect Julius Boeckell file plans on July 9, 1866 for a new church building to be erected at 334-336 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>8</sup>

#### German Baptists and the First German Baptist Church<sup>9</sup>

The German Baptist Church in North America owes its origins to Konrad Anton Fleischmann (1812-67), a Bavarian-born, Swiss-trained theologian, who immigrated to the United States in 1839 to preach the gospel to German immigrants. Fleischmann began his work in Newark, where the first three German converts were baptized. He then moved on to Pennsylvania, making Reading his base, and preaching at revival meetings in Central and Eastern Pennsylvania. In 1842 he moved to Philadelphia, where on July 9, 1843 he founded the first German Baptist Church in the United States. With German immigration booming, within a few years German Baptist churches were established in New York City (1846), Rochester (1848), Buffalo (1849), Newark, New Jersey (1849), St. Louis (1850), Chicago (1850), and Bridgeport, Ontario (1851). In addition to agreeing on the need for a German-language hymnal and a German Baptist periodical, which resulted in the publication of *Der Sendbote des Evangeliums*, beginning in 1853, the conference adopted a strong resolution "against slavery ... since it stands in conflict with the gospel [and] should not be tolerated in churches of believers."<sup>10</sup>

As Cindy Wesley explained in her dissertation on the German Baptists, "the majority of German Baptists were not Baptists at the time of their emigration to the United States."<sup>11</sup>

The German-speaking Baptist churches became centers of community life and meaning. In the churches they sang the hymns of their culture, heard the Scriptures read from Martin Luther's translation of the Bible, set the parameters for acceptable behavior and prayed in their mother tongue. They adapted the methods of revivalism to the German work, emphasizing an inward and personal experience of the faith that was outwardly demonstrated in a simple, sober lifestyle. In their new surroundings they identified themselves as Baptists and Germans.<sup>12</sup>

The First German Baptist Church in New York City was founded by the Rev. Johannes Eschmann (1817-84), a Swiss-born evangelist, who was appointed as a missionary to German immigrants in New York City by the American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1845.<sup>13</sup> By July 1846, Eschmann had gathered a group of 16 charter members, who formed the First German

Baptist Church of New York, the second German Baptist church in America. The congregation first met in a building at Stanton and Essex Streets then moved to a church at 19 Avenue A, near Second Street, in 1850. The congregation prospered, growing to 125 members by 1851.

Early in 1867, after scandals and philosophical disagreements led to Eschmann being fired from his position, the congregation of the First German Baptist Church called Hermann M. Schaeffer (1839-1897), a graduate of the Rochester Theological Seminary, to their church.<sup>14</sup> By the time Schaeffer took over at First German Baptist, the congregation had sold its Avenue A church, purchased the East 14<sup>th</sup> Street site, and was meeting in leased space on East 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Schaeffer began to rebuild the church's membership and organized a fund raising campaign, securing a pledge from the Church Extension Committee of the Hudson River Baptist Association for a portion of the cost of construction. By the end of the year the church was "carrying on its ministry" in the basement of the new building. On October 31, 1869 a formal dedication service was held. The new church was regarded as "the most magnificent German Baptist church in the country at the time."<sup>15</sup>

Hermann Schaeffer left the First German Baptist Church to take a teaching position at the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1872. His successor was George A. Schulte (1838-1916), a German immigrant raised in Buffalo and trained at the Rochester Seminary, who remained at First German Baptist for 21 years.<sup>16</sup> In his reminiscences Schulte recalled that the majority of the church's members lived on the Lower East Side south of Houston Street, although a number of members had moved uptown toward 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Although there were some wealthy members of the congregation, "most of the members belonged to the working class, and lived from hand to mouth."

They lived in cramped quarters and mostly on the top floor [of tenements] or in "yard houses" that were poorly constructed. ... Many even lived in the cheap often damp and dark cellar apartments, which were designated by the rather elegant expression "basement apartment."<sup>17</sup>

Under Schulte's leadership, First German Baptist established a number of mission stations that developed into independent congregations.<sup>18</sup>

By 1915, German immigration was slowing and new arrivals were mostly settling in upper Manhattan or in Queens and Brooklyn.<sup>19</sup> Membership at First German Baptist had dwindled to 125 and the Sunday school enrollment was only 65.<sup>20</sup> Plans were initiated to sell the building and move uptown but the city's other German enclaves already had established German Baptist churches, so a move seemed impractical. Moreover, the members of First German Baptist's remaining congregation were loath to merge with another church since they took considerable pride in their church's being the oldest German Baptist church in New York and the second oldest in the country. By the end of 1925 it was clear that the decline in the German population in the neighborhood would continue. The congregation leased their church to the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr and rented a temporary space in Midtown. This led the New York City Baptist Missionary Society to foreclose its mortgage on the building in November 1927. After several months of litigation the former First German Baptist Church building was sold to the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr in June 1928.

### The Design of the First German Baptist Church

The First German Baptist Church is an excellent example of the *Rundbogenstil* (round-arched style).<sup>21</sup> The style was developed in Germany between the late 1820s and the 1840s by architect-theorists, notably Heinrich Hübsch (1795-1863), who were seeking a "progressive and authentically German way for architects to build."<sup>22</sup> Aiming for a middle ground between the

neo-Classical styles then in vogue, which they regarded as unsuited to local conditions and modern uses and divorced from German tradition, and the neo-Gothic style, which they considered overly ornate and expensive to build, *Rundbogenstil* architects turned to Early Christian, Byzantine, Romanesque, and early Renaissance models. They found in them a noble simplicity, solidity, economy, and “optical comprehensibility” worthy of emulation. By synthesizing and purifying elements from these historic styles, *Rundbogenstil* architects hoped to create modern buildings suitable to their times. Hallmarks of the style include round-arched openings, broad smooth expanses of wall surface, and simple ornament, notably arcuated corbel tables, pilaster strips, and bands, concentrated at the crowning of the building and around structural elements such as windows and doors. Early centers of development included Karlsruhe, Munich, Berlin, and Potsdam. From Germany the style spread to England and the United States. It was first used in the United States in the mid-1840s for Protestant churches beginning with Richard Upjohn’s Congregational Church of the Pilgrims (now Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Rite Roman Catholic Cathedral) of 1844-46 at Henry and Remsen Streets in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. Almost contemporaneous examples included Upjohn’s Bowdoin College Chapel in Brunswick, Maine (1844-55), James Renwick’s Church of the Puritan’s on Union Square (1846-47, demolished), and Blesch & Eidlitz’s St. George (Episcopal) Church at Rutherford Place and East 16<sup>th</sup> Street (1846-56, a designated New York City Landmark).

All four of these churches were designed for Evangelicals, who were strongly influenced by contemporary Germany theology, particularly the Pietist movement, which had a profound effect on 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestantism. Pietism “emphasized the inward spirituality of a ‘religion of the heart’ as well as the centrality of Scripture”<sup>23</sup> and sought a return to the practices of the Early Christian Church in which each congregation was autonomous and self-governing and church ceremonies emphasized preaching rather than elaborate rituals. Cindy Wesley has written that “the Early German-speaking Baptists were, in essence, Pietists who expressed their theological and spiritual beliefs within the Baptist ecclesiastical structure.”<sup>24</sup> Pietism played a role in the development of *Rundbogenstil* theory, particularly the preference for basilican designs harking back to antiquity, and a taste for simple forms and chaste ornament, in keeping with apostolic simplicity of the Early Church. Thus the influence of Pietism may be seen in the choice of the *Rundbogenstil* style for the design, in the use of basilican plan without apse or transepts for the sanctuary, and in the very circumspect use of ornament.

The German Baptist Church’s concern with affirming German cultural identity was undoubtedly at play in the decision to use a variant of the *Rundbogenstil* rooted in German Romanesque. German Romanesque aspects of the design include the steeply pitched gabled roof, stone facings, and arcaded design featuring triple arches. Generic Romanesque details include arcaded corbel tables, string and belt courses, beveled piers, hood moldings with foliate stops, narrow stone buttresses with carved finials, and the wood brick moldings in the window openings, which retain their Romanesque jamb shafts with simple waterleaf capitals and molded bases. One of the design’s chief features, the triangular pediment pierced by a central oculus and capped by arched corbels, is a device used at many German Romanesque churches including Mainz Cathedral, Worms Cathedral, and St. Marcellinus and Petrus, Selingenstadt. Interestingly, both the stonework, with its small roughly coursed blocks, and the no-longer extant tapering spires with triangular gables at their base also seem to have been based on prototypes from Boeckell’s native Hesse, for example St. Peter’s, Fritzlar (c. 1085-90).

As was the rule with *Rundbogenstil* architecture, the design for the First German Baptist Church was not a historic revival of Romanesque architecture but a new design based on an abstracted and simplified interpretation of the Romanesque. Many of the surviving *Rundbogenstil* churches that have been designated as New York City Landmarks are large churches with corner towers and more elaborate ornament than the First German Baptist Church –

for example St. George's, the Washington Square Methodist Church (135 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Charles Hadden, 1859-60, within the Greenwich Village Historic District), and the South Congregational Church, (253-269 President Street, 1851, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District), and the First Reformed Church of Jamaica (153-10 Jamaica Avenue, Sidney J. Young, 1858-59, a designated New York City Landmark). The other designated examples are for the most part simple vernacular designs, featuring a central entrance towers – for example St. Monica's Church in Jamaica (94-20 160<sup>th</sup> Street, Anders Peterson, 1856-57, façade and campanile incorporated into later structure) and St. Patrick's Church (R.C.) in Richmond Town (45 St. Patrick's Place, 1860-62). The First German Baptist Church stands apart as a sophisticated design, featuring a complex balance of vertical and horizontal elements, but with an understated use of ornament that may be a reflection of the congregation's limited resources and of its commitment to "Apostolic simplicity."

### Julius Boekell<sup>25</sup>

[John Henry] Julius Boekell (1831-1905) was born in Hesse, Germany, and immigrated to New York City in 1851. By 1859 he had established his own architectural practice. He became a naturalized citizen in 1860 and soon after enlisted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment (New York), serving on active duty as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant between November 1861 and March 1862, and rising to the rank of Captain in the reserves by 1865. In 1886 he took his son, Julius F. Boekell, who had studied at Cooper Union, into partnership and the firm became Julius Boekell & Son. The younger Boekell practiced into the 1920s.

Julius Boekell [Sr.] was an extremely prolific architect who designed over 150 tenement buildings. He was also responsible for a number of flat buildings and rowhouses, factory and brewery buildings, stores and warehouses, restaurants, and beer gardens. He worked primarily for German clients in the German enclaves of Manhattan, most extensively on the Lower East Side. Examples of his work are included in the TriBeCa East, SoHo, East Village/Lower East Side, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northwest, Greenwich Village, and Greenwich Village Extension II Historic Districts. Among his firm's noteworthy works are the handsome Italianate store and loft building with a commanding cornice at 113-115 Mercer Street (1872) in the SoHo Historic District, the ornate Italianate store and flats building at 285 Bleecker Street, built for butcher Michael Puels in 1874 in the Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II, the exuberant Queen Anne style flats building with ground story store at 101 Second Avenue/ 240 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street in the East Village/Lower East Side Historic District (1880), the restrained group of six neo-Grec rowhouses (1881) at 450-460 West 153<sup>rd</sup> Street in the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill North West Historic District Extension (1881), and the handsome early apartment building combining Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne style elements at 266 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street in the Greenwich Village Historic District (1887). The First German Baptist Church is among Boekell's earliest known commissions and is his only known church design.

### The Ukrainian Autocephalous` Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr

There is evidence that Ukrainians settled in the Americas, including New Amsterdam, as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> They took part in the American Revolution and were part of the Russian colony in California; however, they did not begin immigrating to the United States in large numbers until the late 1870s when poor economic conditions, high taxes, forced military conscription, and the lack of political freedom led to massive emigration especially from the western portion of Ukraine under Austro-Hungarian rule. Between 1870 and 1914 approximately 200,000 Ukrainians immigrated to the United States, most settling in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. After 1920, a second, much smaller, wave of migration began, largely from Galicia, where many Ukrainians were resistant to the Polish takeover of their homeland.

Following World War II, there was a third major period of immigration, when many refugees, who had fled Ukraine during the war and refused to return to their homeland under Soviet rule, were permitted to settle in the United States under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.

The Ukrainian population remained relatively small in New York City and cultural institutions did not develop until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1905 the city's Ukrainian Catholics who followed an Eastern Rite but were united with the Roman Catholic Church, purchased a chapel on East 20<sup>th</sup> Street, which was renamed St. George Ukrainian Catholic Church. In 1911, the congregation moved to East 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the surrounding neighborhood became a major center for Ukrainian-Americans in New York City.

In addition to the Ukrainian Catholics, New York City also began to develop a sizable population of Eastern Orthodox Ukrainian immigrants, largely from Eastern Ukraine. Originally they worshipped in Russian Orthodox churches since Eastern Ukraine was then part of Russia and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church had been absorbed by the Russian Orthodox Church. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Orthodox Church gained many converts due to the American Roman Catholic hierarchy's refusal to accept traditional Ukrainian practices. By 1915 the number of Orthodox Ukrainians in the United States had increased to the point that several independent parishes and clergy decided to organize themselves into an independent Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdiction in America.<sup>27</sup>

When the Ukrainian National Republic was established in 1917, following the breakup of the Russian Empire, many in Ukraine began advocating for an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church.<sup>28</sup> In May 1920 the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council (*Rada*) was created and it proclaimed the establishment of the Ukrainian Autocephalous [independent] Orthodox Church. Attempts were made to secure the endorsement of the Orthodox Patriarchy for the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church but when they failed the church installed its own Metropolitan and bishops at a *sobor* (synod) in October 1921.

The leadership of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox churches of the United States met in New York and declared their unity with the newly formed Autocephalous church in Ukraine. In 1924 Archbishop John Theodorovich (1887-1971) arrived in the United States to form a diocese of the Autocephalous churches under the name of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. Archbishop John established the diocesan headquarters in Philadelphia. Under his leadership many new parishes were established, including the Church of St. Volodymyr, which was organized in this building in 1926.

Located in the heart of the Ukrainian community in the largest city in the country, St. Volodymyr's played a significant role in Ukrainian Orthodox history. In 1932, with the Rev. Leo B. Weslowsky (1890-1968) serving as its pastor, the church hosted the installation of the Right Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Zuk as Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, the first ceremony of this type and importance in a Ukrainian church in this country.<sup>29</sup> The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America (UOC-A) was a second jurisdiction, organized in 1929, comprised largely of former Ukrainian Catholics who had converted to the Orthodox faith. The two jurisdictions co-existed for 17 years, each gaining members and new churches. The most momentous event in St. Volodymyr's history occurred in 1950 when representatives of the two rival Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdictions met in different portions of the building and then in a combined *sobor* to sign an Act of Unification, joining almost all of the Ukrainian Orthodox parishes in the United States and Canada, affecting tens of thousands Ukrainian Orthodox.<sup>30</sup>

In keeping with St. Volodymyr's growing importance, in 1939-40, the church undertook an extensive program of renovations to refurbish the church building and give it a more Eastern appearance.<sup>31</sup> Under the direction of architect Benjamin Levitan, these alterations included cleaning the exterior stonework, replacing the church's original diamond-pane window sash with diamond-pane colored "leaded Cathedral glass," adding wire screens to the windows,



reconfiguring the top section of the towers by reducing the height of the shafts and removing the top portion of the triangular gables and tapering spires, inserting cement patches topped by copper-clad onion domes, and constructing a much larger copper-sheathed dome resting on a wood superstructure on the gable ridge near the front pediment. One of the most striking features was the incorporation of a dove surrounded by radiating lights, a representation of the Holy Spirit, in the central second-story window above the main entrance.

By 1958, the congregation of St. Volodymyr's had outgrown its East 14<sup>th</sup> Street building and relocated to 160 West 82<sup>nd</sup> Street. In 1962 it sold this building to the Town and Village Synagogue. The synagogue also purchased the tenement building immediately to the west of the church, which had been acquired by St. Volodymyr's Church.

### Congregation Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue

Following World War II, Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village gave preference to returning veterans. Jewish families who had newly moved into the complexes began gathering in each other's living rooms for prayer services. In 1948 they organized a conservative congregation, Congregation Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue. For a time they met at the Sirovich Home for the Aged on Second Avenue near Fourteenth Street. Volunteer rabbis conducted services, although "many ritual as well as administrative responsibilities fell on lay members," establishing a tradition of "lay participation that is a distinguishing feature and pride of T&V today."<sup>32</sup> When St. Volodymyr's put its 14<sup>th</sup> Street building on the market, the young families of Town and Village banded together to purchase the building, taking title in February 1962. In April 1962 the congregation moved from its temporary quarters at 225 Avenue B to its new building, marching in procession carrying its torahs up 14<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>33</sup>

In the 1960s, the congregation modified the center second-story stained glass window removing the image of the dove and adding a large Star of David. Metal-and-glass announcement boards were also added to the base of towers flanking the central bays. Sometime between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, metal letters were installed above the center entrances reading "TIFERETH ISRAEL/ TOWN AND VILLAGE SYNAGOGUE." Iron menorahs were also installed at the first story level in the outer bays.<sup>34</sup>

In the early 1970s, under the leadership of Rabbi Stephen C. Lerner, Town and Village became one of the first synagogues to allow women to be counted in a minyan and to be full participants in a service. Town and Village also became a center of resistance against the Vietnam War by setting up a draft information center to "help people get out of the draft."<sup>35</sup> Today Town and Village continues to pride itself on being a "traditional, egalitarian, Conservative community committed to Jewish life, innovative learning, prayer and social justice."<sup>36</sup>

In recent years the congregation has replaced the central entrance doors and installed some lights, fire safety, and security equipment on the façade of this building. Aside from these small changes the building survives today as a well-preserved and fine example of German Romanesque Rundbogenstil architecture and a significant reminder of the evolving character of the Lower East Side and its rich cultural and social history.

Report researched and written by  
Gale Harris  
Research Department

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> A public hearing was previously held by LPC on this item in 1966 (LP-228).

<sup>2</sup> The following section on *Kleindeutschland* is based on Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Stanley Nadel, "Germans" and "Kleindeutschland" in the *Encyclopedia of New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Richard Haberstroh, *The German Churches of Metropolitan New York* (New York: New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Nadel, "Germans," *Encyclopedia of New York*, 463.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Nadel, *Little Germany*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Conveyances, Liber 963, 175; Liber 949, 525.

<sup>7</sup> Conveyances, Liber 985, 39.

<sup>8</sup> New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building Docket [NBD] 47-1866, submitted July 9, 1866. NBD 180-1866, submitted Sept 14, 1866. In later years Diehl claimed to have been a pastor at the First German Baptist Church in Manhattan and to have drawn the designs for the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Church. Clearly Diehl's claim to having been a pastor at the church was incorrect and as yet no evidence has come to light to support his claim to having been involved in the building's design. See "Rev. William Diehl Dies in Hospital," *New York Herald*, July 18, 1916.

<sup>9</sup> This section is based on Frank H. Woyke, *Heritage and Ministry of the North American Baptist Conference* (Oakbrook Terrace, Ill: North American Baptist Conference, 1979); Albert John Ramaker, *The German Baptists in North America* (Cleveland, OH: German Baptist Publication Society, 1924); G[eorge] A. Schulte, *Memories from My Fifty Years of Service*, trans. Donald H. Madvig, ed Lois Glewwe (1913; Sioux Falls, SD: North American Baptist Heritage Commission, 2006); Cindy K. Wesley, *The Pietist Theology and Ethnic Mission of the General Conference of German Baptists in North America* (PhD Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 2000); Rev. E Anschütz, "German Baptists in New York City," *Baptist Home Mission Monthly*. Sept 1898, 333-334; "German Baptists in America," *The Baptist Encyclopaedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881); Philip E. Thompson, "The North American Baptist Conference," in W. Glenn Jonas, Jr., ed. *The Baptist River: Essays on Many Tributaries of a Diverse River* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 2006); North American Baptist Conference Heritage Commission, "Early Conference Leaders," @ [www.nabarchives.org/biographies/early-conference-leaders](http://www.nabarchives.org/biographies/early-conference-leaders).

<sup>10</sup> Woyke, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Wesley, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 42-43.

<sup>13</sup> For John Eschmann see Woyke, 33-36, 60-61; Wesley, Ramaker, 20-21; Schulte, 29; "Rev. John Eschmann," *New Church Magazine* 31 (July 1884), 350.

<sup>14</sup> This information on the Schaeffer is from Woyke, 61-62; A. J. Ramaker, "Professor Herman M. Schaeffer," *Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, 20 (Sept. 1898), 324-25; Schulte and Madvig, 42, 122; "Ordination of the Pastor of the First German Baptist Church," *New York Times*, Mar. 25, 1867, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Schulte and Madvig, 122.

<sup>16</sup> For most of his time at First German Baptist Schulte was also actively involved in the American Baptist Home Mission Society and served as General Secretary of the German Baptist Churches of America.

<sup>17</sup> Schulte and Madvig, 42.

<sup>18</sup> These included the German Baptist church in Hoboken, the Second German Baptist Church of Brooklyn, and the mission station at First Avenue and 61<sup>st</sup> Street, which became the Immanuel German Baptist Church.

<sup>19</sup> The most obvious manifestation of this migration was the loss of the cultural institutions that in the 1870s had made East 4<sup>th</sup> Street one of the most important centers of German life in New York. The *Aschenbroedel Verein* moved to

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Yorkville in 1892, while the club that succeeded it at 74 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the *Gesamverein Schillerbund*, lasted only four years before it too moved northward in 1896. The neighboring New York Turn Verein also relocated to Yorkville in 1897. The burning of the *General Slocum* excursion boat in 1904-in which more than 1,000 local residents perished-is widely considered the symbolic end of *Kleindeutschland*.

<sup>20</sup> For the last years of the church's history see Woyke, 62-63; "The Rev. G.H. Schneck," *New York Herald*, June 12, 1915, 7; "Baptists in Suit Over Church Site," *New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1927; "Baptist Society Sues to Foreclose on Church," *New York Sun*, Nov. 22, 1927, 5; "Court Asked to Sell Old German Church on 14<sup>th</sup> St." *New York Tribune*, 37; "Church Bankrupt As Members Move," *Syracuse Journal*, Nov. 23, 1927; Conveyances, Liber 3541, 327, Liber 3652, 487.

<sup>21</sup> This discussion of the *Rundbogenstil* is based on Kathleen Curran, "The German Rundbogenstil and Reflections on the American Round-Arched Style," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 47 (Dec. 1988) , 351-373; Kathleen Curran, *The Romanesque Revival* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Kathryn E. Holliday, *Leopold Eidlitz: Architecture and Idealism in the Gilded Age* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008); Landmarks Preservation Commission, *St. Stephen's Church (The Church of Our Lady of the Scapular & St. Stephen) Designation Report* (LP-2259) (New York: City of New York, 2008), prepared by Virginia Kurshan; "Rundbogenstil," *Wikipedia* @<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rundbogenstil>, accessed 5/13/2014.

<sup>22</sup> Curran, "German Rundbogenstil," 354.

<sup>23</sup> "Pietism," *Encyclopedia.com* @<http://www.encyclopedia.com/com/topic/Pietism.aspx>, accessed 5/20/2014.

<sup>24</sup> Wesley, 85-86.

<sup>25</sup> Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 16; James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 9; Julius Boekell, *Naturalization Records, Passport Applications, New York State Adjutant General Reports 1846-1945, City Directories-New York, 1861-1915* posted on *fold3.com*; New Building Dockets, 1866-67; "Projected Buildings," *Real Estate Record and Guide*, 1868-1888; Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects Files."

<sup>26</sup> This section on Ukrainians in America and New York City is based on Wasyl Halich, *Ukrainians in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937); Myron B. Kuropas, *The Ukrainians in America* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 1972); Bohdan P. Procko, "Ukrainians," *Encyclopedia of New York*.

<sup>27</sup> Since the Russian Orthodox hierarch refused to recognize the separate identity of the Ukrainians, the new Ukrainian jurisdiction placed itself under the authority of Bishop Germanos (Shdhadi) of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the USA.

<sup>28</sup> This information on the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church is based on Andre Partykevich, *Between Kyiv and Constantinople: Oleksander Lototsky and the Quest for Ukrainian Autocephaly* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1998); Paul Robert Magoosi, *A History of the Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 545-547.

<sup>29</sup> "Bishop is Installed by Ukrainians Here," *New York Times*, Sept. 26, 1932, 13; "Bishop Zuk Dies at 60 in Florida," *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1934, 31.

<sup>30</sup> Despite an overwhelming vote, Bishop Bohdan, head of the UOC-A, rejected the unification and chose to remain separate and a few parishes stood with him.

<sup>31</sup> Alteration Permit, 1820-1939. The alterations were completed in time to be recorded in the c. 1940 tax photo for the building.

<sup>32</sup> Town and Village Synagogue, "Our History," <http://tandv.org/about-us/our-history/> accessed 10/30/2014.

<sup>33</sup> George Dugan, "Synagogue Dedication," *New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1962, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Between 1963 and 1966 the congregation also replaced the building's heating and plumbing systems and repaired the roof. Subsequently new flooring, carpeting, and pews were installed, and in 1968 a central air conditioning system was added, with the cooling tower on the roof of its rear annex.

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<sup>35</sup> Rabbi Stephen Lerner, quoted in Joanne Palmer, “The man who ‘makes Jews,’ Rabbi Stephen Lerner looks back,” *Jewish Standard*, Sept. 14, 2012, [http://jstandard.com/content/item/the\\_man\\_who\\_makes\\_jews/](http://jstandard.com/content/item/the_man_who_makes_jews/) accessed 5/28/2014.

<sup>36</sup> “Town & Village Synagogue,” <https://www.pjlibrary.org/communities/community-detail.aspx?id=274> accessed 5/27/2014. In recent years Town and Village Synagogue has hosted several interfaith events; it offers ASL interpretation for its services, adult education classes including adult bar and bat mitzvah classes, Friday night coffeehouses “with people sharing poetry on the Passover theme of freedom,” has held services “in solidarity with Women of the Wall’s mission for the rights of all people to pray freely at the *Kotel* [Wailing Wall], and is LGBTQ friendly.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the First German Baptist Church (later Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr/later Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue) 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 First German Baptist Church, erected in 1866-69 to the designs of Julius Boekel, is a significant reminder of the evolving character of the Lower East Side and an excellent example of the *Rundbogenstil* style of architecture; that located on East 14<sup>th</sup> Street at the northern boundary of the thriving mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century German community of *Kleindeutschland*, the First German Baptist Church was both a vital social and spiritual center of its largely poor and immigrant congregation and an important center and training ground for the German Baptist Church in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; that it is an early work and the only known church design by Julius Boekel, a talented and prolific architect, who worked almost exclusively within the German enclaves of New York; that the building's *Rundbogenstil* design incorporates such typical German Romanesque features as roughly coursed stone facings, large round-arched openings, arcuated corbel tables, belt and string courses, a central gable pierced by an oculus window, corner buttresses with carved finials, columned window frames, and slender multi-storied towers; that the use of specifically German sources and restrained handling of detail sets this apart from other many of the other surviving *Rundbogenstil* churches in New York; that the building's design reflects the German Baptist church's emphasis on German cultural identity and its roots in the Pietist theological movement, which favored simple forms and chaste ornament; that by 1920s the German presence on the Lower East Side had declined and been replaced by a new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe; that in 1926 the First German Baptist Church leased, and later sold, its building to the newly formed Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr; that located in the heart of the Ukrainian community in the largest city in the country, St. Volodymyr's was one of the most important Ukrainian Orthodox churches in North America and the site of some of the most significant events in Ukrainian Orthodox church history; that in 1939-40 the church was refurbished and altered to give it a more Eastern appearance; that in 1962 the Church of St. Volodymyr leased and later sold its building to Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue, a Conservative congregation founded in 1948, in the apartments of returning war veterans and their families living in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, and that this was the congregation's first permanent quarters; that Tifereth-Israel-Town and Village Synagogue has earned a reputation for social activism, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness, and has played an important role in the social framework of the East Village; that the synagogue made some changes to the façade of the building, notably signage, the installation of iron menorahs at the first story, and a Star of David to the center second-story window lighting the sanctuary; that the building survives today as a largely-intact and fine example of *Rundbogenstil* architecture and as a significant reminder of the rich cultural and social history of the Lower East Side.

In addition the commission determined that the rear addition to the building, which is a later alteration and not visible from any public thoroughfare, should not be included in the designation.

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 First German Baptist Church (later Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr/ later Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue), 334 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 334-336 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 455, Lot 24 in part, beginning at a point at the northwest corner of lot 24, proceeding south along the western lot line for 69 feet 8 inches, then east at a 90 degree angle through the lot to the eastern lot line, then north along the eastern lot to north east corner of the lot, then west along the northern lot line of the lot to the point of beginning. as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Adi Shamir Baron, Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Goldblum,  
John Gustaffson, Roberta Washington, Commissioners, in the affirmative  
Michael Devonshire, Commissioner, opposed to the partial designation



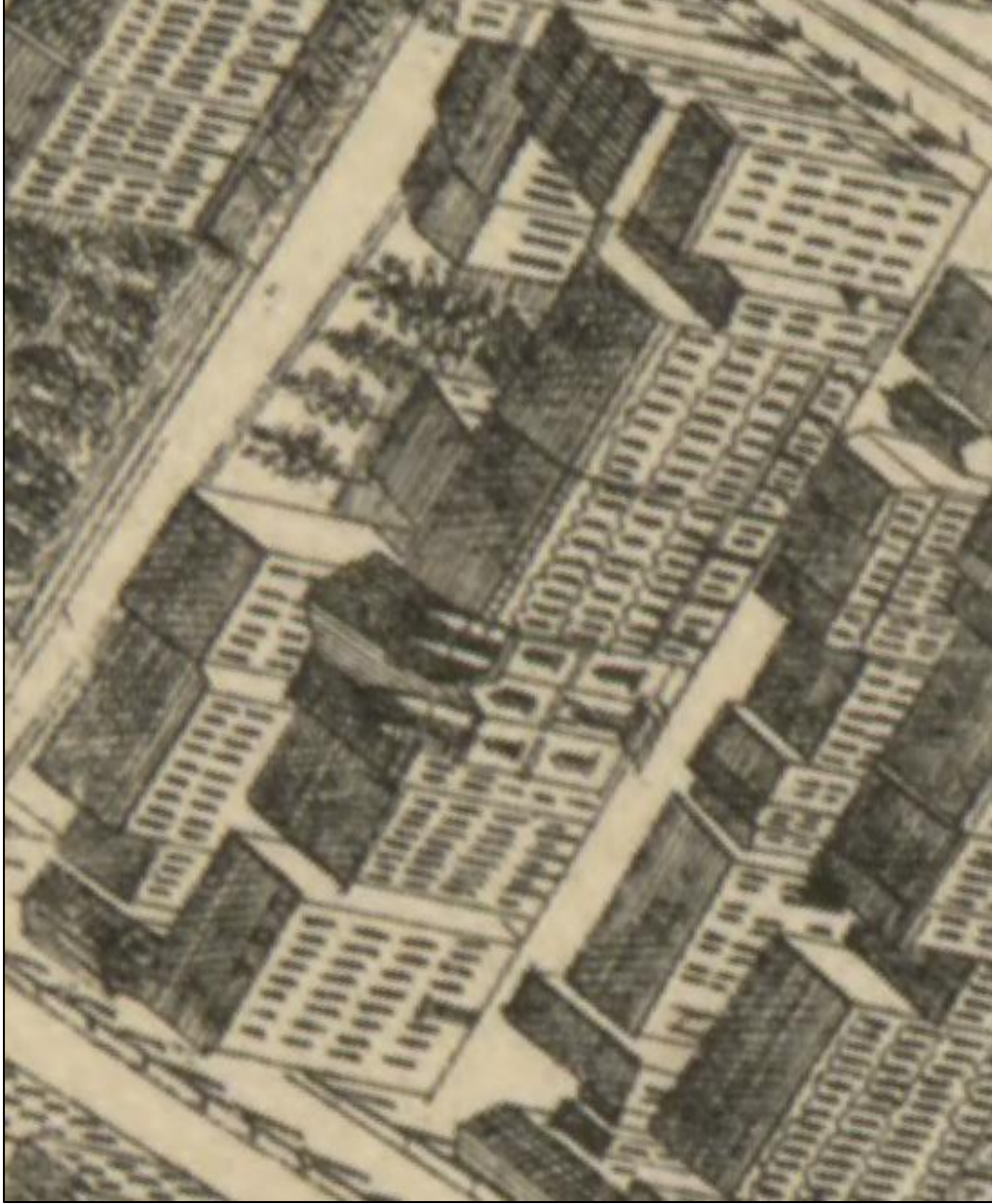
**First German Baptist Church**

(later Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr/  
later Congregation Tifereth Israel-Town and Village Synagogue  
334 East 14th Street (aka 334-336 East 14th Street)

Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 455, Lot 24 in part

*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013*



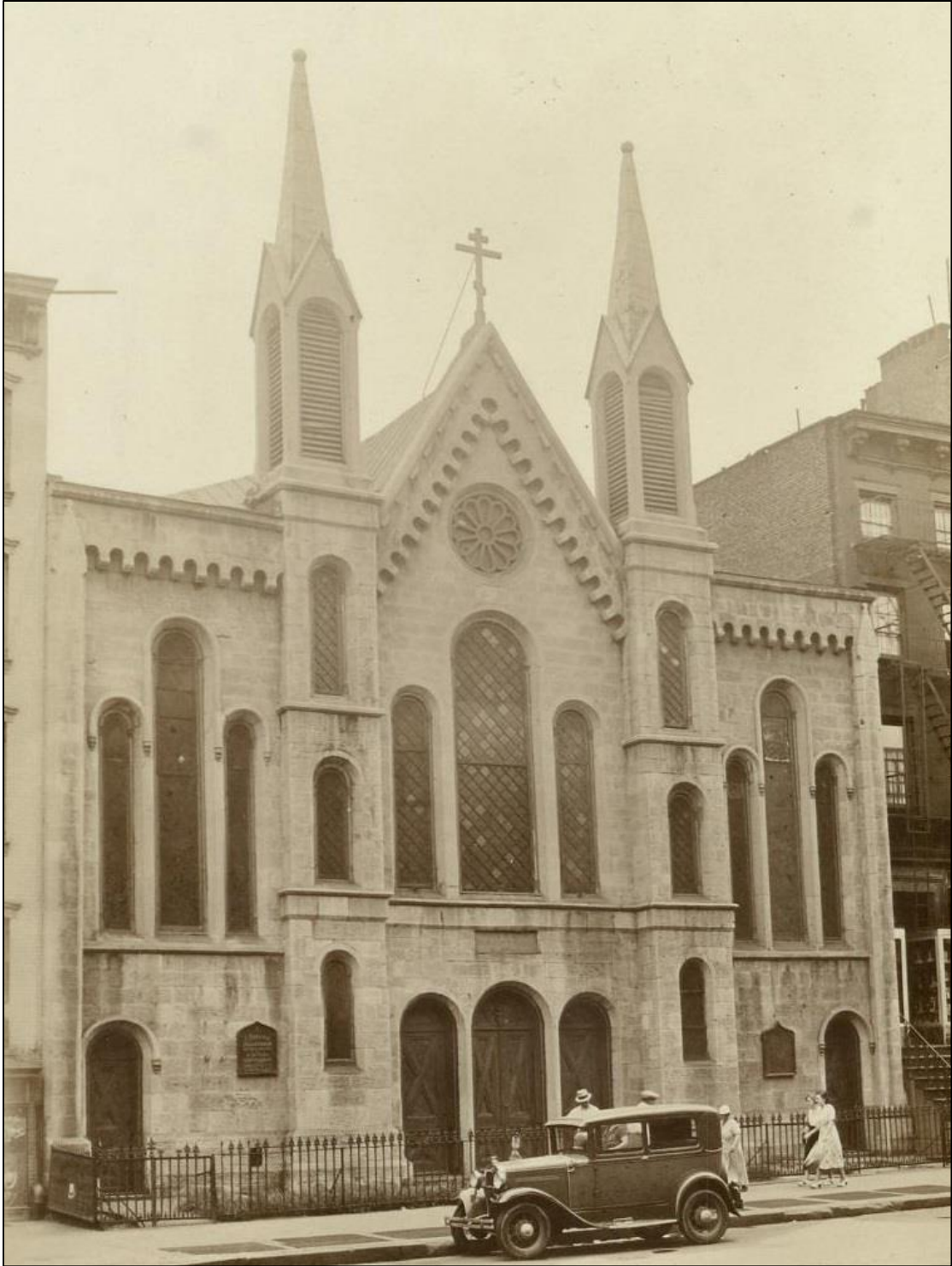


**Detail from a birds'-eye view map showing the First German Baptist Church**

Will L. Taylor, *The City of New York*, 1879

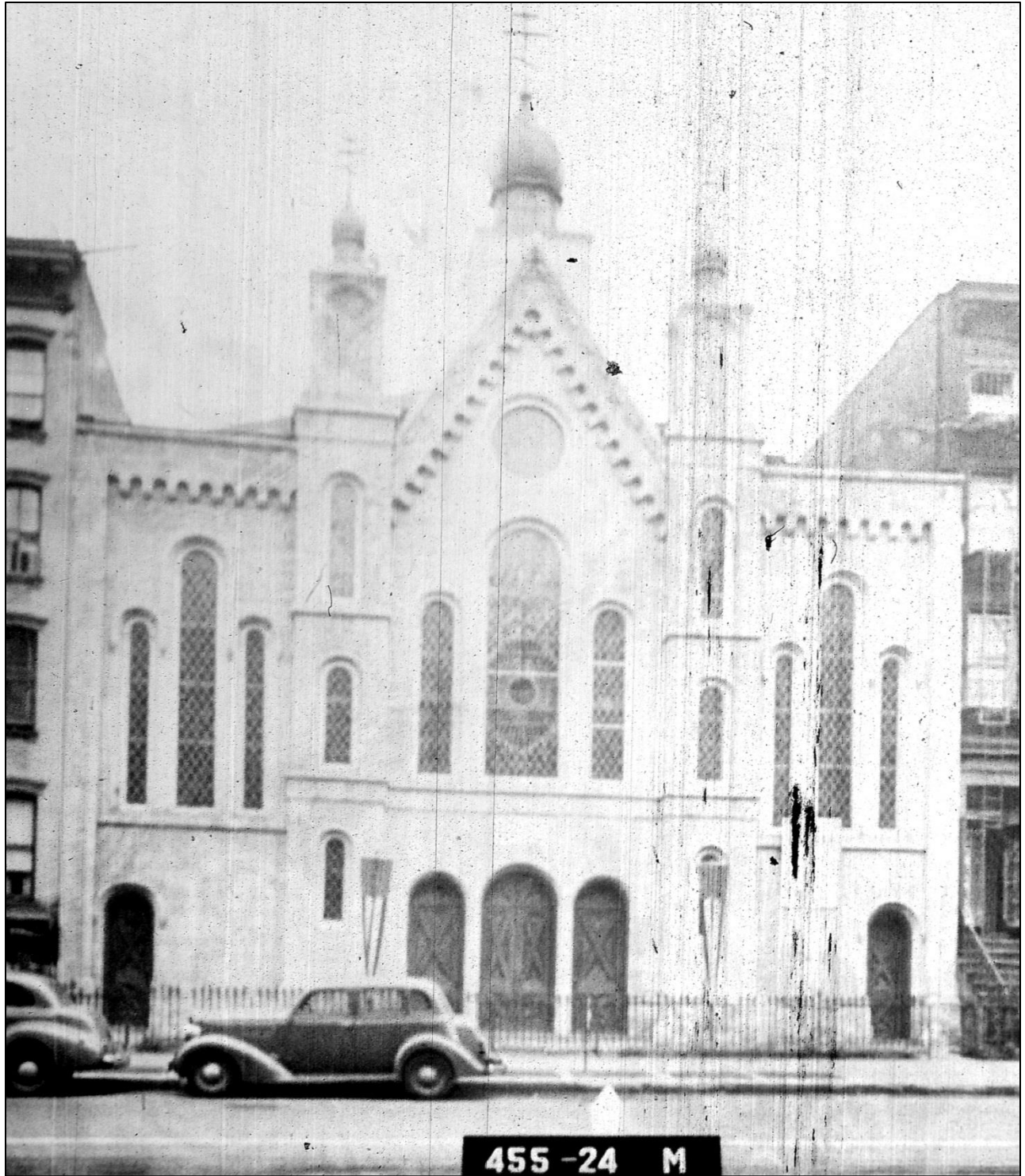
Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division





**First German Baptist Church**

Percy L. Sperr, "Manhattan 14<sup>th</sup> Street (East) – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue," 1936  
*Source: New York Public Library, Photographic Views of New York City*

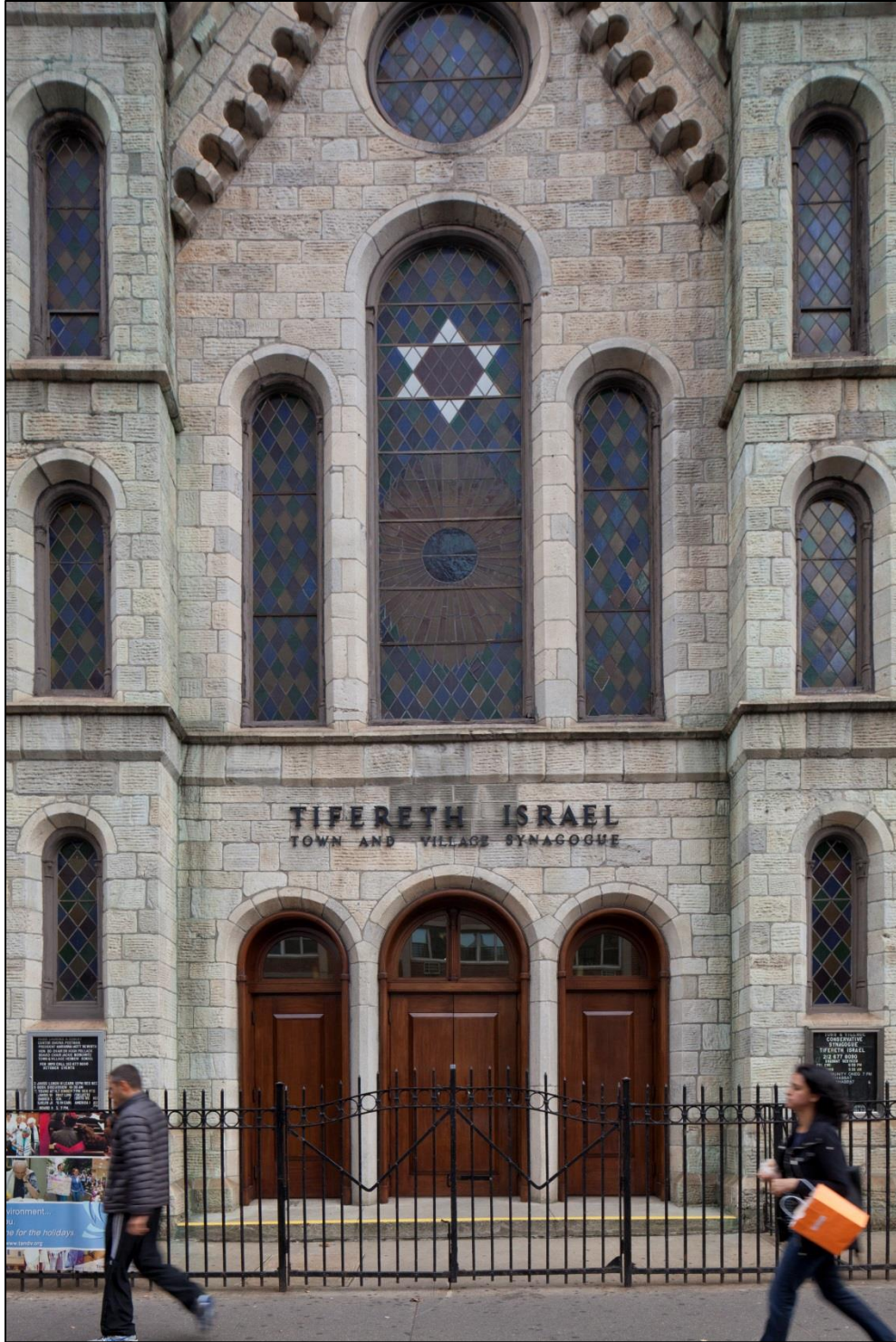


**First German Baptist Church**  
**Following 1939-40 alterations for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr**  
New York City Department of Taxes Photograph, c. 1940  
*Source: NYC Department of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archives*



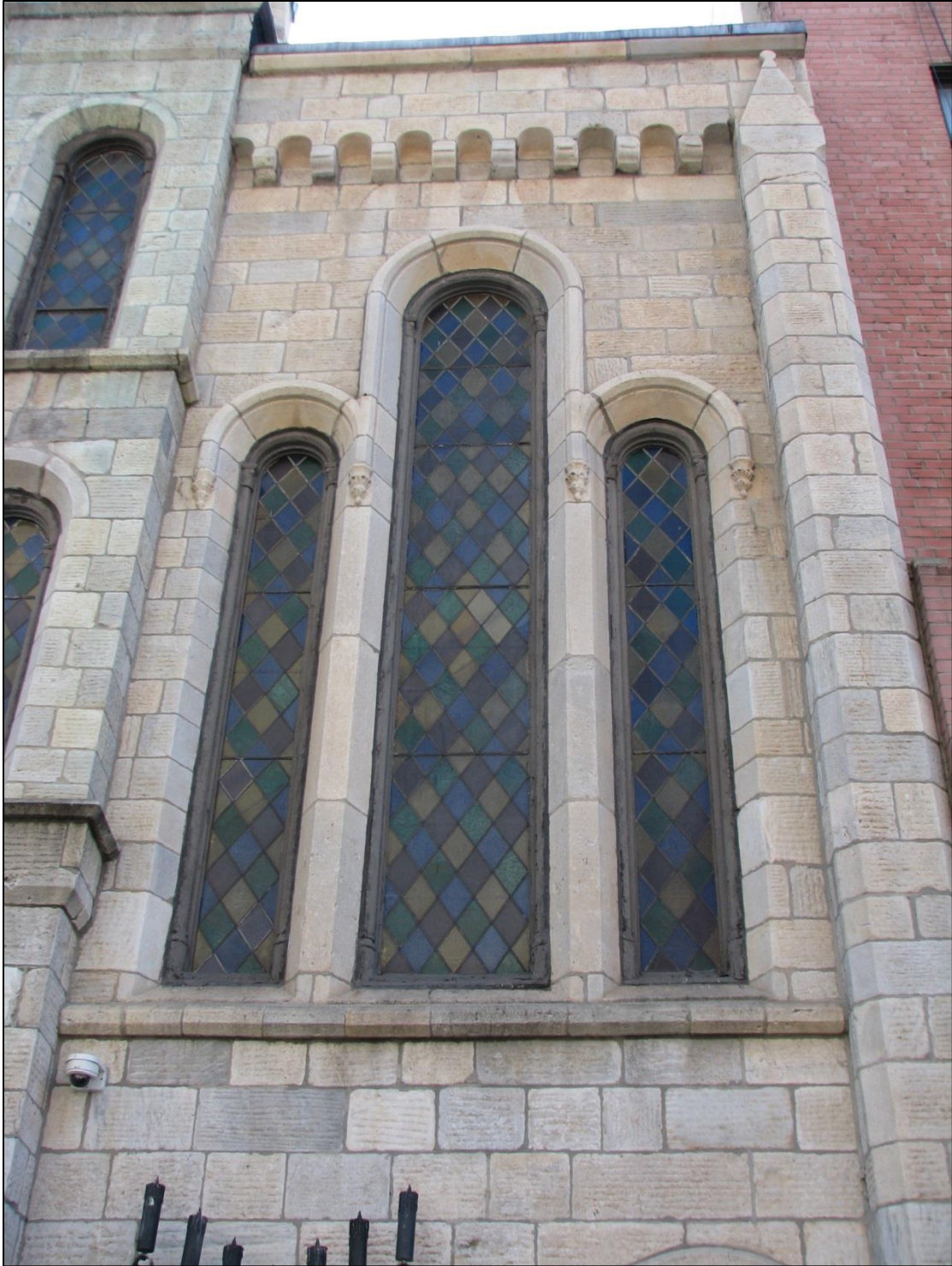
**First German Baptist Church**  
**Adapted for Congregation Teferith Israel – Town and Village Synagogue**  
*Photo: John Barrington Bailey, c. 1965*





**First German Baptist Church**  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2013*



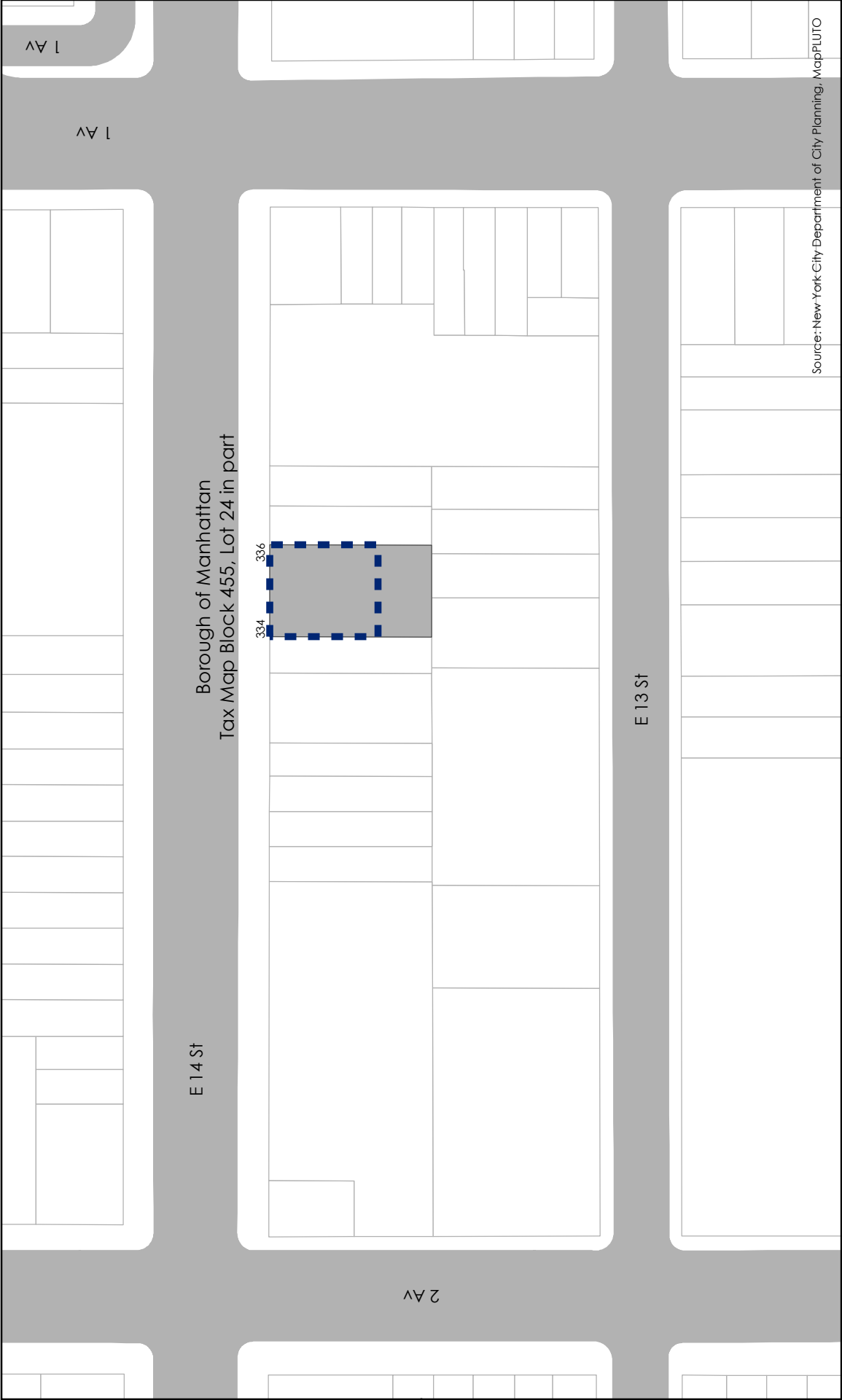


**First German Baptist Church**  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2014*



**First German Baptist Church**  
*Photo: Gale Harris, 2014*





**First German Baptist Church**

**(later Ukrainian Autocephalic Church of St. Volodymyr/later Congregation Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue)**

334 East 14th Street (aka 334-336 East 14th Street), Manhattan

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 455, Lot 24 in part, beginning at a point at the northwest corner of lot 24, proceeding south along the western lot line for 69 feet 8 inches, then east at a 90 degree angle through the lot to the eastern lot line, then north along the eastern lot to the northeast corner of the lot, then west along the northern lot line of the lot to the point of beginning

Designated: October 28, 2014 (LP-2475)