



Landau Zinder celebrates two Scarsdale synagogue renovations

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Scarsdale, NY According to Landau Zinder, construction continues on renovations for Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-el. The firm also commenced construction on renovations for Sinai Temple in Champaign, IL.

“We are very excited for these congregations, which have been planning these projects for years,” said Joshua Zinder, AIA, LEED AP, who is currently serving as 2021 president of AIA-New Jersey, the state’s professional organization for architects. “We believe that good design can strengthen and grow congregations while contributing to their long-term financial stability. These projects will be of value to the communities they serve for years and even decades to come.”

For both the Champaign and Scarsdale renovations, Landau Zinder also consulted on venue

security elements and assisted the congregations in applying for and acquiring grants from the Department of Homeland Security. The funds allowed the congregations to enhance the security profile of their physical synagogue locations.

“In light of recent high-profile events and ongoing assessments, it’s more important than ever to consider the security of synagogue staff and congregants, and to make every effort to safeguard our worship communities,” said Zinder.

The architects have been working with leaders and congregation members of Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-el to realize a major sanctuary renovation. The project aims to “complement the musical, liturgical, and pedagogical goal of our congregation’s Shabbat t’fillah (prayer) experience—namely, helping us to cultivate an inner relationship with the Divine,” according to Rabbi Jeffrey Brown. At the same time, the project will increase accessibility for all congregants and introduce more natural daylight.

Expected to be complete in September, the renovation calls for the demolition of the entire south-facing wall as part of the strategy for transforming the sanctuary, and recladding a portion of the exterior in metal paneling to complement an adjacent school building. The interior will be redesigned to present a less dated, more “timeless” look, with Jerusalem stone accents.

For Sinai Temple in Illinois, Landau Zinder’s design for a renovation will create a more flexible sanctuary space, with a primary “pod” accommodating smaller gatherings for typical weekly services. Movable walls will allow the sanctuary to expand for weddings, bar mitzvahs, and High Holiday services, more than tripling capacity from 150 to 500 when needed. The introduction of a suspended ceiling designed to symbolize the two tablets of the Ten Commandments combined with wood and stone finishes will create a warmer, brighter, more welcoming feel, while the addition of new window openings will introduce additional natural daylight. Completion of work on Sinai Temple is expected in the fall.

Adding to the excitement around the firm, which was founded to provide design and architectural services to congregations across the Jewish community nationally, architects and partners Joshua Zinder, AIA, LEED AP and Michael Landau, AIA also confirmed that construction of the Yakov & Hava Telyas Chabad Jewish Center – a new synagogue and learning center for Chabad of Hunterdon County – is expected to be completed later this year.

The 15,000 s/f synagogue and education center for Chabad of Hunterdon County, N.J., which is expected to open its doors this fall, will support the organization’s combined missions serving Central New Jersey’s Jewish community. The new building will include classrooms for pre-kindergarten, Hebrew school, and adult education, as well as a sanctuary, meeting rooms, offices, a kosher kitchen, a youth lounge, and a combined library and media room.

The 10-acre site in Clinton, N.J., will also feature an outdoor learning space, a playground, and parking for 70-plus cars. Conceived as a modern building constructed from materials that respect the surrounding context – fieldstone, glass, and a durable wood-look material selected for beauty

and longevity – its users will enjoy interiors full of daylight from full-height glass walls and clerestory windows and an interior emphasizing natural wood and stone to round out the welcoming and inspiring setting.

“The opportunity to design this multi-faceted building, and to make a lasting contribution to the future of Chabad of Hunterdon County, has been enormously rewarding already,” said Zinder. “We look forward to serving more congregations across the U.S., building and renovating synagogues in ways that inspire and strengthen Jewish communities.”

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