

## Design Vision

“The purpose of the design vision is to guide the Design Committee and the congregation in finishing and furnishing our building so that the result is coherent and attractive. Our desire is to finish the building’s interior so that it is consistent with its exterior, which was influenced by early twentieth-century styles (Shingle Style, Arts and Crafts, Mission) in the Vine Street neighborhood.

“In response to the congregation’s wishes, we want to create a home-like, warm building that will be welcoming and comfortable and that includes decorative elements that celebrate our Jewish heritage. Natural materials such as stained wood, iron, and copper, rather than chrome and plastic, would best match our objective. Early twentieth-century styles, including Arts and Crafts designs, would be especially compatible with the light fixtures and casework that we have chosen.

“When additional casework is built in the oneg room, library, and rabbi’s office, the sanctuary bookcases will serve as a template. The design vision applies to public spaces including the entrance room, oneg room, sanctuary, library, and rabbi’s office. The other offices may be more functional, and the kitchen and lavatories will be primarily utilitarian.”

Adopted February 10, 2000



## About the House

The History and Design of Temple Shir Tikvah





## A Brief History

The building at 34 Vine Street, located in Winchester, has gone through many changes. It began as a house that was erected around 1860 by Dr. William Ingalls on a site in the town center at the corner of Main and Mount Vernon streets.

The second owner was Dr. Frederick Winsor. On November 9, 1865, the Winchester Unitarian Society held its first meeting in the Winsors' parlor. In the 1870s, Winsor moved the building to the present location overlooking Wedge Pond. After the house was moved, it continued to serve as a residence.

In 1920, the house was purchased by the Knights of Columbus. In January of 1921, fire seriously damaged the structure. By 1922, extensive repairs had been completed and the Knights of Columbus were able to reoccupy the building. They only owned the property for five years when they sold it to the Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows in turn sold the building to the American Legion.

In 1974, the building was again damaged by fire, and four years later it was sold and converted to a two-family dwelling. Later it was transformed into an apartment house.

After searching for more than two years for a suitable home in Winchester for a growing congregation, Temple Shir Tikvah purchased the Vine Street property in 1998. The congregation then spent two years working on the design and renovation of its new/old home.

## Design of the Building

The design of the temple building, with its steeply sloping roof and wood-shingle cladding, was inspired by the eighteenth-century wooden synagogues of Eastern Europe. Images of these synagogues were examined by the Temple Building Committee (Peter Feinmann and Maureen Meister, co-chairs, along with Nancy Berry, Jerry Blaine, Beth Cohen, Eli Bortman, and David Goodman), who hired architects William Sloan and Leslie Saul in 1998, and collaborated on the design, monitored finances, hired the contractor and oversaw the building construction. The design incorporates round-arched windows and classical columns—features of the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, and many other synagogues. American Arts and Crafts architecture, as found in the Vine Street neighborhood, also influenced the building design.

Inside, the temple was decorated to reinforce the themes that contributed to the exterior. The interior work was overseen by temple members Maureen Meister, Maryellen Conway-Shade, and Nancy Barry. The plaque designs, stenciled frieze designs, and notice case inserts were done by Maryellen. She worked with temple member Bob Solosko in designing the ornament for the bimah. Bob carved the lions, crown, and vines. The designs for the bimah paneling, ark, and matching lecterns were developed by Charles Nazarian.

On the entry level of the building, the curtains are made from fabric printed with designs of Josef Frank, a leading early twentieth-century Viennese Jewish architect. Lamps in the rabbi's study are reproductions of Arts and Crafts pottery made by the Saturday Evening Girls, Jewish and Italian girls who lived in Boston's North End during the early twentieth-century. The linen curtains in the lower-level were hand-stamped by Maryellen, following Arts and Crafts tradition.