

North Shore Synagogue

Kings Point, New York

I

ALEXANDER GORLIN ARCHITECTS HAS DESIGNED A HIDDEN SANCTUARY, REPLETE WITH BIBLICAL AND MYSTICAL SYMBOLS.

By Michael J. Crosbie

Project: North Shore Synagogue, Kings Point, New York

Architect: Alexander Gorlin Architects—Jason Federbush, project architect; Stephen Ray Fellman Architect, associate architect; Alexander Gorlin, Glenn Goble, David Gissen, Brendan Cotter, design team

Client: North Shore Hebrew Academy

Engineer: Ross Dalland, P.E.

Consultants: Kugler-Tillotson (lighting); Scarborough Acoustics, Inc. (acoustical); Sheldon Lazan (HVAC); The Sear-Brown Group (site engineer)

Stained glass: Alexander Gorlin Architects

General contractor:

P.J. Wyer Construction, Inc.

Size: 5,000 square feet

Cost: \$1.25 million

Sources

Exterior cladding: Belden Stark (brick masonry)

Roofing: Carlyle (elastomeric)

Windows: Kawneer (aluminum)

Glazing: Viracon

Skylights: Exarc Skylights

Doors: Kawneer

Metal doors: Aileron Design

WWW

For additional places of worship and more information on the people and products involved in this project, go to Building Types Study at www.architecturalrecord.com

Program

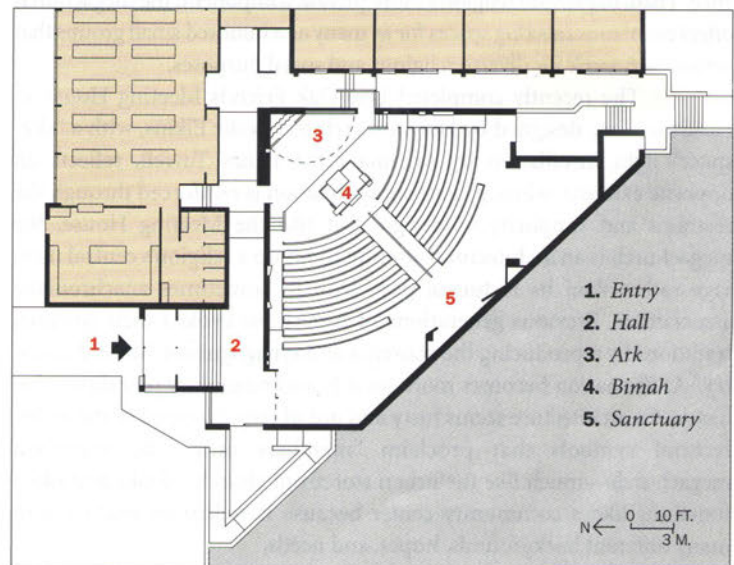
Orthodox Jews in Kings Point, Long Island, needed a place to worship. The closest synagogue was accessible only by car, the use of which is prohibited on the Sabbath. The North Shore Hebrew Academy was close by, but had no worship space. The academy was in need of an auditorium for its 1958 facility—a former public school. Could both needs be filled with a single, small addition?

Architect Alexander Gorlin's sensitive insertion needed to fill all the program requirements for worship, but had to do so within a height of 45 feet above sea level. The existing grade was already at 27 feet, which left a scant 18 feet in which to call forth some semblance of the sacred. The exterior design also had to honor the rather bland brick style of the original. The new addition, built into the side of a hill, seats 210 and is used every Sabbath and holiday for this congregation of families.

Solutions/Intentions

The design occupies the corner of two of the academy's classroom wings. A modest entrance pokes its way under the shallow-slope roofs of the Eisenhower-era building, doing little to prepare one for the mystical space within. Where he couldn't raise the bridge, the archi-

Michael J. Crosbie is the editor of the journal *Faith and Form*, and an architect with Steven Winter Associates.



tect lowered the river. He sank the floor to gain height, and at the ceiling spun a thread of colored light with custom stained-glass clerestory windows of his design.

According to the synagogue's rabbi, Marvin Tokayer, the use of colored light through the windows lends

a sense of awe. The interior wall and roof surfaces appear in flux, sliding past each other. One brass-paneled wall actually pivots and rolls back to cover and protect the ark when the sanctuary is used as an auditorium.

For the sanctuary's central focus, Gorlin evokes a passage from