

327 N. Negley
Ave.,
Pittsburgh

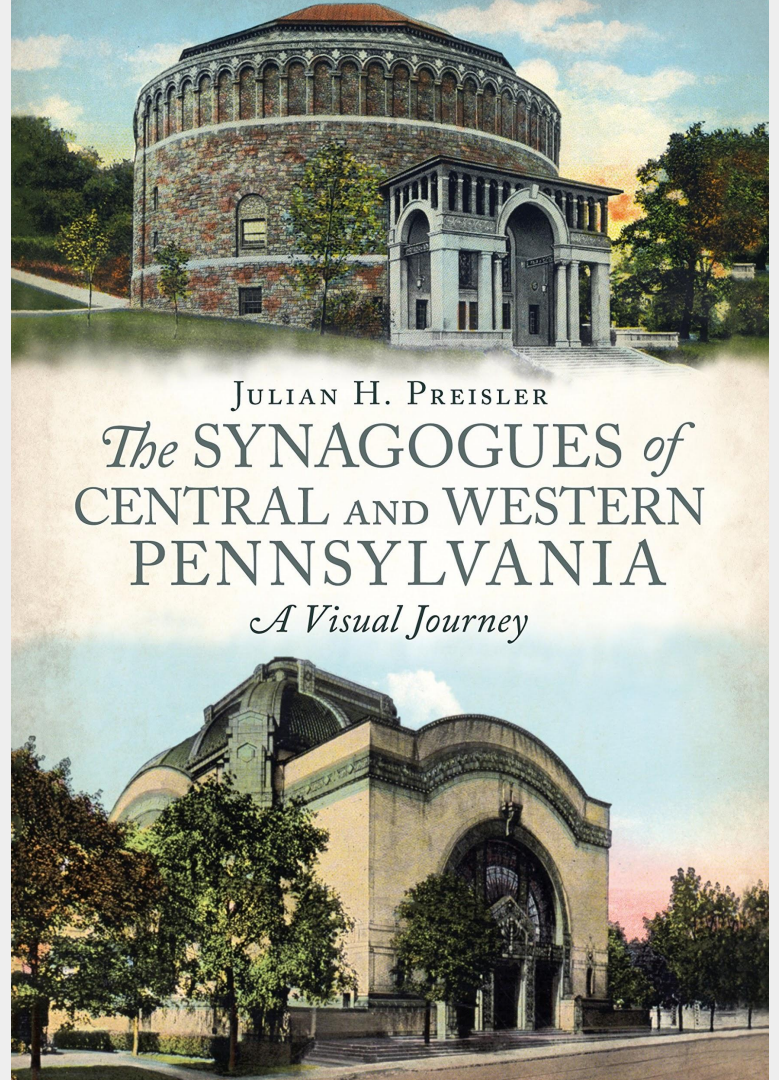
An Artistic History

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At a Glance

- One of the important sacred monuments of the region
- Striking 1920's Byzantine Revival Movement synagogue
- Pittsburgh History and Landmarks designation



Timeline of 327 N. Negley

- 1911: B'nai Israel congregation founded to serve East End
- ~1922-1927: construction of sanctuary building
- 1960's-1990's: decline of the congregation
- 1995: B'nai Israel moves out
 - Merges with Beth Jacob, New Kensington, to form Adat Shalom, Fox Chapel
- ~1998-2016: Urban League Charter School
 - Moves to Larimer as Urban Academy
- 2018- :North Negley Residences

Architects

- Henry Hornbostel
- Alexander Sharove
- Philip Friedman
- William Fraser

Relative contributions unclear



At right: Hornbostel, 1930's

Henry Hornbostel (1867-1961): Monumental Works

- New York Bridges
 - Queensboro
 - Williamsburg
 - Hell's Gate
- Campus Plans
 - Carnegie Mellon
 - Emory
- Pittsburgh Projects
 - Soldiers and Sailors Memorial
 - City-County Building
 - Union Station



Queensboro Bridge





Carnegie Mellon University (foreground)



Hornbostel in Pittsburgh
Above: Soldiers and Sailors Memorial
At right: City-County Building elevator doors



Byzantine and Romanesque Revival

- B'nai Israel is Pittsburgh's "entry into the national Byzantine synagogue sweepstakes of the 1920s" (Gruber 2010)
- Synagogues were restricted in medieval Europe
- Modern synagogue architects appealed to Middle Eastern themes to develop an 'authentic' style
- Influenced by Zionism and Jewish archaeology



Revival Style in the Old World (circa 1910)



ESSEN-RUHR.

Synagoge.

Above: Old Synagogue, Essen, Germany

Below: Sofia Synagogue, Bulgaria



Revival Style Explodes in USA (1920's)



Above: KAM Isaiah Israel, Chicago

At left: Wilshire Boulevard Synagogue, Los Angeles

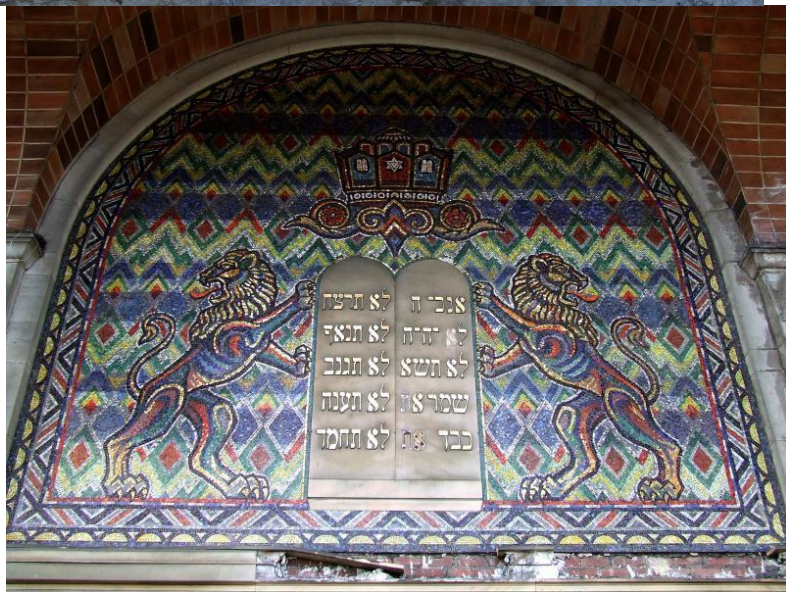
Revival Style in the USA, 1920's (cont'd)

Rodeph Shalom,
Philadelphia
(Moorish Revival)



Influence of Archaeology

- First expedition of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, 1921
- Discovery of Roman-era synagogue mosaics at Tiberias
- Expedition widely fêted in Jewish community
- Influenced design of KAM Isaiah Israel, Chicago, circa 1923 (Alschuler 1990)



Lions of Judah

Top: Roman-era synagogue mosaic, excavated 1921

Bottom: Mosaic at 327 N. Negley, 1920's

Lion of Judah

From Jewish Power to Black Power Symbol



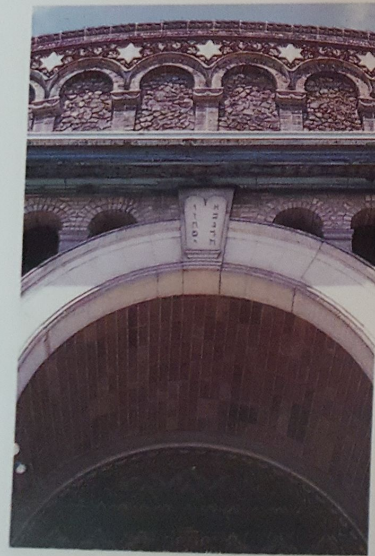
Above: Ethiopian Imperial Flag
At right: Rastafari Emblems



Unique Byzantine Exterior

- Striking stonework
- Guastavino Tile
- Unusual cut-stone frieze

Extraordinary use of materials: cut stone, Guastavino tile, and mosaic in the entrance portico (left); textured brick in stack-bond piers and arches, cut stone spandrels representing grapes and leaves with Stars of David, and rubble filling for the archways (middle); and the portico frieze (right) with Stars of David, rainbows, and grapes.



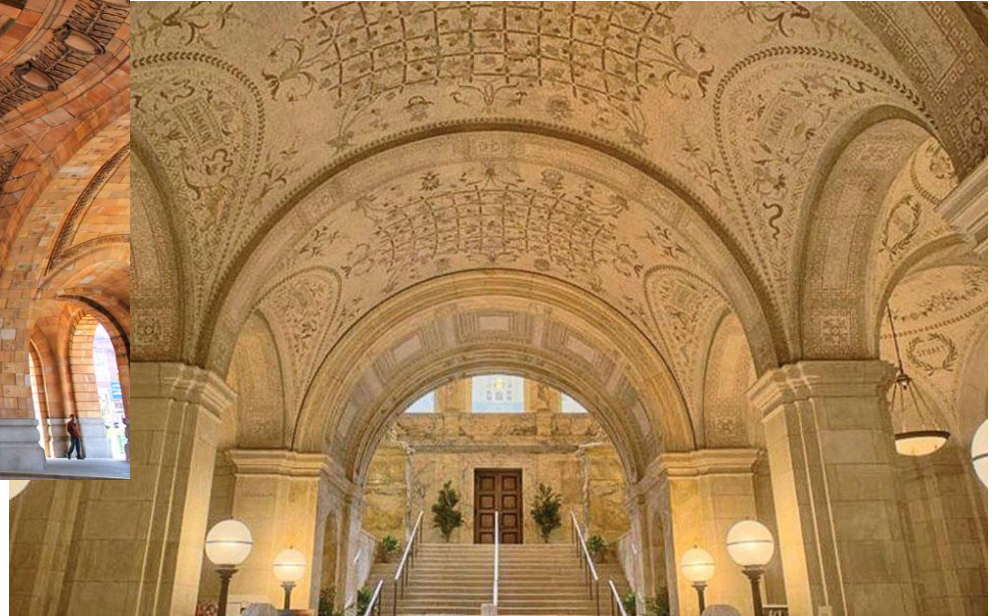
Source: Kidney (2002)

Guastavino Tile



Above: Union Station, Pittsburgh

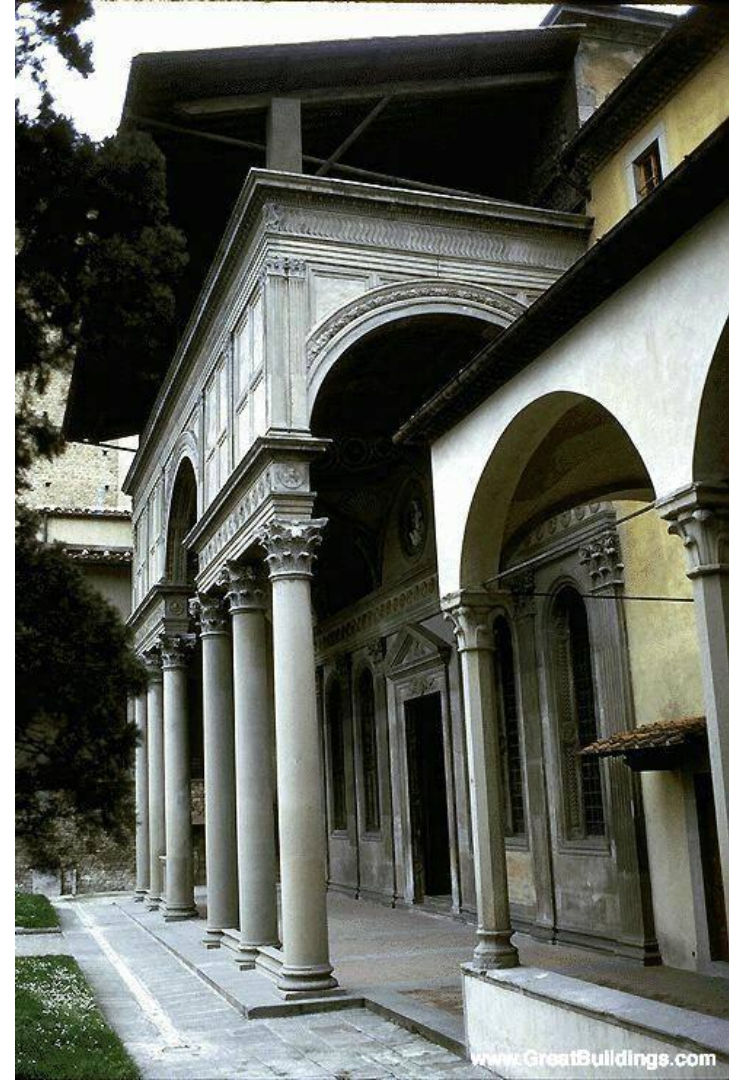
Below: Boston Public Library



Inspiration from Brunelleschi



Pazzi Chapel, Florence, Italy





Further Note

- Stained glass windows by Jean-Jacques Duval (1965)

Sources and Resources

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