

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Danzansky Funeral Home

other names _____

2. Location

street & number 3501 14th Street, N.W.

☐ not for publication

city or town Washington

☐ vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20007

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

D. Danzansky DANZANSKY / DC SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

7-7-2008
Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

FUNERARY/Funeral Home

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/High Victorian Eclectic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Social History

Period of Significance

1910-1938

Significant Dates

1910; 1924; 1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Bernard Danzansky

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Albert Beers/Harry Wardman

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

District of Columbia Public Library, Washingtoniana
Division. D.C. Preservation League

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5,800 Square Feet

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	0 3 3 2 8 5	4 3 0 7 0 2 3	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Miller, Peter Sefton and Sally Berk, Architectural Historian. Kim Williams, editor

Organization D.C. Preservation League date June 2008

street & number 401 F Street, NW, Room 324 telephone 202.783.5144

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- X A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
X A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- X Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Victor Ayala

street & number 3501 14th Street, N.W. telephone

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Description Summary:

The property at 3501 14th Street consists of two attached red brick row houses that were constructed in 1910, but later joined on the interior, enlarged and converted into use as a funeral home. Built by developer Harry Wardman and designed by architect Albert Beers, the original row houses reflect a transitional late Victorian Queen Anne/early Colonial Revival style of architecture. In 1923-24, a two-story addition housing a chapel was built at the rear of 3501 14th Street, and in 1938, a Tudor Revival-style addition including a funeral parlor was appended to the front elevations of the former dwellings, offering an ornate and prominent corner entry to the funeral home. The two former dwellings are the two southernmost houses located in what was originally a group of eight attached row houses. The third row house from the south has been demolished, leaving a vacant lot between the present building and the other five row houses still standing north of the vacant lot. As originally constructed, each row house measured approximately 22 feet wide and stood 37 feet high and featured single-story front porches. Like many others in the row, the two dwellings at 3501 (historically 3501 and 3503) 14th Street no longer have their front porches, having lost them at the time of their conversion to a funeral home.

The property is located along 14th Street, the primary transportation and commercial corridor in the densely built Mount Pleasant neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

General Description:

Exterior

The two attached row houses historically denoted as 3501 and 3503 14th Street and now simply as 3501 14th Street, are three-story, three-bay-wide red brick dwellings set upon raised foundations and covered with steeply pitched false mansard roofs with distinctive dormer windows. Stepped parapet end walls (including a shared wall between the dwellings) give the row houses a Flemish appearance, adding to the buildings' high Victorian and eclectic appearance. The two dwellings provide the two alternating architectural variations of the eight-house row having an ABAB pattern. The southernmost house, representing form A, is three bays wide with segmental-arched window openings in the main block and bold pedimented dormers in the attic level. The attached house to the north representing form B is similarly three bays wide, but features distinctive round-arched openings in the main block and pyramidal roof dormer windows in the attic level.

The front addition, appended to the building in 1938 has brick walls and limestone trim executed in a Tudor Revival style, primarily in its use of Tudor arch window and door openings. The addition, which appears as a tall one-story addition, actually contains two floors on the interior, including the raised

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foundation level and the first story of the original row houses. The primary entry to the building is located in the addition at the building's southwestern corner.

The west elevation of the building faces 14th Street with the three-story dwellings set back from the lot line and the front addition appended to the dwellings and projecting to the front of the lot line at the sidewalk. The Tudor Revival-style brick addition extends across the entire façade and has walls laid in all-stretcher brick having a variegated reddish brown color similar to the brick of the older dwellings behind and is trimmed at door and window openings in limestone. The principal entry is located at the corner and is framed by a full-wall panel of limestone forming a bowed angle. Double wood entry doors surmounted by superimposed transom lights are recessed into a tall Tudor arch, itself bordered by label molding. The limestone wall panel extends above the roofline of the two-story addition, thus forming a central parapet that further accentuates the corner entry bay. The original metal and glass canopy over this entrance has been removed, leaving only the hardware from which the canopy had been suspended by cables.

A minor entry door, located at the north end of the west elevation of this addition, similarly features a Tudor arch surround of limestone. Between the corner entry and this secondary door are two window bays, including small casements with stone sills at the ground level and larger Tudor arched openings with limestone trim above. The original academically correct Tudor-style wood windows with a robust central stile were removed and replaced with pairs of 2/2 vinyl windows. Limestone balustrades set within the brick parapet wall are located above the windows, while a limestone cornice caps the parapet.

The second and third story of the row houses are set behind and rise above this front addition. At the second story, the southernmost dwelling features three rectangular window openings, with segmental-arched lintels above further ornamented with a central stone keystone and two corner impost blocks. The attached northern dwelling has three bays of round-arched windows, with brick voussoirs and a central limestone keystone. At the dormer level, the southernmost row house features two bold pedimented dormers with large arched windows pushing through the lower cornice to form a broken pediment. Originally these dormer windows were filled with Queen Anne double-hung wood sash having a multi-paned upper sash over a single pane lower sash. The current replacement windows consist of pairs of double-hung windows set within the arched opening. The attic level of the northern row house similarly has a pair of dormers, but rather than pedimented roofs, this pair features semi-hipped roofs built into the slope of the steep mansard. The windows, originally 2/2 wood windows are now pairs of casement replacements. Wooden scrolls on either side of the window frames have been removed. The steeply pitched mansard roof features a catslide and wide eaves supported by exposed rafters in the southern row house and a boxed cornice in the northern one. Stepped parapet firewalls between the row houses and at either end add to the high Victorian aesthetic and eclectic flavor of the dwellings.

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The south elevation of the building consists of the three-story, two-bay-deep main block of the southernmost row house, plus the south elevation of the 1924 two-story addition that extends off of the building at the rear. Based upon alterations in the brickwork, it appears that the row house originally had two single windows on center of this south wall at all three levels. In 1938, when the front Tudor Revival-style addition was built, the first story windows of this elevation were altered such that the rear window was moved further back and both were given Tudor arch surrounds of limestone to match those of the front addition. The second story windows were similarly enhanced with stone label molds, while those of the third story retained their simple stone lintel. Narrow brick belt courses separate the different stories.

The addition at the rear of the building was constructed in 1924 to house a garage on the ground floor, a chapel on the first floor, and a kitchen and pantry on the second floor. The addition steps down from two stories to one and was historically covered with a flat roof. A vaulted roof was recently built when the funeral home was converted into office space.

The north wall of both the row houses and rear wing is devoid of openings, having been attached historically to the other row houses to the north.

Interior

Now serving as office space, the interior of the former dwellings-cum-funeral home has been completely gutted and fitted out with office cubicles. No historic fabric or features survives on the interior indicating the historic use of the building as either dwelling or funeral home.

The corner entry opens directly into a double-height stair hall, providing access to offices on the second floor. The stair hall has granite or marble stair treads and walls and a stainless steel railing. The main reception area at the top of the stairs similarly features granite or marble floors a wood reception desk and all new furred out sheetrock walls with wood chair rails and crown molding. Beyond the reception area in the rear of the former row houses are office cubicles arranged within the large vaulted open area, and closed offices along the south wall.

The lower level of the building remains in an un-renovated state.

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Summary Statement of Significance:

The Danzansky Funeral Home at 3501 14th Street, originally constructed as two attached row houses in 1910 in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington, D.C., was modified in 1923-24, and enhanced again in 1938 for use as a funeral home. The dwellings (originally two of a row of eight attached row houses) were designed by Albert Beers and built by Harry Wardman, one of the city's most prolific and influential developers in the city's history, and builder of a core group of 700 houses over a 14-block area of Columbia Heights. In 1923, Jewish funeral director and undertaker Bernard Danzansky opened a funeral parlor in the row house at 3501 14th Street, establishing the city's first Jewish funeral home—a position it held from 1923 until the opening of Goldberg's Funeral Home in 1945. With his business success, Danzansky became a significant member of the city's Jewish community, founding and funding several Jewish institutions and contributing significantly to the city's Jewish heritage and culture.

Not purpose built, but progressively equipped with the necessary appointments of a funeral home, the Danzansky Funeral Home serves as an example of the evolution of the funeral home as a building type. More significantly, though, the property represents the growing importance of the Jewish population in the city and the special funerary needs demanded by both the Jewish religion and culture. The property meets Criteria A and B with community planning/development and social history as the areas of significance. The Period of Significance for the property extends from 1910 when the row houses were first constructed until 1938, when the row houses were further enlarged to meet Jewish funerary needs.

Despite the loss of its historic interiors and original windows, the property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Harry Wardman and Columbia Heights:

The two attached row house buildings to later become the Danzansky Funeral Home were constructed in 1910 on land purchased by developer Harry Wardman. Wardman began amassing land in the immediate vicinity in May 1906, by first purchasing a 20-lot section of the Rhees Farm, just north of Spring Road on the east side of 14th Street, N.W. Wardman, who had already invested in the construction of houses in the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights neighborhoods to the south, clearly saw the potential for development along this as-yet unbuilt stretch of 14th Street.¹

¹ *The Washington Post*, "Wardman Buys Big Tract", May 7, 1906, p. 2.

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Two years later, patent attorney Harry Willson, purchased a large section of land south of the Rhees farm, known as the Mattingly farm. Willson then partnered with Harry Wardman to construct 102 houses on the former farm and on the platted streets between Newton and Otis Streets and 14th and Holmead Street.² Of the development, the *Washington Post* reminisced, "The old Mattingly farmhouse and barns...will be torn down in the near future, blotting out a historic and picturesque feature of the landscape in that part of the District."³ It also reported that such brick row houses as being proposed were popular and that Wardman had erected 400 of them in the past two years.

In 1910, Wardman purchased the remaining section of the Mattingly farm that stretched along the east side of 14th Street north to Spring Road with the intent of building 300 houses. In January 1910, the *Washington Post* reported that the first group of eight houses would be designed by architect Albert H. Beers, long an associate of Wardman.⁴ The Danzansky Funeral Home comprises the two southernmost of the houses in this first group of eight houses. The row, which bore the street addresses 3501 through 3515 14th Street, consisted of attached dwellings each measuring 22.5 feet wide, 37 feet high and having 10 rooms and 3 baths with electric lighting, and hot water heat.⁵

Upon completion of the row, in June 1910, Dr. Edgar Keneipp purchased 3501 14th Street to serve as his home and office.⁶ Dr. Keneipp remained in the house until 1923 when he left the city for his home county in Illinois.⁷

The Danzansky Funeral Home:

In 1923, Dr. Keneipp sold his house to Bernard Danzansky, a former tailor and ice cream and stationery seller who three years earlier had established a funeral home at 1304 9th Street, NW.⁸ The salesman-cum-undertaker acquired the dwelling, both to enlarge his 9th Street business and to use as his family residence. Danzansky, an active member of the Jewish community, likely chose the 14th Street location

² *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1908, "Buys 102 Building Lots", p. 16.

³ *The Washington Post*, "To Build Small Homes", February 9, 1908, p. ARF 6

⁴ *The Washington Post*, "Henry Wardman Active", January 16, 1910, p. CA 6

⁵ DC Permit to Build #4357 (February 7, 1910); #4937 (March 12, 1910), and associated inspector reports

⁶ *The Washington Post*, "Connecticut Avenue Sales," July 17, 1910, p. CA 4.

⁷ *The Washington Post*, "Dr. Keneipp Services Today," July 9, 1955, p. 20

⁸ Danzansky first appears as a "funeral director" or "undertaker" in the 1923 City Directory; residential and "undertaker" listings show him in the funeral business at 1304 9th Street NW. Danzansky's Washington National Jewish Ledger ads in early 1948 refer to "27 Years of Leadership." Starting with the February 13, 1948 issue of the Ledger, this becomes "28 Years of Leadership." Given that each edition of the city directory took a long time to compile and was offered for sale prior to its nominal year, it seems likely that Danzansky started his funeral home in 1920.

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to be closer to the neighborhoods where many affluent residents of the Jewish community were beginning to settle. In order to accommodate his business, Danzansky built a rear addition housing a garage and “chapel”⁹ on the first floor and a kitchen and pantry on the second floor. The first known funeral to occur at 3501 14th Street was that of Rose Celesta Lowenstam of 1707 I Street NW, whose service was held on November 16, 1924.¹⁰ At that time, Bernard Danzansky proclaimed himself to be “the only Jewish funeral director and embalmer” in Washington.¹¹

Danzansky’s claim to be the “only” Jewish funeral director in the city is supported both by oral history and by the fact that there are no references to any Jewish funeral homes other than Danzansky’s in either the *Washington Post* or the *Washington Evening Star*.¹² Although Jewish cemeteries in Washington date back to the Civil War era (burials at the Adas Israel cemetery, for instance, began in 1870), there were apparently no Jewish undertakers¹³ until well into the 20th century because until after World War I, the Jewish population of Washington could not support a funeral home.¹⁴ Prior to that, funerals were held in private residences, presided over by a rabbi, with the actual burial handled by an undertaker or sexton. Another alternative, particularly for German Jews, was to have a German funeral home, such as Geier’s, handle the arrangements, with a service again by a rabbi. Occasionally, they were conducted in non-denominational funeral homes, or, in the case of Reform congregations, at the synagogue.¹⁵ The influx of Jews from Eastern Europe—like the Danzanskys—did not occur until the end of the nineteenth century. There was then perhaps a sufficient “critical mass” of population to support a funeral home, but ethnic and sectarian differences still posed a challenge to someone catering to one faith.¹⁶ On the other hand, the limited size of the Jewish population and the specialty in Jewish burial practices created something of a natural monopoly for Danzansky—i.e., demand for such services were limited enough to be satisfied by a single firm.

⁹ DC Permit to Build, November 23, 1923 and associated inspector reports. The D.C. Permit to Build identifies the use as chapel.. Clearly, though the religious sanctuary was meant for Jewish religious services.

¹⁰ *The Washington Post*, November 16, 1924, Obituary, p.3.

¹¹ *The Washington Post*, “Two Undertakers in Clash to Ship Body For Burial”, March 1, 1924, p.4

¹² In a 2007 interview, the archivist of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington noted that until after World War I, the Jewish population of Washington could not support a funeral home. Furthermore, Ms. Susan Winer, granddaughter of the founder of the Goldberg Funeral Home (which bought Danzansky’s in 1975) reported in a 2007 interview that “in the beginning, say the 20s and forward there was only Danzansky until my grandfather started the business in about 1945 or so and it was Goldberg Funeral Home.

¹³ It was also about the time of the Civil War that undertaking emerged as a separate, specialized line of business from the cabinetmakers/coffin-makers who had previously provided the caskets, plus transport and other services as a side line.

¹⁴ Interview with archivist at the Jewish Historical Society, 2007.

¹⁵ This statement was based in part on a review of Post obits. I can send you a list of samples but it might be overkill.

¹⁶ According to the *American Jewish Year Book*, the Jewish population of Washington was 8,000 in 1917 and according to *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, the Jewish population of Washington was 16,000 in 1930.

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Sometime after 1930, the success of Bernard Danzansky's funeral home enabled him to purchase the attached row house at 3503 14th Street. By 1937-38, he had begun major interior and exterior modifications including the removal of the front porches on the row houses and the construction of the Tudor Revival-style addition along the front façade. The new interior space boasted additional funeral parlor rooms, air conditioning, an elevator and a commodious and elegant entryway.¹⁷

It is the front addition of 1938 that most clearly identifies the building as a funeral home.¹⁸ Without the context of a comprehensive city-wide survey, it is difficult to evaluate funeral homes either architecturally or socially. However, based upon a general understanding, funeral homes historically tended to *not* be purpose-built facilities, but mostly adaptive reuses of large residences that invariably involved substantial alterations. The Danzansky alterations are not mere decoration or afterthoughts; real consideration and expense went into creating an entrance addition that has street presence and that presumably met the expectations of Danzansky's clients through the use of limestone, a large canopy, and Old World elements that convey the stately and solemn feeling of a religious institution. As such, the Danzansky Funeral Home provides a good example of the building type, as it evolved from a dwelling into a funeral parlor.

Danzansky's Funeral Home filled an important need by readily providing important religious rituals and customs that require specialized knowledge and competencies. For example, among Orthodox and Conservative Jews, embalming is forbidden and ritual cleansing of the body in a timely manner is of the utmost importance. This cleansing is performed by a person of the same sex as the deceased who leaves intact any shed blood, as the blood of a person is considered as holy as his life and deserving of proper burial. The body is also clothed in special burial shrouds and is never left unattended until burial.

However, Danzansky also performed embalming services, presumably for his Reform Jewish clientele. Danzansky's grandson, Stephen Danzansky wrote that his grandfather founded his business to meet a community need:

"Barney Danzansky's founding of the funeral home was both a service to the Jewish community/tradition *and* a service to a burgeoning American urban society where the government licensed funeral directors and promulgated health regulations for the disposal of the deceased. Barney saw his work as a bridge between the two, and so left the joys of a comfortable retail business (tailor, stationery, and even an ice cream store on 14th Street) to serve his community."

¹⁷ *The Washington Post*, "Funeral Parlor Designed", July 18, 1937, p R3.

¹⁸ Washington, DC Permits to Build, #213487; 213488; 213489; 213802; 216741; 217135 and associated inspector reports from June through October, 1938.

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Bernard Danzansky:

Bernard Danzansky was born in Romania in 1878, and emigrated to the United States in 1890 where he was raised in Baltimore, MD. By 1920, Danzansky was becoming a leader in the philanthropic activities of Washington's Jewish community. He was a founder and first president of Washington's original Hebrew Home for the Aged. He was a leading fundraiser in the building of the Hebrew Home at 1125 Spring Street, N.W.¹⁹ During an era in which Jews faced widespread discrimination, both socially and professionally, Danzansky was active in Jewish relief efforts following World War I and in Zionist causes.²⁰ Danzansky also founded the first chapter of the Independent Order of B'rith Sholem, a Jewish fraternal chartered in an era when many such organizations excluded Jews.²¹ In 1924, the same year he moved his funeral home to upper 14th Street,²² Danzansky chaired the 22nd Annual convention of B'rith Sholem at Washington's Raleigh Hotel.²³ Six years later, in 1930, the national B'rith Sholem organization commissioned a bronze tablet honoring the accomplishments of Mr. and Mrs. Danzansky.²⁴

As one of the area's earliest Russian-Jewish immigrants and a successful businessman, Bernard Danzansky was a prominent individual within the Jewish community. As noted above, he was active in Jewish philanthropic and self-help organizations, and significantly, the founder and funder of the Hebrew Home for the Aged. In 1935, Danzansky was president of the Jewish Funeral Directors Association of America. During the late 1940s, Bernard Danzansky became less active in the operation of the funeral home, choosing instead to focus on his philanthropic activities. In 1944, he founded the Hebrew Academy of Washington, remaining as president for more than a decade. The only all-day Jewish school in Washington at the time, the Hebrew Academy was part of a larger national movement committed to providing students with a solid Jewish education while also preparing them to participate in the broader American community. The Academy quickly outgrew its first location, a residential building on upper Georgia Avenue; in 1951 after a series of moves, the Academy built its own purpose-built school on 16th Street, near Fort Stevens Drive, a testament to Bernard Danzansky's philanthropy.²⁵

¹⁹ <http://www.hebrew-home.org/history.html> and *The Washington Post*, "Help to Aged Women," May 11, 1914, p. 4., "New Home Is Opened," October 19, 1914, p. 14; and "Hebrew Home for Aged Cornerstone is Sealed," October 27, 1924, p. 8.

²⁰ *The Washington Post*, "Jews Demand A Place," July 12, 1915 p. 2.

²¹ *The Washington Post*, "B'rith Sholem Meets Here," April 21, 1924, p. 18.

²² The first Washington Post funeral notice that referenced the 3501 Fourteenth Street address was that of Rose Celesta Lowenstam of 1707 I Street NW, whose service was held on November 16, 1924 (Obituary, p.3)

²³ *The Washington Post*, "600 B'rith Sholem Delegates Due in Washington Today," May 18, 1924, p.18.

²⁴ *The Washington Post*, "Danzansky Tablet Unveiled At Home", October 6, 1930, p. 20

²⁵ *The Washington Post*, "Building Contract Awarded for Hebrew Academy", December 12, 1949, p. 11, "Party Tonight Will Honor Danzansky," June 8, 1952, p. M4, and "Head Renamed to Fifth Term By Academy," July 13, 1952, p. M19. Danzansky served as head of the Academy as late as 1956.

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Bernard Danzansky's son, Joseph Danzansky earned his own reputation in the city's business world. An attorney by trade, he later became president and chairman of Giant Foods and president of the Washington Board of Trade. He was "a major force in the winning of Home Rule" for the District of Columbia and a philanthropist. The *Washington Post* eulogized him, stating that "the tireless work of Danzansky for his beloved city, for a metropolitan area and its rich and poor citizens, was probably unmatched by any other Washingtonian of his generation."²⁶

Columbia Heights and Washington's Jewish Community

Danzansky's Funeral Home is one of the few extant sites demonstrative of the fact that a significant Jewish community once populated Columbia Heights. In 1924, when the Danzansky Funeral Home moved to Columbia Heights, it was part of the general migration of the city's residents from Southeast, Southwest, and downtown Washington to portions of the city north of Florida Avenue. Jews, however, prior to the 1950 Supreme Court ruling that found restrictive covenants to be unconstitutional, were prohibited in many areas of northwest Washington west of 16th Street and Rock Creek Park – among them Woodley Park, Wesley Heights, and Spring Valley. Wealthier Jews moved to Forest Hills between Connecticut Avenue and Rock Creek and along the 16th Street corridor. Middle and lower-income Jews moved to Columbia Heights, along the Fourteenth Street street-car line, and Georgia Avenue north of Missouri Avenue, also along a street-car line. This area became a locus of a significant Jewish population in the years between the two world wars.

The pattern of Bernard Danzansky's life is indicative of the general migration pattern of Jews in Washington during the first half of the twentieth century. The funeral home in Columbia Heights represents the third migration of a community that began, in the late nineteenth century as a cluster of immigrant merchants in the modestly-priced quadrants of southeast and southwest Washington and Georgetown; that moved in the early twentieth century to the downtown commercial core, primarily along 7th Street, NW; and that, in the years following World War I, moved to the upper reaches of the city. The fourth migration was to the suburbs after World War II.

Danzansky was first listed in the city directory in 1913 as a tailor at 1134 7th Street NW.²⁷ Only two years later, he was listed as both living at and running a mens' furnishing store at 741 8th Street SE. Five years after that, he was listed as a stationer at 1303 7th Street NW, a few blocks from his next move to the first location of his funeral home, 1304 9th Street, NW, and across from his home at 1303 9th Street. His last move was to 3501 14th Street where he and his family lived in residential quarters above the funeral home for the remainder of his life.

²⁶ *The Washington Post*, "Tireless Civic Work Typlified Businessman", November 14, 1979, p. D7

²⁷ Danzansky was first mentioned in the *Washington Post* on November 24, 1912, when the "Clubs and Societies" page noted that he would chair the "Washington Hebrew Young Men's Club" founded in a meeting at his home.

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Conclusion

The Danzansky Funeral Home merits National Register Criterion A as the site of an institution important to Washington's Jewish community and National Register Criterion B because Bernard Danzansky was a figure important in that community for reasons that go well beyond his funerary services. The building itself may merit consideration for its building type, but a deeper understanding of the range and history of at least local funeral homes is necessary before such a conclusion can be made.

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Major Bibliographical References:

Newspaper Articles: *The Washington Post*:

- "B'rith Sholem Meets Here," April 21, 1924, p. 18.
- "Building Contract Awarded for Hebrew Academy," December 12, 1949, p. 11.
- "Buys 102 Building Lots," February 7, 1908, p. 16.
- "Connecticut Avenue Sales," July 17, 1910, p. CA 4.
- "Danzansky Tablet Unveiled At Home", October 6, 1930, p. 20
- "Dr. Keneipp Services Today," July 9, 1955, p. 20.
- "Funeral Parlor Designed", July 18, 1937, p R3.
- "Head Renamed to Fifth Term By Academy," July 13, 1952, p. M19.
- "Henry Wardman Active," January 16, 1910, p. CA 6.
- "Jews Demand A Place," July 12, 1915 p. 2.
- "Party Tonight Will Honor Danzansky," June 8, 1952, p. M4,
- "Tireless Civic Work Typlified Businessman", November 14, 1979, p. D7
- "To Build Small Homes," February 9, 1908, p. ARF 6
- "Two Undertakers in Clash to Ship Body For Burial", March 1, 1924, p.4
- "600 B'rith Sholem Delegates Due in Washington Today", May 18, 1924, p.18.

Other Sources:

DC Permits to Build #4357 (February 7, 1910); #4937 (March 12, 1910), and associated inspector reports.
DC Permits to Build, #213487; 213488; 213489; 213802; 216741; 217135 and associated inspector reports from June through October, 1938.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The property at 3501 14th Street is located at the northeast corner of 14th and Otis Streets and occupies Lot 806 on Square 2827 S.

Boundary Justification:

The buildings historically designated 3501 and 3503 14th Street and comprising the property now designated as 3501 14th Street have been on this lot since construction in 1910. The historic boundaries have remained unchanged since then.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information is common to all photos:

Danzansky Funeral Home
3501 14th Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
Kim Williams, Photographer
June 2008
DC Historic Preservation Office

- 1) South and west elevations; view looking northeast
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- 2) West Elevation, view looking east
2 of 7
- 3) South elevation; view looking north
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- 4) North and east elevations, view looking southwest
4 of 7
- 5) Detail, side door, west elevation
5 of 7
- 6) Interior reception area looking towards corner entry
6 of 7
- 7) Interior reception area looking from main entry stair to upper level
7 of 7

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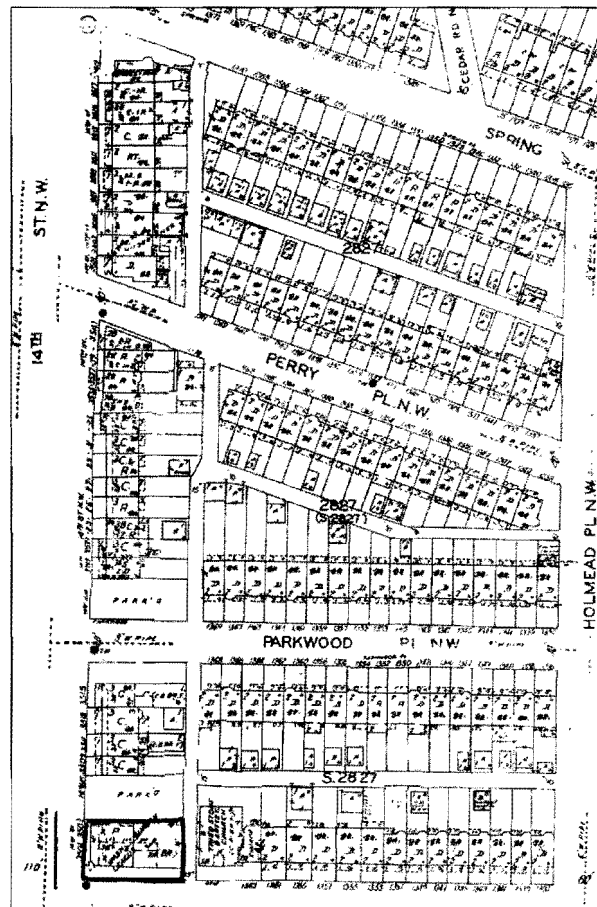
Danzansky Funeral Home

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SITE MAP



Danzansky Funeral Home
3501 14th Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
Sanborn Map, 1991