

60 Norfolk St (Beth Hamedrash Hagadol Synagogue)

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Post-Fire Condition (June 22nd, 2017)



Aerial View from North East

Ground Level View from North

Timeline: Beth Hamedrash Hagadol Fire and Subsequent Actions



Source: The Lo-Down

- May 14th, 2017: Fire damages historic synagogue building
- June 16th, 2017: BHH submits application to LPC to demolish fire damaged building.
- July 11th, 2017: LPC Public Hearing : Commissioners vote to approve hand demolition of walls to bring them down to safe and stable level.
- Sept -Nov, 2017: Coordination meetings for stabilization work held with all involved parties including BHH, DOB, BEST, LPC, and project contractors and engineers.
- Dec 1st, 2017 Stabilization drawings submitted to DOB on November 21st, 2017 approved by DOB.
- Dec 5th, 2017: Stabilization work begins on site
- Throughout the stabilization work, regular communication was maintained between all parties involved; NYC DOB, NYC DOB BEST, BHH Synagogue, Domani Engineering, Gotham Organization (acting as owner's representative of BHH), Landmarks Preservation Commission, and LPC engineering firm Superstructures. On site meetings were held on December 4th, 11th, and 27th, 2017; January 3rd, 18th, February 12th, 15th, 2018
- Architectural features of the building including tower decorative detailing, property entrance iron fencing, and doors and door details have been salvaged on site for future re-use.
- To date removals, have progressed to the limits established by LPC, at which point removals were halted.

LPC and DOB Approved Stabilization Drawings (December 1st, 2017)



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BHH Current Conditions Photos



East Elevation

Interior looking South

North Elevation



• Salvaged artifacts from the existing historic structure can be reused at the interior of the new BHH space.

BHH Stabilization: Current Condition

- The objective of the removals was to remove unstable and unsound portions of the building to a safe level.
- To date, removals have progressed to the limits established by LPC, at which point removals were halted.
- Currently unstable and unsound portions of the building remain; and ٠ additional measures are necessary to establish a safe condition.
- Site safety measures including perimeter fencing and perimeter bridging remains on site.
- LPC approval of further removals of the existing structure is requested to ٠ further stabilize existing structure.
- The integration of synagogue remnants into the future site redevelopment is ۲ proposed. The next slides identify a level at which the remnants could be integrated, pending stabilization, and associated architectural precedents.



Current Condition of BHH Structure

Proposed Further Removals: Norfolk Street (West) Elevation



• The historical towers are enclosed in a new, glazed lobby space that will provide views from the exterior and a tactile connection with the stone base from within.

Proposed Further Removals: South Elevation



• A previously used side entry to the below grade space of the existing historical structure is commemorated through the maintenance of the South wall with a new, glazed enclosure. The South wall extends past the face of the new development to become an enclosing wall of a new garden space to be used by BHH.

Proposed Further Removals: East Elevation



• The existing perimeter walls of the historic building are proposed to be reused as garden walls enclosing a space for BHH's use. The exterior garden can be used for social gatherings and holiday traditions.

Proposed Further Removals: North Elevation



• The North side historical tower will be integrated into the new BHH entry vestibule. A portion of the existing north side wall has been previously removed to provide access for stabilization work. The remainder of the of the existing wall will be within the area of the proposed new development and will be visible. The removal of this wall is needed to provide necessary infrastructure for the proposed senior residences above. A portion of the wall at the east end will remain to enclose the proposed garden.



The damage to BHH was extensive. All that remains are ruins and artifacts.

Our proposed preservation effort focuses on the evocation of the memory of the former structure rather than the building itself.

Three precedents illustrate relevant approaches to preservation after extensive destruction or renovation:

1. The incorporation of fragments of a medieval church into the structure of a modern museum.

2. The transformation of a 19th century church into a contemporary landscape feature.

3. A modification of a historic museum facade that creates a new entry space defined by juxtaposing existing and modern building elements.

Kolumba Art Museum, Cologne (Zumthor)



Kolumba Art Museum, Cologne (Zumthor)





Residential Garden, USA



Proposed Development Concept: BHH Integration



The proposed integration of the BHH synagogue into the project involves several key features:

Preservation of the historic trace of the synagogue, by keeping the sanctuary plan and orientation visible.

Addition of a glass enclosed vestibule facing the street that creates a new entrance space of the congregants, a gallery for surviving artifacts, and protects the remaining ruins from the elements.

Memorialization of the former Sanctuary by marking Bima (pulpit) and Aron Hakodesh (ark) locations as features of an outdoor courtyard which can be used for worship and other purposes.

Separation of the old from the new by having the new building "float" above and around the ruins, without touching them.