



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 237/23

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

Name and Address of Property: **Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ**
1915 E Fir Street

Legal Description: Lots 9 and 10, Block 21 of H.L. Yesler's 1st Addition to the City of Seattle, according to plat recorded in volume 1 of plats, page 215, in King County, Washington.

At the public meeting held on June 21, 2023 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ at 1915 E Fir Street as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- A. *It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.*
- B. *It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.*
- C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.*
- D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.*
- E. *It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.*
- F. *Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

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DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Sephardic Bikur Holim (currently Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ) religious facility is located in the Central District neighborhood of Seattle, Washington (see figures A1 and A2). Topography in the area is slightly hilly with an elevation that ascends to 20th Avenue, peaks, then descends heading east into a valley. A mix of single-family residences, townhouses, and apartment buildings are in the immediate vicinity, with a commercial district one block south on East Yesler Way. The property is located on the southwest corner of East Fir Street and 20th Avenue and has a grassy lawn on the north and east sides and a paved parking lot on the south and west sides of the property (see figures A3, and E1).

The building has an area of 4,808 square feet with two stories and a basement, wood-frame construction, a concrete foundation, brown-beige brick veneer cladding, a rectangular plan, asymmetrical composition, and a flat roof with a character-defining parapet wall that features gables marking the front (north) and back (south) entrances and the east and west façades. Concrete stairs rise from a sidewalk on the south side of East Fir Street and lead to a two-story projection with a recessed front entry. A large cast stone decorative arch with a tripartite arch at the front entry, 12 tall semicircular arched windows, and Art Deco buttressing are significant features of the building. Many decorative elements that represent the Jewish history of the building remain intact including a Ten Commandments tablet above the front entrance, a six-pointed Star of David on the east facade, and 13 six-pointed Stars of David inlaid in cast stone above the arched windows. The building and ornamentation are an eclectic mix of Lombard Romanesque, Rundbogenstil, and Art Deco styles.

The building possesses a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. There are no structural alterations to the exterior of the building, and the interior has been respectfully remodeled over time to serve the needs of the property owners. Decorative elements throughout the building convey both its early use as a Jewish synagogue and later use as Christian church. As a result, the 93-year-old building clearly contributes to the significance to the religious, ethnic, and cultural history of the Central Area and Seattle.

Existing Site Conditions

The building is located in the Mann neighborhood in the Central District of Seattle. The Yesler-Atlantic neighborhood was part of Seattle's urban renewal and Model Cities programs, which spanned from 1969 to 1974. These federal and local efforts to improve urban environments resulted in demolition of "blighted" housing and commercial structures in the Yesler-Atlantic "T", immediately south of the property along East Yesler Way. The development pattern along Yesler Way has full-block development sites that are a legacy of urban renewal's removal of single-family residences and small apartments. The subject property is currently zoned Lowrise

3 (M), as are the blocks to the north, east, and west. The subject block has a split-zone, and shifts from Lowrise 3 (M) to Neighborhood Commercial 1-55 (M) to the south of the property, adjacent to the multifamily / commercial district along East Yesler Way. South of East Yesler Way the blocks are zoned Multifamily Residential Commercial (M1), Lowrise 3 (M), and Neighborhood Commercial 1-55 (M). The neighborhood has a strong multi-family residential character with a mix of new construction townhouses, two- to three-story apartment buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s, and four-story mixed-use apartment buildings with ground-floor retail and services that were built in the last few decades. One- to three-story commercial buildings remain along East Yesler Way. Institutions in the area are a former synagogue building (Herzl) that now houses the First Place Charter School and the Seattle Classical Christian School, one block north of the property on 20th Avenue. The Rotary Boys and Girls Club is two blocks northwest. Several churches are within a two-block radius. Pratt Park is one block south, and Spruce Street Mini Park is two blocks northeast. Both parks were built with funding from the federal Model Cities program. The Douglass-Truth Branch Library is four blocks east, and the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (another building originally built as a synagogue – “Chevra Bikur Cholim”) is three blocks west.

Oriented to the north, the building is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of East Fir Street and 20th Avenue. The site consists of Lots 9-10, Block 21, H.L. Yesler’s 1st Addition, to form a parcel of 15,360 square feet or 0.35 acres. The topography of the site is relatively flat, and sharply descends east of 20th Avenue. The first-floor elevation is approximately five feet above the street level. The building has four entrances; the primary building entrance is located on the north façade, with one secondary entrance on the north façade and two secondary entrances on the south façade. There also is a basement-level service entrance on the south façade. Concrete sidewalks surround the property on East Fir Street and 20th Avenue (see figures B1, B2, and B5). A concrete paved parking lot spans the south and west sides of the property, accessed by two entrances off of East Fir Street and 20th Avenue (see figures B7 and B8). A grass lawn borders the north and east facades of the building. A bush at the northeast corner of the property is the only notable planting. Behind the bush, a large freestanding sign identifies the Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ. A chain link fence runs the length of the western boundary of the property. A chain link fence extends from the north façade of the building, perpendicular to and meeting the fence on the western edge, enclosing the paved driveway that lies west of the building. A chain link fence extends from the east façade of the building enclosing and securing the parking lot that lies to the south of the building.

Building Exterior

The building is a brick veneer, two-story, wood-frame structure with cast stone trim in a Lombard Romanesque / Rundbogenstil (“round arch”) style with Art Deco elements. The building rises from a concrete foundation, has a partial basement, and is rectangular in plan, measuring 50’ by 100’. The primary front entrance doors on East Fir Street are recessed 10’ from the façade of the building, and measures 17’ in length. A covered front porch projects on the north side of the building. A secondary entrance at the northeast corner of the building is

recessed 2' from the north façade and measures 11' in length (see figures D1-D7 for the 1929 architectural drawings by W.G. Brust, Jr.).

The overall massing and asymmetrical composition of the building reflects the layout of the primary and secondary functions. The primary entrance on the north façade divides the building into two unequal and differently treated parts. The sanctuary, the primary religious worship space in the building, occupies the eastern two-thirds of the first and second floors of the structure, and has a two-story interior volume.

North façade

East of the primary entrance, a group of four one-and-one-half-story tall windows visually identifies the sanctuary space and suggests the existence of a monumental interior space behind the façade (see figures B3-B5 and B10). The tall and narrow paired windows with replacement sashes are separated by a colonette, framed by cast stone round-topped arches and colonettes that provide a trim detail. Jewish Stars of David are embedded in the arches above the windows. The tall windows are character-defining features of the structure. The building steps back two feet at the northeast corner. A secondary entrance is connected to the sidewalk by a series of shallow concrete stairs. A semicircular arched window is above the entrance door.

The main entrance, a character-defining element of the building, dominates the north facade and strengthens its expression by projecting forward of the main building mass (see figures B11 and B12). Brick and concrete pedestals that once supported lighting fixtures flank the steps accessing the entry portico (see figures C9 and D4). The entrance is framed by a two-story cast stone arch. Three arches with cast stone ionic columns separate the stairs from the porch and distinguish the entrance. Jewish Stars of David are inset into the column capitals (see figure B14). Six arches supported by three colonettes are inset into the grand arch and add a decorative element above the entrance at the level of the second story. Four wooden doors lead into the lobby and central corridor (see figures B12 and B13). Jewish Stars of David, carved in wood, are decorative elements affixed on the doors. Semicircular brick arches with a distinctive basket weave pattern provide ornamentation above the doors. Simplified Art Deco buttresses finish the projecting portions at the entrance and on the building corners. The recessed entrance portico, the stone columns and articulated stone facing around the entry add a sense of monumentality and “presence” to the entrance sequence. A stone tablet with two arched segments is inset into the brick above the entry arch (see figure B11). Historically, the tablet was etched with Hebrew letters representing the Ten Commandments. The letters have been removed but the tablet remains. The projecting entry bay has a gabled parapet wall, which differentiates the space from the flat parapet wall on the rest of the building’s north facade.

To the west of the primary entrance one one-and-a-half-story tall window mimics the sanctuary windows. However, the interior space contains two stories of office and multi-purpose spaces.

The simplicity of the beige-brown striated brick veneer facades is relieved by restrained Art Deco-style detailing at the upper portions of the main corners of the building and the corners of the projected main entrance mass. The half-round arch detailing of the articulated stonework at the main entrance and the stone trim at the head of the tall windows recalls imagery of Hagia Sofia, located in Istanbul, Turkey, suggestive of the Turkish heritage of the building's original congregants.

Patterned brickwork at the parapet is suggestive of what might have been a more articulated cornice design had the building budget allowed. Stone blocks engraved with the names of major donors to the Sephardic Bikur Holim building fund were inset into the brick on the lower portion of the north and east façades. Those original markers were removed and replaced with stones associated with the building's contemporary use as Tolliver Temple. Today, the stones memorialize the Jenkins family, Rev. R. Byrd, Rev. Tobie Dennis, Carrie Reece [sic], and Genever Tolliver. Two stones mark the dedication of Tolliver Temple on November 1, 1963 under the leadership of Pastor Bishop L. E. Tolliver and church trustees J.W. Heflin, L.C. Jones, and Ernest Malone (see figure B15).

East Façade

Three tall arched windows replicate the same pattern as the sanctuary windows on the north façade (see figures B5 and B6). Art Deco-style buttresses project at the northeast and southeast building corners. A gabled parapet wall projects above the flat roof behind and adds visual interest and monumentality to the east façade. A stone Jewish Star of David is inset into the brickwork above the windows within the gable. Three stone blocks engraved with the names of significant Tolliver Temple members are inset into the brick on the lower portion of the east façade. They memorialize the Heflin family, the Malone family, and Alice Williams.

South Façade

An asymmetrical composition divides the façade in accordance with the primary and secondary functions of the building (see figures B7 and B8). Like the north façade, a primary entrance projects slightly, has Art Deco-style buttresses at the corners of the projection, and is marked by a decorative gabled parapet wall. The entrance is simpler and less ornate than at the front (north) of the building. Double doors lead into the entry corridor and stairway. A window above the doors replicates the sanctuary window pattern but is half the size. To the east of the entrance is a group of four tall semicircular arched windows that mark the location of the sanctuary in a pattern that mimics the north façade (see figure B16).

The building steps back two feet at the southeast corner. A secondary entrance is connected to the parking lot by a series of shallow concrete stairs. A semicircular arched window lies above the entrance door. An ADA ramp provides access to the door.

To the west of the entrance four windows show the interior layout of the building's secondary functions of office and multipurpose spaces occupying two stories of the west one-third of the building. On the first floor, two windows (replaced) are inset into rectangular openings. On the

second floor are two sets of paired, wood-framed windows each topped by a quarter-circle arched window with original stained-glass lights (see figure B17).

Windows that provide light into the partial basement are visible in the concrete foundation on the south façade (see figures B7 and B8).

West Façade

The fenestration on the west façade reveals the interior layout of the building's secondary functions of office and multipurpose spaces occupying two stories of the west one-third of the building (see figures B8 and B9). On the first floor four windows (replaced) are inset into rectangular openings. On the second floor there are four sets of paired, wood-framed windows each topped by a quarter-circle arched window with original stained-glass lights. Art Deco-style buttresses project at the northwest and southwest building corners. A gabled parapet wall projects above the flat roof behind and adds visual interest and monumentality to the west façade.

A small window that provides light into the partial basement is visible in the concrete foundation on the west façade (see figure B9).

Building Interior

The interior spaces are programmed according to the primary function of a religious facility with a sanctuary for worship services and secondary functions of offices, classrooms, a social hall, and restrooms (see figures E1 and E2 for basic building sketch maps). The building consists of an elevated main floor, a second floor, and a partial-width finished basement. The building retains much of its original plan, circulation patterns, spaces, and features that distinguish its first function as an orthodox synagogue. Interior stylistic embellishments are most prominently displayed in the sanctuary and in the entry corridor light fixtures. Decorative woodwork, columns, column capitals, and several light fixtures are original to the building construction (see figures D1-D7 for the 1929 architectural drawings by W.G. Brust, Jr.)

Entry Corridor & Circulation

The primary front entrance doors that face East Fir Street enter into a wide corridor or lobby that bisects the building (see figure B19). This double-loaded corridor accesses the voluminous sanctuary to the east; a secondary corridor lined with enclosed offices and other spaces to the west; and the main staircase that connects all levels of the building to the south. The entry corridor retains the original ceiling height and open spatial arrangement. Two original, branched, multi-light fixtures each hang by a linked chain from the ceiling to illuminate the space (see figures B19 and B20). The fixtures reflect an Art Deco-inspired zig-zag motif and are among the few flourishes of the style carried through to the interior. Door and window openings are trimmed with painted, square-edge, back band casings. Similar painted baseboards trim the carpeted floor. The U-shaped staircase at the south end is open between

the main and second floors. The double doors on the building's south façade enter at the main staircase landing between the main floor and basement.

Sanctuary

Two sets of swinging doors on the east wall of the entry corridor access the sanctuary (see figures B19 and B24). The impressive worship space occupies the eastern two-thirds of the building and has a two-story volume (see figures B21-22 and B24). The sanctuary maintains all of the original features that are distinguishing characteristics of a traditional Sephardic Orthodox synagogue: an eastern orientation to fulfill the religious commandment to face east toward Jerusalem while praying; an elevated pulpit; a proscenium arch that housed the ark holding the sacred Torah scrolls; and the U-shaped balcony along the north, south, and western perimeter of the sanctuary where women sit separate from men, as per orthodox tradition.

The focal point of the sanctuary space is the impressive proscenium arch (see figures B21- B22, C9, and C12-14). The ark that held the sacred Torah scrolls was removed from this space when it was converted to a church in 1963. Gold-painted trim with a rope motif accents the round-arch opening (see figure B23). This stylized trim is also found on the highly decorative square columns on the first and second floors, which also feature gold-painted scrolled and floriated capitals (see figure B25). The first-floor columns also have wall bracket light fixtures. The sanctuary is illuminated by a large chandelier light fixture hanging by a link chain near the center of the space and several smaller hanging fixtures. Natural light streams through the many tall windows on the north, south, and east walls. Most door and window openings are trimmed with painted, square-edge, back band casings, similar to what is found in the entry corridor.

Several rows of pews are arranged around center and side aisles on the main floor and face east toward the proscenium arch and pulpit (see figures B21 and B26). The pews replaced theater-style seating in the 1980s or 1990s (see figure C29). Five original risers access the area within the proscenium arch that originally housed the pulpit (see figure B22). The pulpit is now situated on a platform that extends from the third riser and is enclosed by a low, wood-paneled parapet. The space within the proscenium arch includes three rows of pews that face west toward the congregation. On either sidewall of the proscenium arch is a door accessing an enclosed space with a staircase leading to the second-floor balcony (see figure B23).

Main-floor Offices & Secondary Spaces

According to the 1929 architectural drawings, the west one-third of the building's main floor functioned as a large, open "social room," (see figure D2). During the early Tolliver Temple era, this area was used for weekday church services. In recent years, under the leadership of Pastor O.J. Jenkins, this space was subdivided to include offices, restrooms, and secondary functional spaces. As a result, this area is the most-altered space in the building. Currently, an L-shaped, double-loaded corridor off the entry lobby accesses these spaces (see figure B27). The doorway trim and floorboards of the corridor are restrained and similar to what is found in the lobby.

Second-floor Spaces

Three original staircases access the second floor: the lobby's main central stair and two enclosed stairs on either side of the proscenium arch at the east end of the building. The main staircase opens into a wide, double-loaded corridor that leads to the sanctuary balcony to the east; a multi-purpose social hall to the west; and a kitchen and restroom to the north (see figure B28).

A pair of wood-paneled swinging doors on the east wall of the corridor accesses the balcony (see figure B28). Three rows of newer theater-style seating occupy the north, south, and west parts of the balcony. The seats are situated on risers (see figure B29). A clear-panel balcony railing has replaced a shorter wood-panel parapet.

A pair of wood-and-glass-paneled swinging doors on the west wall of the corridor accesses a multi-purpose social hall (see figure B30). This space occupies the entire west one-third of the building's second floor, and it originally functioned as a large, open classroom that could be subdivided into two rooms by folding doors (see figure B31). The room is illuminated by natural light pouring through the original arched windows on the north, south, and west walls (see figure C17a). Non-historic, ceiling-mounted fluorescent lights also provide light. The door and window trim and baseboards remain unpainted, setting it apart from other painted trim throughout the building. A pass-through window at the northeast corner of the room connects to the kitchen.

At the north end of the corridor, four risers lead to a restroom and kitchen (see figures B32 and B33). The 1929 architectural drawings show no risers or kitchen at this location and a slightly smaller floorplan for the restrooms. Today, a sitting room attached to the restroom extends farther into the central corridor. The L-shaped kitchen wraps around the restroom, and an opening on its west wall functions as a pass-through to the multi-purpose social hall. Although the kitchen and pass-through window are not original features, they were in place by the 1950s (see figure C17b).

Basement

The main central staircase accesses the basement (see figures B34 and B35). The finished spaces occupy only a small area at the southwest corner of the building on either side of the staircase. The spaces and their functions have changed little. Many early features, such as doors, wood trim and baseboards, and ceiling heights remain, although some finish materials (such as flooring) have been replaced in areas. A single-loaded corridor situated perpendicular to the staircase accesses a small kitchen and restroom to the west and an enclosed, unfinished mechanical room to the east. This mechanical room can also be accessed via an exterior basement door on the building's south side (see figures B8 and B18).

Alterations and Change Over Time

The property has been respectfully remodeled over time to accommodate the evolving needs of the owners. The known changes are documented below from a mix of primary sources, oral history accounts, and field observations.

Exterior Alterations

- Sometime after 1979, most of the original windows were removed and aluminum replacement units were installed. Twelve pairs of tall, double-arch windows on the north, south, and east sides have replacement units in the original openings. Six pairs of main-level windows on the west and south sides have downsized replacement units within the original openings. Other smaller single and paired windows on the north and south sides have been replaced. (Extant original windows include six pairs of upper-level arched wood windows on the west and south sides and two small arched windows on the above the north primary entrance.)

Interior Alterations

- The ark that held the sacred Torah scrolls, housed within the sanctuary's proscenium arch, was removed when the building transitioned from a synagogue to a church in 1963 (see figures B21- B22, C9, and C12-14).
- The pulpit was originally situated on the top riser at the proscenium arch. A pulpit platform was installed after 1963, and it extends from the third riser in front of the proscenium arch. It is enclosed by a low, wood-paneled parapet (see figures B22 and C9).
- Several key alterations noted below were made in recent decades under the leadership of current pastor O. J. Jenkins:
 - The west one-third of the main-floor space originally functioned as a "social room," according to Brust's 1929 architectural plans. This space was subdivided to include offices, restrooms, and secondary functional spaces (see figure B27). This is the most-altered space in the building.
 - The rows of sanctuary pews on the main floor of the sanctuary replaced theater-style seating and new seating was installed in the balcony in the 1980s or 1990s (see figures B26, B29, and C29).
 - A wood-paneled parapet originally formed the balcony railing, but this was partially removed and replaced by a taller, clear-panel railing (see figures B29 and C16).
- The second-floor restrooms were reconfigured and a kitchen was added. It is not clear when these changes were made, but oral history suggests these changes were made by the mid-1950s.

Despite these alterations, the building is able to clearly convey its significance to the religious and social history of Seattle's Jewish and Black communities. There are no exterior structural alterations and only minimal changes to the original exterior ornamentation. The interior layout is intact and its primary function, the sanctuary, retains its two-story volume, U-shaped balcony structure, eastern orientation, proscenium arch, columns, and column capitals.

SIGNIFICANCE

The place of worship at 1915 E. Fir Street originated as the Sephardic Bikur Holim synagogue, erected by Turkish-Sephardic Jewish immigrants in 1929 for religious, educational, social, and cultural purposes. It is one of the few clearly visible vestiges of Jewish life left in the Central District. Since 1963, it has served as the home of Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ, a predominately African-American congregation with roots in the Great Migration of the early 20th century. Collectively, the building reflects the stories of two independent Seattle communities that originated in the Central District and illustrates how multiple narratives can resonate from a single place. In addition to its spiritual, cultural, and intellectual importance to both communities, the building is notable for its design by Seattle architect W. G. Brust, Jr.

Neighborhood Context

Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ is located in Seattle's Central District, also known as the Central Area. The area lies between downtown Seattle to the west and Lake Washington to the east. One of the first and oldest residential areas of Seattle, the area is loosely bounded by East Madison Street to the north, Jackson Street to the south, Martin Luther King Jr. Way to the east, and 12th Avenue to the west.

The Coast Salish are the first known inhabitants of present-day Central District. The Lake People (Xatchua'bsh), a band of the Duwamish, lived in settlements ringing the shores of Lake Washington, including the area that we now recognize as the Central District. Carson Boren and Henry L. Yesler were the first white settlers to take possession of land in the Central District. In the mid-1800s the Central District was logged; the elevation of the Central District's hills was used to skid the logs down to Henry Yesler's sawmill at the western terminus of Mill Street, later renamed Yesler Way (Henry, 2001). In 1882, Yesler filed Land Claim No. 42 for a tract of land in the Central District. By 1884, transportation services were provided by a wagon line that ran daily between downtown and Lake Washington on Jackson Street. Seattle's first cable car line opened in 1888 and traveled east from downtown along Yesler Way to Lake Washington, returning west along Jackson Street. The streetcar line opened up the area to development. Yesler platted portions of his land claim as the H. L. Yeslers First Addition, filed on October 7, 1882 (see figures A4 and A5). Tolliver Temple is located on Lots 9 and 10 in Block 21 of this plat. A working-class residential neighborhood quickly grew around the streetcar. Churches, synagogues, hospitals, schools, fire stations, and a public library were built in the Central District around the turn of the century.

An 1893 Sanborn Map shows the future location of the building on the northeastern corner of Block 5808 (see figure A6). At the time, the street names bounding the block were Lake Street to the north, East Street to the east, Yesler to the south, and Squire to the west. The original streets were renamed in 1895. In 1893, Block 5808 contained only two residential buildings and three sheds. However, just five years after the electric streetcar began service, the area had a substantial amount of residential development. Half of the properties on Block 5805 and two-

thirds of Block 5806 were developed, and Block 5809 was almost fully built. The south side of Yesler Way reflected a denser development pattern, with a seven-unit building occupying the entire street-facing portion of Block 5811. A 1905 Sanborn Map shows continued development on all of the blocks, with the north side of East Fir Street and the north side of East Spruce Street completely filled in. Several vacant parcels remained (see figure A7). By the 1930s, only a few vacant parcels remained (see figure A8). The 1951 Sanborn Map shows that the Jewish population had established institutions in the area, with Sephardic Bikur Holim on the southwest corner of 20th Avenue and East Fir Street and Herzl Congregation synagogue one block north on 20th Avenue and East Spruce Street (see figure A9).

Nearby properties that are designated as City of Seattle landmarks include Providence Hospital 1910 Building, 528 17th Avenue; Garfield High School, 400 23rd Avenue; Douglass-Truth Library, 2300 E Yesler Way; Yesler Houses, 103, 107 and 109 23rd Avenue S.; William Grose Center / former Fire Station #6, 101 23rd Avenue S.; Washington Hall, 153 14th Avenue; Chevra Bikur Cholim / Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, 104 17th Avenue S; and Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1634 19th Avenue.

Central District: Settlement Patterns, Discrimination, and Demographics

Census data shows that the Central District has been the historic home of many racial, ethnic, and religious minorities since the early 1890s. Early settlement patterns were influenced by proximity to Seattle's Central Business District. Yesler's sawmill, railroad yards, shipping, and maritime activities on Elliott Bay, operating fruit, vegetable, and fish stalls at the Pike Place Market, and other neighborhood-based merchant activities provided job opportunities for immigrant and minority populations that were excluded from Seattle's more white-collar commercial settings.

Settlement patterns in the early- and mid-20th century were increasingly shaped by discriminatory housing policies of the federal and local governments aimed at racial and ethnic minorities. The city's first-known racial restrictive covenant was filed in 1924 by the Goodwin Company for an area in north Seattle's Victory Heights neighborhood (Silva, 2009, n.p.). Hundreds of similar discriminatory covenants were attached to deeds throughout King County over the next quarter-century, resulting in few options outside of the Central District for racial and ethnic minority residents to own or rent property. They were further constrained by disinvestment in the banking and mortgage industry. The Homeowners Loan Corporation published a "Grade of Security" map in 1936 that rated the financial risk of an area, primarily based on the concentration of minority populations. Commonly referred to as the "Redlining Map," the Central Area was demarcated in red and labeled 'Hazardous,' effectively halting investment and lending and increasing poverty and blight in the area. This structural racism, coupled with biased real estate practices, limited the options of where in the city African Americans, Jews, and Asians could own and rent property, thus restricting their movement beyond the Central District, which had remained mostly free of racial restrictive property covenants (Silva, 2009, n.p.). In 1968, the federal Fair Housing Act and Seattle's Ordinance 96619 prohibited discrimination in housing, and the demographics of the Central District

profoundly changed in subsequent years as residents could more freely relocate to other parts of the city.

Jewish Demographics

From 1890 until about World War I, the Central District was a predominantly Jewish area (Henry, 2001; Veith, 2009, pp. 40-42). Seattle's Jewish residents originally settled in the downtown and Pioneer Square areas, then gradually shifted east into the Central District at the turn of the 20th century. The original Jewish settlers in Seattle were Ashkenazi Jews, having emigrated from Central and Eastern Europe starting in the late 1860s. Sephardic Jews first arrived in Seattle in 1902. The Jewish community as a whole established a hub along Yesler Way, initially around 12th Avenue. Over time, the population expanded east toward 24th Avenue, then shifted northeast to East Cherry Street and 26th Avenue. In 1910, there were approximately 4,500 Jews in Seattle — the vast majority of them Ashkenazi — equaling 1.9 percent of Seattle's total population of 237,194. At the time, 85 percent of the city's Jewish population, or about 3,825 people, lived in the Central District (Cohn, 1982, p. 32). German Jews congregated around the northern section of the Central District near Madison Street, while the Eastern European immigrants — along with the small number of Sephardic Jews at the time — clustered around Yesler Way. (Figure A10 is a map illustrating the distribution of Sephardic Jews in the Central District in 1939.) By 1940, the Jewish population increased to 10,300, or 2.6 percent of Seattle's 399,458-person population. The Central District continued to hold 85 percent of Seattle's Jewish residents (Cohn, 1982, p. 35). The Jewish community numbered 13,600 in 1960 and began to disperse from the Central District. By the early 1970s, most of the Jewish community's religious, educational, and social institutions had relocated out of the Central District, tracking the outmigration patterns of the community.

African American Demographics

African American settlement in the Central District began in 1882 when Black pioneer William Grose (1835-1898) bought a 12-acre parcel of land near East Madison Street and established his home on the site (Henry, 1998). Grose, a prominent landowner and leader, drew other African American families to settle in the area around his residence. By 1900, the East Madison Street area included "the largest concentration of black homeowners in the city," which counted 406 African Americans among Seattle's total population of 80,671 (Taylor, 1994, p. 19 and 25.) The city's small Black community gained nearly 1,900 new residents between 1900 and 1910 and another 600 by 1920. African Americans accounted for 0.9 percent of the city's total population of 315,312 in 1920 (Taylor, 1994, p. 51-52). By 1940, most of the city's 3,789 Black residents lived in four distinct areas in and around the Central District: the well-established East Madison Street area; the Jackson Street area (roughly between 12th Ave. S and 23rd Ave. S); the 26th Avenue community (south of Yesler); and the Cherry Street area (roughly between 15th Ave. S and 23rd Ave. S) (Veith, 2009, pp. 56-60). (Figure A11 is a map illustrating the distribution of African Americans in the Central District in 1939.) Between 1940 and 1950, the city's Black population grew 413 percent, from 3,789 to 15,666 (Taylor, 1994, 159). The percentage of Black residents living in the Central District increased from eight percent of the total neighborhood population in 1940 to 55 percent in 1960 (Veith, 2009, p. 60) (see figure A12). In 1970, 73.4

percent of the residents of the Central District were Black. In the decades following the passage of City Ordinance 96619 in 1968, which prohibited discrimination in housing, the Central District's Black population has declined, with a rapid and profound decrease from around 40 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2014 (Beason, 2016) to about 13 percent in 2021 (City of Seattle).

History of the Seattle Jewish Community: Early Settlement

Note: While this nomination involves a property that served Sephardic Jews almost exclusively, the building has historical significance to Seattle's Jewish community as a whole. Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish immigrant families lived together in the Central District, and this building is one of the last remaining properties in the Central District bearing architectural evidence that immigrant Jews settled in and once inhabited this neighborhood, and contributed greatly to its legacy. For that reason, this section of the narrative describes early Jewish settlement in Seattle prior to the arrival of the first Sephardic Jews in 1902.

The first wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-1800s. Originally from Central Europe, they migrated from the East Coast to California during the 1849 Gold Rush, then traveled north to Seattle to participate in the fish, fur, and lumber industries and related commerce. In 1869, when the entire population of Seattle numbered 1,100, there were three Ashkenazi Jewish families from Central Europe, and the first Jewish child was born in Seattle. Bailey Gatzert was elected Seattle's first — and still only — Jewish mayor in 1875 (WSJHS, 2006). By 1880, the Jewish population in Seattle had grown to 100 people (Cohn, 1982). The second wave of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants came from Eastern Europe in the 1880s to early 1900s. A third wave of Sephardic immigration began in 1902.

At the turn of the century, Eastern European Ashkenazic and Southern European / Mediterranean Sephardic Jews moved from downtown into the Central District. Settlement initially clustered around 12th Avenue and Yesler Way. The first Sephardic hub formed around 12th And Main Street (Adatto, 1939). The Yesler Way area took on visible signs of a Jewish enclave, with synagogues, religious schools, kosher butchers, bakeries, restaurants, coffee houses, and a movie theater that served the religious, social, and commercial needs of the Jewish neighborhood.

Between 1898 and 1933, eight synagogues, two mikvahs (ritual baths), and a funeral chapel were constructed in the Central Area. Synagogues were the center of Jewish communal life, and functioned as places for worship, lifecycle events, social activities, and education. Chevra Bikur Cholim, Temple De Hirsch, Herzl Congregation, and Congregation Machzikay Hadath built houses of worship for the Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative Ashkenazic denominations. Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, Ahavath Ahim Congregation, and Sephardic Bikur Holim organized to provide benevolent, religious, and social functions for the Sephardic community.

In response to being excluded from mainstream society's social organizations and to the immigration boom, Jewish community members formed their own organizations to provide

social, political, cultural, and recreational activities, and to support new immigrants. Women were instrumental in these efforts: the Seattle Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society, the city's first Jewish welfare organization, was formed in 1892, and the Seattle Section of the National Council of Jewish Women opened Settlement House as an educational center to acculturate and Americanize Ashkenazi and Sephardic immigrants in 1906.

Jewish students attended public schools in the Central District – South School, Pacific Elementary School, Washington School, Horace Mann, and Garfield High School. Hebrew and Jewish religious education was offered in afterschool and Sunday school programs through the synagogues and Talmud Torah.

History of Seattle Sephardic Jewish Community

In the early 20th century, Sephardic Jews began leaving their adopted homelands in Turkey and on the Greek island of Rhodes in order to escape religious persecution, political turmoil, and military conscription. Many resettled in Seattle to begin a new life in an upstart town, and formed a nascent Sephardic community in the Central District.

The Seattle Sephardic community dates back to 1902, when Solomon Calvo and Jacob Policar of Marmara, Turkey, became the first two Sephardic Jews to arrive in Seattle, following tales of abundant fishing opportunities in the Pacific Northwest. From 1906 to 1907, the Sephardic population tripled as political, economic, and religious conditions in the Ottoman Empire declined. By 1910, there were around 600 Sephardic Jews in Seattle. Following the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and World War I, Seattle gained the largest percentage of Sephardic Jews compared to the overall Jewish population of any city in the United States (Cohn, 1982). By 1916, Seattle's Sephardic community had grown to 1,500 people. Fifteen years later, Seattle had the second largest Sephardic population in the United States after New York. Now, Seattle is home to the third-largest Sephardic population in the United States, following New York and Los Angeles, with an estimated 4,000 people.

Due to differences in geographic origin, language, foodways, and religious customs, the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities remained relatively separate, despite living in close proximity in the Central District. In fact, when Calvo and Policar first arrived in Seattle, they had difficulty convincing their Ashkenazi brethren that they actually were Jews. While the Jews who had previously settled in Seattle spoke German or Yiddish, the young men spoke Ladino, also known as Judeo-Spanish. When, in an effort to prove themselves Jewish, Calvo and Policar read aloud from their prayer books, their pronunciation of Hebrew words was unfamiliar. Even to this day, Sephardic Jews are considered and treated as an ethnic minority within the religious minority of Seattle and world Jewry.

The Sephardic community in Seattle developed religious and social institutions separate from the Ashkenazi majority. Three Sephardic synagogues were established in the early 20th century, each with their own unique customs and religious practices reflecting the local communities from which they emigrated. Sephardic Bikur Holim incorporated in 1910 to serve the Turkish

immigrant community, primarily from Tekirdag. Congregation Ezra Bessaroth incorporated in 1914 to serve the Sephardic immigrants hailing from the island of Rhodes, and built a synagogue at 15th Avenue and East Fir Street in 1917. Ahavath Ahim Congregation was founded in 1922 by Seattle's earliest Sephardic settlers from Marmara, Turkey (Historylink, 1998), and eventually merged with Sephardic Bikur Holim in 1931.

Social, educational, and welfare organizations were established for the greater Sephardic community to participate in together. The Young Men's Sephardic Association (Y.M.S.A.) was founded in 1917 and became the leading men's club. A house was purchased on 14th Avenue and Yesler Way for club activities. The Seattle Progressive Fraternity replaced the Y.M.S.A. in 1921. The Fraternity focused on providing welfare support, education, Americanization, and citizenship programs. The Sephardic community became actively involved in the National Council of Jewish Women's Settlement House on 18th Avenue and Main Street (Adatto, 1939). In 1925, the Junior Sephardic League became an active social enterprise for the youth of the three synagogues. The Sephardic Brotherhood was founded in 1935 to provide a cemetery and burial services for all of Seattle's Sephardic Jews (Historylink, 1999). The Brotherhood continues to provide benevolent activities for the community, and operates the Seattle Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery in North Seattle.

Dating back to their origins in Spain, Sephardic Jews have infused energy into the larger community where they live — and that tradition has continued in Seattle. Several founding merchants of Pike Place Market were Sephardic Jews, with Pure Food Fish and Three Girls Bakery carrying that commercial legacy forward today. Sephardic Jews have advanced Seattle's arts and culture; Benaroya Hall, for example, is the namesake of a prominent Seattle Sephardic family. Sephardic Jews have contributed to the area's academic reputation with the renowned Sephardic Studies Program and Sephardic Studies Digital Collection at the University of Washington. Seattle's Sephardic community is recognized both nationally and internationally for having stayed closely aligned to its cultural, linguistic, culinary, and faith traditions. The community, for example, has been at the forefront in preserving Sephardic Jews' native Ladino dialect and passing it on to future generations.

Seattle's Sephardic community today centers around two synagogues in the Seward Park neighborhood, including Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation and Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, both relocated from their origins in the Central District. Sephardic Adventure Camp, which began through Rabbinic leadership and volunteers from Sephardic Bikur Holim, draws children from across the country and the world for a summertime immersion into Sephardic life. In 2019, Seattle hosted "Erensyia," a biennial gathering of Sephardic Jews from across the globe, with Sephardic Bikur Holim hosting an exhibit and community dinner during the four-day conference to welcome the delegates.

History and Significance of Sephardic Bikur Holim

In 1906, the Sephardic residents of Seattle organized religious services in a rented house on 10th Avenue and Yesler Way. A Torah scroll was borrowed from an Ashkenazi synagogue in

order to conduct the service. In 1910, a Sephardic mutual aid society was incorporated to serve members hailing primarily from Tekirdag and Marmara, Turkey. In 1911, two Torahs were purchased as an initial investment toward forming a synagogue. Community members raised \$800 to purchase the existing Chevra Bikur Holim synagogue building on 13th and Washington, which became available in 1914 when Chevra Bikur Cholim began construction of a new synagogue on 17th and Yesler Way (now the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center) (Micklin, 1998a). The immigrant Jews from Tekirdag financed the purchase of Sephardic Bikur Holim's first property. The new congregation was named Bikur Holim after the community's synagogue in Tekirdag. The official name was listed as: Spanish Hebrew Society and Congregation Bikur Holim. In addition to social support and religious services, the congregation offered a Hebrew language school and education programs. An after-school religious and Hebrew school was established as the Sephardic Talmud Torah.

By the middle of the 1920s, the synagogue building at 13th and Washington was too small for the rapid growth that the community experienced after World War I. As the Jewish population became more established, its residential patterns shifted eastward away from the enclave centered around the synagogue on 13th and Washington. Every Friday evening and Saturday community members observed the Jewish Sabbath, which prohibits driving and using other means of transportation. Therefore, the community sought a location for a new synagogue that would offer relief from the cramped quarters and provide walking distance proximity to the homes of congregants.

In 1924, Rabbi Abraham Maimon emigrated from Tekirdag, Turkey, to serve as spiritual leader of the community. He was an admired and respected Rabbi of the community's home congregation in Turkey, and his selection was greeted with great enthusiasm. The appointment of Rabbi Maimon occurred against the backdrop of Congress passing laws that severely limited foreign immigrants, and his arrival took a long time to come to fruition. Inspired by Rabbi Maimon's enthusiastic leadership and religious example, the community became stronger and more committed to synagogue life and religious observance, ending a period of membership attrition. Rabbi Abraham Maimon passed away in January 1931 after a short but impactful period of growing the membership and helping the community build its new synagogue.

Also in 1924, the synagogue's Ladies Auxiliary was founded, giving the women of Sephardic Bikur Holim leadership positions in synagogue governance. It was organized as one of three standing committees of the congregation's board, but also had its own independently elected president and officers and maintained control of all monies earned through its fundraising endeavors. The Auxiliary's first event was a dance at Washington Hall at 14th Avenue and Yesler Way in 1926. Admission was \$1, punch sold for 5 cents a cup, and the Ladies Auxiliary raised \$500 (Benezra, 1977). In 1926, Sephardic Bikur Holim President Joseph Caston approached the Ladies Auxiliary for a \$500 loan — the money to be used as down payment on a lot on 20th Avenue and East Fir Street for a new synagogue (Benezra, 1977).

A front-page article in the January 15, 1926, edition of *The Jewish Transcript of the Pacific Northwest* describes the acquisition of the property at 1915 East Fir Street under the headline, “Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation Buys New Home Site”:

The first Sephardic Congregation to organize, and the first to buy a place for worship in Seattle, has taken another forward step, when it agreed to erect a more spacious and becoming house of worship in a more suitable locality. The initial step in this commendable program was taken a few days ago, when the spacious property on Twentieth Avenue, and East Fir Street, was purchased by the congregation for the erection of its future home. The Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation was organized close to fifteen years ago, when a handful of Spanish-speaking immigrants from Turkey, came to these shores, and united for religious purposes, and for brotherly assistance. ... From the very beginning it adopted an open-minded and progressive attitude. The Congregation is inclusive, and all Jews are welcome to become its members and supporters. Although seriously hampered by strained finances, the members of the congregation have accomplished all that could be expected of them. Just a year and a half ago, the Sephardic Bikur Holim members welcomed their new Rabbi, Rev. Abraham Maimon, who came over from Turkey, for the express purpose of leading his people in their religious and moral life. In order to do this, the Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation had to surmount numerous obstacles, and overcome many difficulties. Proper credit is due those indefatigable workers for their untiring work (p. 1).

A “very encouraging attendance of men and women” elected a Building Committee on September 30, 1928 (*The Jewish Transcript*, 1928a). The committee was organized “to finance and erect a beautiful new home for the Bikur Holim,” (p. 1). The Building Committee met every Monday night to work through every detail of the project, from fundraising through construction. On Sunday mornings, Building Committee members went to the homes of congregants to collect cash donations for the building fund. The average wage at the time was \$15 a week, from which community members set aside a small amount to build their new synagogue (SBH History By Decade, n.d.).

A synagogue ledger shows an entry for “July Campan [sic] for the Building,” with 30 donations ranging from \$2 to \$25, raising a total of \$251. “Donations for the 8 Pins of Sinagogue [sic],” raised an additional \$1,865 by selling engraved plaques that were embedded in the north and east façades of the building. Sephardic businessman Nessim Alhadeff, a successful fishmonger at Pike Place Market, made the largest donation of \$500 (see figures C1a and C1b).

The Ladies’ Auxiliary of Bikur Holim also was instrumental in raising additional money for the building fund. The group organized several fundraisers, including staging “The Pogroms of Russia,” a play that took place at Washington Hall on December 16, 1928 (*The Jewish Transcript*, 1928b). A synagogue ledger reveals multiple entries of loans from the Ladies Auxiliary, presumably used to float payments to the architect and contractor during construction.

The Building Committee solicited sketches from several prominent architects. W. G. Brust was hired to design the building and Ernest E. Reynolds served as the contractor. Brust estimated that it would cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 for the new synagogue, but the Building Committee thought the congregation would be able to raise only \$10,000 (SBH History by Decade, n.d.).

A Memorandum of Expenses in the ledger catalogs the construction suppliers, and shows careful attention to tracking payments and close management of the construction budget (see figure C1c):

“Account with Mr. Brust Architecter CREDIT”

Cost of Building

Roughing in 16,800

Additional Completely 9,093

25,893 @ 2 ¼

582.59

Supervision for roughin 16,800 @ 2 ½

378.00

960.59

The congregation faced limited available resources for the project and it was in danger of losing the property. A committee of prominent, wealthy Ashkenazi Jews from Temple De Hirsch synagogue — including Nathan Eckstein (a prominent tradesman and educator, and namesake of Eckstein Middle School in North Seattle), J. R. Hiller, and Alfred Shemanski (a successful businessman, the first Jewish University of Washington regent, and founder of a philanthropic trust still serving Seattle today) — sent an urgent appeal to “a certain group of men with foresight”:

They well deserve and must have the whole-hearted interest and support of the Jewish Community. To aid them in their sad situation it is imperative that the sum of \$2000.00 be raised immediately. ...These people, whose purpose in erecting this synagogue was so noble, who are bravely struggling in the world for better life, must not find us lacking in their need now (Cone et al., 2003, p. 75).

A ledger entry “Paid to Alfred Shemansky (sic)” shows three payments totaling \$1,000, which indicates that he assisted the congregation with a much-needed loan for the building. Additional money was raised through a six-day bazaar that joined Sephardic and Ashkenazi and organizations into a common effort (Cone et al., 2003, p. 117).

Community historian Isaac Maimon reflected on the challenge of building a synagogue: “It was no easy task. Their unwavering commitment and realization of the central position that the synagogue occupied was foremost in their minds and hearts,” (eSefarad.com, n.d.).

Building construction was divided into two phases. The first phase of construction of the building exterior and interior spaces was completed under Permit Number 286621, issued June

21, 1929 (see figure C2). The second phase, to plaster the social room, hallway, boiler room, kitchen, and men's room was completed under Permit Number 296724 in 1930.

The national Sephardic newspaper, *LaVara*, which was written in Ladino and based in New York City, reported on the progress of constructing the new Sephardic Bikur Holim in Seattle (see figure C6). On July 8, 1929, *The Seattle Daily Times* reported that hundreds of members of Seattle's Jewish community celebrated the laying of the cornerstone of the new synagogue. The list of speakers at the ceremony includes the names of Rabbinic and lay leaders from Ashkenazi and Sephardic synagogues, which demonstrates the significance of the event to the broader Jewish community (Cornerstone of new Synagogue is laid, 1929). *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* described the event as having "impressive ceremonies," (Jewish Synagogue Cornerstone Laid, 1929) (see figures C3-C5).

An inauguration ceremony was held for the new facility on Sunday, September 29, 1929. *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported that "Jews Dedicate New Seattle Synagogue" before a large audience (1929, September 30). A newspaper clipping from *LaVara* announces a "Grandiose fiesta in Seattle" with photographs of the new synagogue building, sanctuary, and Rabbi Maimon reciting the blessing of *Shehehiyanu* (a prayer said when celebrating and thanking God for special occasions and sanctifying new things) (see figure C6).

In 1929, the old synagogue building at 13th Avenue and Washington Street was sold to the Japanese Methodist Church for \$3,000 (SBH History by Decade, n.d.), ensuring that the site would endure as a place of worship serving another immigrant community living alongside Jews within the Central District.

Sephardic Bikur Holim members actively participated in the synagogue, in the larger Seattle community, and in service to their country. During World War II, more than 100 members served in the military, including two women who enlisted and one who became an officer. Sephardic Bikur Holim women formed the "Do Our Bit" unit and helped with the war effort by baking cookies for the USO, donating gifts for wounded soldiers, and knitting socks and caps for the servicemen with their "bendichas manos," (Ladino for "blessed hands"). The Seattle Red Cross recognized the women of the Do Our Bit unit for their significant contribution. Older men of the congregation served in the local Civil Defense Administration as plane spotters, night raid facilitators, and block wardens (SBH History by Decade, n.d.). Sephardic Bikur Holim formed a War Bond Drive Committee and raised enough money to purchase two mobile hospital ward train cars.

In 1944, Rabbi Solomon Maimon, the son of Rabbi Abraham Maimon, was hired as the first full-time Rabbi the congregation had since the passing of his father in 1931. Rabbi Solomon Maimon was the first Sephardic person to earn rabbinic ordination in the U. S. He spoke fluent English, Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish, which gave him broad appeal in the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities. Hugely influential, Rabbi Maimon kept the congregation deeply rooted in its Sephardic traditions while actively engaging in modern, post-World War II American life. Among the many accomplishments during his 40-year tenure, Rabbi Maimon was instrumental

in establishing the all-day Seattle Hebrew Day School, youth programs, adult education, and the overnight Sephardic Adventure Camp. The camp was entirely staffed by congregation volunteers: high school students were the counselors, food was donated by Sephardic-owned businesses, and members of the Ladies Auxiliary took turns doing all of the cooking and baking, which gave the campers a taste of Sephardic culinary specialties. The only Sephardic camp in the world continues to thrive to this day.

After World War II, Sephardic Bikur Holim welcomed several Ladino-speaking Holocaust survivors, originally from Salonika, Greece. Quotas limited the number of Turkish-born people allowed to immigrate to the U. S., and U.S. Sen. Warren Magnuson in 1952 was called on to help the congregation bring a hazzan (Cantor) to Seattle to lead the synagogue's religious services. With the senator's assistance, Rev. Samuel Benaroya joined the religious leadership of Sephardic Bikur Holim, emigrating from Edirne, Turkey. Rev. Benaroya taught Sephardic liturgy, established a children's choir, and ensured that Sephardic tunes and traditions were carried forward to the next generation (SBH History by Decade, n.d.).

With the striking down of discriminatory covenants in Seattle and the opening of the suburbs, Jewish community members began migrating out of the Central District at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, primarily for Seward Park, North Seattle, Mercer Island, and Bellevue. The Church of God in Christ purchased the Sephardic Bikur Holim property on August 8, 1963, for \$85,000 on contract. Sephardic Bikur Holim relocated to Seward Park, building a new synagogue on 52nd Avenue South at South Morgan Street that was dedicated in 1965 (SBH History by Decade, n.d.). The congregation remains vital today, operating as one of two Sephardic Orthodox synagogues in the city, helping to cement Seattle's position as one of the most religiously active, culturally aligned, and historically significant Sephardic communities in the United States.

A New Era: Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ

At the dawn of the 1960s, Bishop Lafayette E. (L.E.) Tolliver was in search of a new worship space for his growing Church of God in Christ (COGIC) congregation. This tight-knit, multi-generational, African-American congregation had long worshipped out of a storefront church he owned at 424 21st Street, near the southeast corner of 21st Avenue and Jefferson Street in the city's Central District. When the synagogue at 20th and Fir was vacated in 1963, it offered Tolliver and his congregants an opportunity to move to a bigger building within the same neighborhood and without the expense of constructing a new facility. They opened their new house of worship, which soon came to be called Tolliver Temple, with a week of dedication services in early January 1964 ("Services Planned," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Jan. 5, 1964) (see figures C20 and C21).

The roots of this congregation trace back to the 1920s and the formation of the COGIC in Seattle and Washington. Indeed, Tolliver and members of his extended family were instrumental in organizing and establishing the denomination, which today includes more than 50 churches statewide. Their history and that of the church reflect the broader story of the

Great Migration of the early 20th century, when millions of African Americans left the rural South for the urban North, Midwest, and West. (For additional context on the Great Migration, see Wilkerson, 2010).

African American Settlement in Seattle

African Americans were drawn to the Central Area beginning in the late 19th century in part by early resident William Grose (1835-1898), a prominent Black landowner and leader, who bought a 12-acre parcel of land near East Madison Street in 1882. However, unlike the city's early Jewish population, Black residents were more scattered throughout the city, at least initially. As transportation services through the area developed, more Black residents moved to the Central District, finding it "not unlike white streetcar suburbs such as Rainier Heights or Madison Park," (Veith, 2009, p. 247).

A Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to urban areas in the North, Midwest, and West was underway by the turn of the century. In particular, the developing trade and shipping sectors within both coastal and inland cities attracted Black migrants to the Pacific Northwest. They most typically found employment in the supporting service sectors, but events like the Longshoremen's Strike of 1916, which sidelined some 21,000 mostly white workers, "provided the first opportunity for black laborers to obtain work beyond 'traditional' occupations," (Taylor, 1994, p. 52). Subsequent wartime employment in the late 1910s also drew African Americans to Seattle and other West Coast cities. The wartime era "provided a major, if temporary, boost to black Seattle," and as many left jobs as domestic workers and porters for more lucrative employment in the shipyards, steel mills, post offices, and at Fort Lawton (Taylor, 1994, p. 54-55). As a result, the city's small Black community gained about 2,500 new residents between 1900 and 1920 (Taylor, 1994, p. 51-52).

The post-World War I era witnessed the loss of those wartime skilled jobs for African Americans, with increasing competition from the surplus of white labor and from newly arriving immigrants. Occupational mobility was challenged by many factors including limited educational opportunities and employer discrimination. The Great Depression of the 1930s further devastated Seattle's Black community as many service-sector jobs disappeared. Nearly one-quarter of African Americans in Seattle were unemployed in 1940, a rate among the highest in the nation (Taylor, 1994, p. 63). At this time, most of the city's 3,789 African American residents lived in four distinct areas in and around the Central District: the well-established East Madison Street area; the Jackson Street area (roughly between 12th Ave. S and 23rd Ave. S); the 26th Avenue community (south of Yesler); and the Cherry Street area (roughly between 15th Ave. S and 23rd Ave. S) (Veith, 2009, pp. 56-60).

During World War II, manufacturing opportunities from companies such as Boeing attracted an influx of African Americans to Seattle. Between 1940 and 1945, the city's Black population increased 164 percent to about 10,000 and another 169 percent between 1945 and 1960. By the end of the war, 4,078 shipyard workers and 1,233 aircraft construction workers were

African American (Taylor, 1994, pp. 161-162). Similar numbers remained employed in defense sector jobs that transitioned to peacetime manufacturing.

This sustained migration of African Americans to the Pacific Northwest throughout the early- and mid-20th century strained the small Black community, “placing a tremendous burden on its resources,” (Q. Taylor, 1994, pp. 187). For generations, these new arrivals depended on a social network that centered around Black churches.

Churches in the African American Community

For African American communities nationwide, the church served many purposes beyond spiritual engagement. Black churches in Seattle served as centers for social gatherings, entertainment, club and political meetings, and general uplift activities that were available nowhere else. As an important community institution, churches served as an integral part of the Black social network that also included religious auxiliaries, social and civic clubs, and fraternal organizations. This network was as an important social safety net for newly arriving migrants. Those arriving on trains were often met at the station and invited to church services and offered meals and a place to stay. When Black community members struggled to get by or find work, churches were a place to which they could turn (Q. Taylor, 1994, p. 38).

Most early Black Seattleites worshipped in white churches or in private homes. As the African American community grew, some sought to establish all-Black religious institutions like those in the American South from where most migrated. The first meetings to organize an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church occurred in 1886, and it incorporated in 1891. Those affiliated with Mount Zion Baptist Church first gathered in 1890 and formally organized in 1894. These two churches were a cornerstone of the early Black community and “a part of a network of African American churches in the Pacific Northwest which provided mutual support and encouragement,” (Q. Taylor, 1994, p. 38).

Several Black churches organized in the 1920s and 1930s, resulting in a religious landscape that spanned the spectrum of belief and orthodoxy. Historian Quintard Taylor said of this period:

The Episcopalians had St. Philips Chapel and the Presbyterians had Grace Presbyterian Church, both noted for their ‘quiet, dignified’ services. But there were also the exuberant, emotional fifty-member storefront churches such as the Full Gospel Pentecostal Mission, founded in 1929. By the 1930s ‘nontraditional’ churches, such as Father Divine’s Temple of Peace, had also emerged in the small black community (Q. Taylor, 1994, pp. 138).

Similar in size and spirit to the aforementioned Full Gospel Pentecostal Mission, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) emerged in the 1920s among a newly arrived group of African Americans from the South. Establishing meeting places was challenging for these smaller, newly organized congregations, and during the Great Migration so-called storefront churches proliferated in many northern cities (Boyd, 1998, n.p.). Often vacant storefronts or abandoned buildings were all that was available to serve as a gathering space to migrant Blacks. Seattle’s small COGIC

congregation split into two soon after forming, and while the locations of the churches changed over time, L.E. Tolliver's organization eventually worshipped at a storefront church at 424 21st Avenue for more than 20 years (see figures C18 and C19). Its move to the former synagogue at 20th and Fir signaled both its growth and deep roots in the community.

Seattle's African American churches – as well as the greater religious community – were important actors in the push for equity and civil rights throughout the 20th century. At the invitation of Mt. Zion's Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to Seattle in November 1961 and gave a series of speeches on civil liberties. As civil rights activities in the American South gained nationwide attention in the summer of 1963, Seattle's greater religious community joined McKinney, Bishop John Hurst Adams (First AME), and Rev. Mance Jackson (Bethel CME) to address racial and ethnic discrimination in Seattle. As part of the Greater Seattle Council of Churches, these leaders organized grass-roots rallies, protests, campaigns, and sit-ins involving many from the Black community. (For additional context on the role of religious activists in Seattle's civil rights movement, see Soden, 1998)

Brief History of the Church of God in Christ

Founded by Bishop Charles Harrison Mason in 1907, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) is one of the largest Pentecostal churches in the world. Mason was raised a Baptist and was licensed into the ministry in Preston, Arkansas. He differed, however, in his beliefs around the baptism of the Holy Spirit and complete sanctification, resulting in his separation from the Baptist Church in the late 1890s. He ministered to followers throughout the American South, in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee. In 1906, he traveled to Los Angeles to participate in the Azusa Street Revival led by Black preacher William J. Seymour. The Azusa Street Revival was a predominantly working-class religious movement that attracted a multiracial and multiethnic following. Large numbers were African Americans who had recently migrated from the South (Campbell, 2010, p. 3). Inspired by the revival, Mason returned to Memphis and convened the first Pentecostal General Assembly in November 1907. This marked the official founding of the COGIC.

The tremendous growth of the COGIC in the early 20th century was “phenomenal,” (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, p. 82). In part, it was the result of Mason's “charismatic and visionary leadership,” as well as his keen “ability to cultivate leadership and delegate responsibility,” among both men and women (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, p. 82). Mason's strategy of “sending evangelists to accompany the northerly migration of African Americans and of charging bishops with the establishment of new jurisdictions in such metropolitan areas as New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago resulted in COGIC becoming a predominantly urban church,” (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, p. 82). Jurisdictions developed in northern and western cities across the United States, and “between the mid-1920s and the early 1960s membership increased eightfold, from some 50,000 to over 400,000,” (Lincoln and Mamiya, 1990, p. 82).

The COGIC ordained both Black and white clergy, but worshippers generally gravitated to racially separate congregations (Walker, 2017, n.p.). In 1914, many of the white clergy formed

the Assemblies of God Church. Other surviving denominations that share a common early history with the COGIC include the Church of Christ (Holiness), USA and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

One of Mason's lasting legacies is the COGIC organizational structure. The COGIC is organized into jurisdictions, each under the authority of a bishop. A jurisdiction ranges in size between 30 and 100 churches. Both civil and ecclesiastical structures govern the national church organization. A general assembly maintains legislative authority and exercises great authority over the church. The assembly elects a general board of bishops who serve as church apostles. A presiding bishop is elected separately and serves as the chief apostle. Mason also was instrumental in the formation of COGIC's Women's Department, which empowered women in roles that transcended the traditional role of motherhood to include spiritual mothers or church mothers. COGIC's early women leaders Elizabeth Robinson and Lillian Brooks Coffey laid this foundation for women within the congregation to act as advisers to the pastors, as disciplinarians and leaders of church members, and serve as the backbone of a congregation (Butler, 2007, p. 2-12). This structure and these roles influence the workings of every COGIC congregation, including Tolliver Temple.

Today, the church is predominantly African American with millions of adherents in more than 100 countries worldwide. It remains headquartered in Memphis where it began. The city's famous Mason Temple, named in honor of the church founder, is where the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his final major public address before he was assassinated in 1968 (Bletson, 2009, n.p.).

The Church of God in Christ in Seattle

L. E. Tolliver (1891-1967) and his family were among the thousands of Black Americans leaving the rural South in the early 20th century in search of economic opportunity. A native of Mississippi, Tolliver served in the U.S. Army during World War I before settling in Seattle by 1920. He lived in his brother James Tolliver's household and worked as a laborer and later for the city's transit department (U. S. Census, 1920-1940). The family lived on the northern outskirts of the city at 7018 23rd Avenue NE in the predominantly white neighborhood of Ravenna. L. E. Tolliver later owned the residence.

Tolliver was among the group of Black newcomers who organized the first Church of God in Christ in Seattle and Washington. The official organization is recorded in the Articles of Incorporation submitted to the Washington Secretary of State's office in May 1926. The articles outlined the objectives of the religious organization to be "educational, religious, social and charitable;" and "carrying on and advancing the principles enunciated in the ritual beliefs of the Church of God in Christ;" "to carry on charities and relief work;" and to prescribe "rules and regulations" pertaining to membership (State of Washington, 1926). Five trustees were named in the record and included S. V. Howell, J. W. Burton, L. E. Tolliver, Eila B. Glanton, and Edward Reese. Glanton is notable as the only woman listed, although she may have been an early spiritual leader as she arranged and published religious passages that appeared in *The*

Enterprise, a local Black newspaper run by William Henry Wilson (Glanton, E. B., 1928). A notable woman *not* listed in the incorporation document is Carrie Reese, who was Tolliver's older sister and was married to trustee Edward Reese. Her role as an early church leader is well-known among today's local COGIC membership and also is reflected in a memorial stone installed in the exterior north facade of Tolliver Temple (Wallace-Croone, 2021).

Howell initially served as the pastor but within months the organization had split into two COGIC congregations – one led by Howell (on Jackson Street) and the other led by Pastor Morgan M. Lee (on Irving Street). Following the split, in the late 1920s, the two congregations regularly advertised their services in *The Enterprise*. Over time, the locations of the churches advertised in newspapers and directories varied, but they were always in the Central District.

About 1940 L. E. Tolliver formed his own COGIC congregation, which met in the small, one-story storefront space at 424 21st Avenue (see figures C18 and C19a). The building had formerly operated as a Kosher grocery. It appears on a 1941 Sanborn Co. map and is labeled as "Church Rm." (see figure C19b). The building also had apartments or flats where Tolliver family members and acquaintances lived. Tolliver was known for helping family and friends with housing and other assistance (Wallace-Croone, 2021). The building was demolished in 1963 (King County Assessor, Property Record Card).

In 1951, national COGIC leadership appointed Tolliver as bishop of the Alaska jurisdiction, a position he retained until his death in 1967. Although his extended family remained in Seattle and he maintained an active role in the Seattle COGIC, he dedicated considerable time to his new role. He was instrumental in establishing the COGIC in Alaska and Fairbanks, just as he had been in Washington and Seattle in the 1920s. A modest advertisement in the *Fairbanks News-Miner* records his first church opening in 1951 with a "tent service" on July 8, 1951. Subsequent news articles document COGIC's growth in Alaska and the opening of churches in Fairbanks, at 510 21st Street, Fairbanks (1951) and 306 Ladd Street, Fairbanks (1957), for example.

Meanwhile, the Seattle congregation was outgrowing its storefront church and needed a bigger gathering space. Tolliver apparently hoped to erect a new church building next to the one at 424 21st Street, but when the Jewish synagogue at 1915 E. Fir Street became available in 1963, he saw this as a better option (Wallace-Croone, 2021). Tolliver's Church of God in Christ acquired the property in August 1963 and later celebrated their opening with a week of dedication services in early January 1964 ("Services Planned," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Jan. 5, 1964) (see figure C21).

As a testament to their deep roots and rich history, the congregation began calling itself Tolliver's Temple (or Tolliver Temple) and installed memorial and tribute stones on the exterior of the building honoring longtime and influential members. The names in the stones reflect those who were a part of Tolliver's church before it moved to 1915 E. Fir Street and supported the church with contributions to purchase the property.

With this new building, Tolliver Temple had the space to host more activities beyond worship services and church gatherings. Beginning in 1964 and continuing through the mid-1970s, Tolliver Temple hosted statewide COGIC conventions (see figures C22-23, C26-27 and C30). Current elders recall these events as energy-filled, days-long events that drew members from all over, including Tacoma, Yakima, and Eastern Washington. The church would be full of people dressed in their very best Sunday attire. Women worked hard to cook meals for everyone in the second-floor kitchen, and they ate large dinners in the adjacent dining hall (Singleton, 2021).

Outreach and uplift within the community remained a central focus of the congregation in its new facility (see figures C24 and C25). The church opened its doors to the neighborhood and greater community, hosting meals, gospel musical events, charity fundraisers, and other activities (Singleton, 2021; Wallace-Croone, 2021). Since 1963, there have been just three pastors at Tolliver Temple: Bishop L.E. Tolliver, Pastor Franklin L. James, and Pastor O.J. Jenkins. The congregation is currently transitioning to its fourth pastor.

Architect: William (W.G.) Brust

William George Brust, Jr., attended the University of Pennsylvania (1907). He worked as a head draftsman for E.F. Champney and John Graham, Sr. in the 1910s. From 1919 to 1927, he was in partnership with Seattle school architect James Stephen and his son Frederick, another Pennsylvania graduate. Brust began his own practice in 1927. He was known for his designs of churches in the 1930s and 1940s, but he also designed apartment buildings, institutional facilities, and industrial buildings. Many properties he designed are listed below. The First Lutheran Church, a Late Gothic Revival-style building completed in 1930 in Ketchikan, Alaska, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. Brust retired in 1961 and died in Seattle in 1969. (Ochsner, 2017).

Woodland Park Apartments, 5005 Phinney Avenue, Seattle (1928)
Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, 7500 Greenwood Avenue N, Seattle (1929)
Sunset Heights Apartments, 455 N 44th Street, Seattle (1929) (see figure D8)
First Lutheran Church, Ketchikan, Alaska (1930) (see figure D9)
Ridgeview Apartments, 315 N 50th Street, Seattle (1931) (see figure D10)
Seventy-third Street Bldg., 7212-7220 Greenwood Avenue, Seattle (1932) (see figure D11)
Warehouse, 2921 Utah Avenue, Seattle (1938)
Savage Metal Products Co., 5421 1st Avenue, Seattle (1941) (see figure D12)
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 2400 NW 85th Street, Seattle (1946-47)
Office Building, 434 Yale Avenue N, Seattle (1947-48)
Alaskan Cooper Works, 3200 6th Avenue, Seattle (1948)
Dry Cleaning Plant, 1264 S King Street, Seattle (1948)
Calvary Temple, 6801 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle (1948) (see figure D13)
Chrystal Arms Apartments, 25th Avenue and E. Denny Way, Seattle (1950)
Hope Lutheran Church, 4456 42nd Avenue SW, Seattle (1952)
Industrial Arts Building, Seattle Pacific College, Seattle (1952)
Sand Point Heights Lutheran Church, 6553 40th Avenue NE, Seattle (1953)

Women's and Men's Dormitories at Seattle Pacific University, Seattle (1958)
Lake Hills Lutheran Church, 707 159th Place SE, Seattle (1958)
Seattle District Office of Johnson Service Co., 430 Yale Avenue N, Seattle (1959)
Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, 10940 SE 168th Street, Renton (1959)
Faith Lutheran Church, 8208 18th Avenue NE, Seattle (1959-60)

Architectural Style and Tradition

The building exhibits a modern, simplified Romanesque style, in the Germanic Rundbogenstil (round-arch) tradition, with muted Art Deco influences. The design is influenced by the 19th century tradition of the round-arch styles of Central Europe. This Germanic-influenced Romanesque, it should be noted, is different from the Romanesque Revival popularized by H.H. Richardson in the late 19th century. It was Prussian state architect Friedrich von Schnikel (1781-1841) who popularized the Rundbogenstil, which blended ancient Romanesque, Byzantine, and Renaissance traditions. Many Central European synagogue architects, as well as those designing protestant and Catholic churches, favored Rundbogenstil during this time (Emanuel, 2005).

More broadly, 19th-century European synagogues reflected a range of stylistic influences including Moorish, Classical, and Gothic traditions. Although many American synagogues erected in the 20th century recall these past stylistic traditions, their designs can vary quite dramatically from one another. Often, they reflect a blend of traditions. Classicism dominated American synagogue architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By the 1920s, reflections of Byzantine traditions gained favor and resulted in such magnificent domed structures as Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco (designed by Bakewell and Brown, 1926) and the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles (1928), (Gruber, 2003). Seattle's former Chevra Bikur Cholim (1915; Seattle Landmark), is one of the few domed, centric-plan built and remaining in the city.

Synagogues erected by small, nascent Jewish congregations, such as Sephardic Bikur Holim and the nearby Machzikay Hadath (at 26th Avenue and Fir Street), followed these same eclectic tendencies, although in simplified fashions. The choice for Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation was the Romanesque tradition, which allowed for a simplified building rooted in tradition and history. Unlike the aforementioned grand domed synagogues, this smaller building employed a rectangular hall plan with an open, tall interior with room for upper-gallery seating, as well as multi-purpose areas for religious education and social gatherings. The building's defining features include a monumental round-arch entry with an articulated cast-stone facing and ionic columns; tall, narrow, paired round-arch windows reflecting the voluminous two-story worship space; and Art Deco-influenced buttressing of the entry bay and at the building corners. It is constructed of common, inexpensive materials, including brick and cast stone, and exhibits modest Jewish ornamentation primarily found in the Stars of David at the entrance and above the windows. The building's style, ornamentation, and materials not only reflect the congregation's modest means at the time of construction but also the Sephardic community's aspirations to establish their place in 1930s Seattle society.

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include: the site; the exterior of the building; the interior of the sanctuary; and exempting all elements of the building and site that are liturgical in nature.

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