

## The North Suburban Synagogue Beth El-Zell Hall Addition+Renov.



Building type  
Religious and Cultural

Location  
Highland Park, IL

Site Area  
6.5 Acres

Project Area  
Approx.4250 sf

Client  
The North Suburban Synagogue Beth El

Completion Year  
Zell Hall Addition and Renovation Subs. Jan 2020

Construction Cost  
\$ 1.399 Million in 2020

Top: View of exterior entry and loggia

**History:** Zell Hall was probably constructed between 1956-1960; perhaps immediately prior to the Percival Goodman addition for the Field Sanctuary from 1961-1963. The hall is essentially a two story structure with a tall basement that serves as a Youth Lounge and the main Zell Hall level which was an extension to the stage once serving Blumberg Hall. Zell Hall is blessed with a fairly cavernous volume which has not been utilized to its fullest. Furthermore, the space is currently inaccessible for persons with disabilities. The structure ties in with an incongruous entry vestibule (clad in stone) that does not aesthetically jive fit with the rest of the aesthetic of the synagogue.

**Concept:** Given the numerous functioning levels within this area- (a total of 4 different access levels within a height of 12.5ft.), our approach was to literally think outside the box. The most effective way to bring about aesthetic cohesion as well as accessibility was to add a glazed loggia (corridor) to the south side of the structure, providing access at both

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the Zell Hall and the Horwitz Hoffman Youth lounge. A three stop dual access elevator will be added to serve the various levels. Additionally, a small multipurpose reading room/ family room will be added adjacent to the new extended south vestibule. A ramp mounted on the outside of the rotunda wall will provide access to and from the south wing of the building. The glazed double height entry vestibule will add an inviting element to the ensemble of structures that are currently accessed from the parking lot. The interior ceilings will be restored to become a grand volume and the large windows to the south will be replaced with a more minimal transparent glass with rolling shades. A new coffered ceiling will be illuminated with cove lighting and a series of decorative pendants. Track systems will permit the suspension of art, such that this space can serve both ritual and artistic functions. The hall will also hold potential to be a secondary meeting area and social hall for functions ranging from 50-60 people.

Team

Cyrus Subawalla-Principal Designer  
 Rahman Polk-Associate Principal  
 Top L&R: View inside loggia from SE & SW  
 Mid L&R: Interior Views of Hall  
 Bottom R: View of exterior from SE

