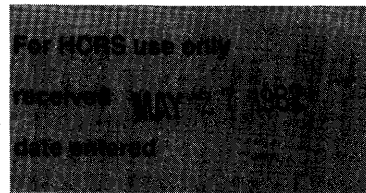


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (LC13:D6-4)

and/or common South Street Temple

2. Location

street & number 20th & South Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Lincoln N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Nebraska code 31 county Lancaster code 109

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, By Trustees

street & number 20th & South Streets

city, town Lincoln N/A vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, County-City Building

street & number 555 South 10th Street

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date On-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun was built in 1923-24, as a house of worship for the Reformed Jewish people in the Lincoln community. The Temple, in the absence of a traditional architectural style, is eclectic in nature, and incorporates Byzantine and Moorish design elements in its ornamentation and general massing. The large brick structure is accented with terra cotta trim and has decorative brickwork executed throughout its facades. The most prominent feature is the central octagonally-shaped dome which rises above the roof line of the Temple. Structural and historical integrity have been preserved except for minor interior alterations.

The Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (South Street Temple) is located in Lincoln, Nebraska, county seat of Lancaster County and capital of the state of Nebraska. The Temple is situated on the northwest corner of Twentieth and South Streets.

The original temple, no longer extant, was built in 1893 and was located at 12th and D Streets. The present structure was built in 1923-24 in the stylistic tendency known as Eclecticism. The Temple, in the absence of a true Hebraic architecture, incorporates design elements from the Moorish and Byzantine styles. The re-use of Byzantine forms, especially in churches, was characterized by multiple domes, round arched windows and ample decoration. Moorish synagogues were usually radially planned with a dome over a square hall.

The Temple is constructed of brick and has a raised basement with a brick beltcourse. The structure is oriented on an east-west axis, with the main entry located on the east facade. Access to the vestibule is provided through three separate double door entries surrounded by elaborate carved-stone archways and columns. Floral shapes, plant forms, curvaceous lines and geometric motifs, all reminiscent of Moorish designs, are executed throughout the columns and arches. A striking feature on the east facade is the large rose window, displaying the Star of David as the focal point, and used in the facade of the building for the dramatic use of sunlight in the Temple auditorium. The gable peak is adorned with the two Tablets of the Law, worked in terra cotta. The Temple has a square-shaped plan with pavilions on the north and south facades, and a central octagonally-shaped dome with a clay tile roof. The east and west wings house the vestibule and apse areas, respectively.

The entire cornice features arched brick corbelling, diamond shaped motifs, brick dentilling and terra cotta trim. The north, south and west facade apexes have terra cotta plaques displaying the Star of David. Fenestration on the north and south facades is identical. Lower level windows have two over two pane arrangement and flat brick window hoods. The north and south pavilions feature triple round arched window arrangements with fanlights and colored panes of geometric shapes. Decorative brickwork, in the arches, columns and panels, of geometric designs, surround the windows. A terra cotta band underlines the window bases. The west facade, which houses the Ark, is devoid of excessive ornamentation. Additional entries are found on the north and south facades. A brick chimney is located at the northeast corner of the building.

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Few alterations have been made to the interior of the Temple. The interior layout is square with a central hall leading from the vestibule. The balcony is situated above the vestibule in the east wing of the Temple. Entry into the auditorium is through the three massive panelled, double doors identical to the exterior doors which lead into the vestibule. The sanctuary seats approximately 240 people. The simply-finished walls are accented with richly tiled geometric bands forming archways above the balcony area, the apse, and the triple round arched window arrangements. The four arches hold the huge, mosaic dome rising above the sanctuary area. The dome was designed by Professor Meyer G. Gaba, a member of the congregation, to be accoustically perfect. The Ten Commandments, in Hebrew, are represented on tablets at the apex of the arches on all four sides of the auditorium. Transverse ribs form a vault bay over the sanctuary area, with repeated vaulting in the balcony and apse areas. The majestic walnut Ark, for the keeping of the scrolls, was carved by Keats Lorenz, a master carver of Lincoln. The "Eternal Light" is represented above the Ark, along with the Hebrew inscription reading "Know Before Whom You are Standing." The bema, the platform from which the Torah or Holy Bible is read, is placed in a central location, as is customary. Menorahs, seven-branched candlesticks, flank the outside edge of the platform near the steps leading to the bema. The choir box, located behind the pulpit, contains the Austin organ, donated by the Temple Sisterhood.

The activity or Sabbath school room in the basement has been modernized in the last three years. The stage was partitioned off for a library.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify ethnic)

Specific dates 1923–24 **Builder/Architect** Davis & Wilson, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun (South Street Temple) is significant as a place of communion religiously and socially for the Jewish people. Representative of the Jewish culture, the Temple remains as an important part of the heritage of the Jewish people. Architecturally significant, the Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun exemplifies the early 20th century eclectic architecture of temple building types and incorporates Byzantine and Moorish design elements in its ornamentation and general massing. At present, the South Street Temple is one of only two Jewish houses of worship in the city of Lincoln. The second, Tifereth Israel Synagogue, is of modern design.

The history of the Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun begins on October 5, 1884 when Messrs. Isaac Friend, Aaron Katzenstein, Isaac Oppenheimer, Moses Oppenheimer and Leopold Barr, all residents of Lincoln, Nebraska, organized the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. The first meeting which set down the precepts of reform congregations was held in Pittsburgh in 1885. It rejected the reinstatement of the temple cult and the demand for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. Men and women could now worship together, and the concept of an organ and choir was approved.

When Lincoln was selected to be the state capitol, the legislature encouraged divine worship among the different denominations by donating city property for the purpose of erecting houses of worship. In January, 1885, the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun acquired two lots on the northwest corner of 12th and D Streets in Lincoln. In 1893, it was decided to build a Jewish house of worship on this location. The building was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1893. Although the country was suffering from the financial panic of 1893, it was hoped that membership would increase since services could now be held in the new house of worship. Membership declined however, and a succession of rabbis ministered to the needs of the Jewish congregation until 1912. In 1912, Jacob Singer was elected as resident rabbi and served until 1923, when Rabbi Solomon Elihu Starrels, from New Orleans, filled his position. Henry Jay Karp is the present rabbi and the congregation comprises of approximately 103 members.

9. Major Bibliographical References ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lincoln

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

This property is located on lots 5, 6, College Hill Subdivision, Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska in Section 36, T10N, R6E, including all of the historically associated real estate.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joni Gilkerson, Survey Associate/Susan Wassenmiller, 825 F Street, Lincoln, Ne

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date March, 1982

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402/471-3850

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Mervyn D. Kinnett 5/13/82

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

<small>For HCRS use only</small>	
<small>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register</small>	
<i>William Byars</i>	<small>Entered in the National Register</small>
<small>Keeper of the National Register</small>	<small>date</small> <u>6/25/82</u>
<small>Attest:</small>	<small>date</small>
<small>Chief of Registration</small>	

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The present building, erected in 1923-24, incorporates architectural details and layout similar to other reform temples built during the early 20th century in the stylistic tendency known as Eclecticism. Because no generally acceptable style designations have been developed which suitably describe the Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, the synagogue, in the absence of a true Hebraic architecture, can be considered Byzantine or Moorish. Many of the design elements from these two styles are incorporated into the layout of the Temple.

There are several reasons attributed to the lack of an architectural prototype for Judaism. The first is because the Jews, for a great part of their history, were a wandering people -- living in many places among many cultures. Their own culture revealed itself most expressively in the poetry of the psalms, not in buildings, and they left behind them no architectural heritage. Wherever they traveled, the Jewish people have embraced as their own the architecture which they have found around them. Secondly, the Jews have a long tradition of not depicting living things (people and animals) in their art as a result of a ban against idolatry. The Islamic alternative is a rich tradition in art of Mosaics and geometric motifs. This might explain an adoption of Byzantine architecture by the Jews in later years.

Traces of the Romantic Movement can also be found in the architectural designs of Jewish synagogues. For years, the only decorative devices with Jewish symbolic connotation were the slab of the two Tablets of the Law and the Eternal Light, a lamp burning before the Ark. Fondness for a diffused romantic light in the shape of a hexagram, symbolizing the shield or star of David, first appeared in American synagogues around the middle of the 19th century.

The Temple of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun was designed by Lincoln architects Davis and Wilson, who were responsible for numerous structures in Lincoln and around Nebraska, including the Gold and Company (Brandeis) building, and the Stuart Theatre building, both in Lincoln. The architectural firm of Davis and Wilson was established by Mr. Ellery L. Davis and Walter F. Wilson in 1921. Earlier, after graduation from the University of Nebraska and Columbia University, Mr. Davis formed a partnership with Mr. George Berlinghof. Two of their first projects were a department store for Miller and Paine and the Lincoln High School building. In March, 1919, Walter F. Wilson was discharged from the U.S. Navy and immediately entered the office of Mr. Davis, after dissolution of the Berlinghof and Davis partnership. The partnership of Davis and Wilson was established in Lincoln with offices in the Anderson Building at 12th and "O" streets. In 1957, the firm of Davis and Wilson was incorporated in the state of Nebraska. In 1962, Mr. William Fenton and

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Mr. James Stange became stockholders and principals in the firm of Davis and Wilson, Inc. On December 15, 1968, the name of the firm became Davis, Fenton, Stange and Darling.

Keats Lorenz, a prominent master modeler and carver of Lincoln, collaborated with the architects and carved the Ark of the Temple. Mr. Lorenz was born in Mattewan, New York. He quit high school at the age of 15 to work in a sculpturing shop in Boston, Massachusetts. In Boston, he also worked in the architectural office of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson. (Bertram Goodhue was the designer for the Nebraska State Capitol). Mr. Lorenz moved to Lincoln in 1922 and taught wood working at Whittier Junior High School for a year before opening a woodcarving shop. He later moved to Dallas and then returned to Lincoln in 1953. He operated his own woodcarving shop and was a member of the Lincoln Artists Guild. Mr. Lorenz' other noteworthy accomplishments in Lincoln include the mahogany doors for the representative's hall in the State Capitol building, the mantel piece in the Governor's mansion, and other works, in the Stuart Theatre building, public buildings and private residences, in Lincoln and the Midwest.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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