

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Plum Street Temple (Isaac M. Wise Temple)

AND/OR COMMON

K. K. B'nai Yeshurun

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

S.E. Corner Eighth and Plum Streets

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Cincinnati

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Ohio

CODE

COUNTY

Hamilton

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> 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

K. K. B'nai Yeshurun

STREET & NUMBER

3315 Clifton Avenue 45220

CITY, TOWN

Cincinnati

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Ohio

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hamilton County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

Court and Main Streets

CITY, TOWN

Cincinnati

STATE

Ohio

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory and Appraisal of Historic Sites, Buildings and Areas

DATE

1960

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Cincinnati City Hall, 801 Plum Street

CITY, TOWN

Cincinnati

STATE

Ohio

33

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"A spectacular mixture of Gothic and Moorish or Near Eastern elements, both within and without, the result is quite fantastic and flamboyantly colorful."¹

The structure is of red brick with buff lime stone trim that is richly ornamented in low relief in the Moorish style. The facade is divided into three bays with the high central nave of a Christian basilica with deeply recessed doors. Two polygonal minarets rise 50 feet above the roof.

The plan includes the nave (34 x 100 feet), two side aisles (17 x 74 feet), two transepts (34 x 34 feet). There is a basement level used for school rooms, a kitchen facility and for the Rabbi's study. The main floor of the temple is 75 feet from the floor to the roof, the transepts 45 feet high and the side aisles 35 feet high. The two story nave is lighted by a clerestory level above whose windows are framed in pointed arches. The roof is supported on slender cast iron columns with Moorish capitals. The altar is at the east end of the building with a rose window above matching the west door, with its rose window. Over the four bays of the nave and side aisles and above the center of the transept rise 13 domes on octagonal bases. The whole interior is richly decorated with eastern ornament. This picturesque embellishment was painted on in 1874 by the German artist, Thien. Successive restorations have left the original work intact including the elaborate inscriptions in Hebrew in the cornice, over the arches and above the Ark. The last cleaning and restoration was carried out in 1969.

¹ Patton, Glen James Keys Wilson Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Vol. XXVI No. 4, December 1967

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1865 - 1866

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Keys Wilson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Plum Street Temple is important architecturally and to the history of the Reform Judaism in the United States. Beginning in the early 19th century in Germany, Reform Judaism was brought to America by immigrants and reached its zenith under Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, Wise became Rabbi at the Plum Street Temple in 1854 and guided that congregation for 53 years. During that period the Synagogue was the leading reform temple in the United States. Rabbi Wise was the first President of the Union of American Hebrew congregations and was the founder of Hebrew Union College.

The congregation was incorporated in 1842 and outgrew an earlier synagogue. In 1863 subscriptions were circulated for a new building and the present site was purchased in 1863 for \$35,000. Ground was broken that year. The Civil War halted construction but the cornerstone was laid on May 12, 1865 and the Synagogue opened August 24 of that year. Current news accounts noted "It is in the Byzantine style with two steeples....the building, according to the plan, will be truly grand, both in design and dimensions."¹ Another booklet notes: "It is an Alhambra temple, with slender pillars and thirteen domes [perhaps to correspond to the famous passage in Exodus 34:6,7 with the thirteen attributes of God."²

The origins of the congregation were central European and particularly Germany and the architectural style is based on the Romantic movement abroad, documented by Rachel Wischnitzer in Synagogue Architecture in the United States. The search among the Jews for an architectural style that gave them a special identity may be derived from a group of central European monumental designs, Rabbi Isaac Wise identified this Moorish style with Reform Judaism and the Plum Street Temple was the first Moorish Synagogue in the United States. (Temple Emanu-El in New York was demolished in 1927, Central Synagogue in New York is another excellent example of this style)

¹May 6, 1864, The American Israelite

²50th anniversary booklet 1892, Isaac M. Wise and Max B. May

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Heller, James G., A Yesterday when it is Past, A History of the Isaac M. Wise Temple - K. K. B'nai Yeshurun - of Cincinnati in Commemoration of the Centenary of Its Founding. Cincinnati, Copywrite 1942 by Isaac M. Wise Temple, 236 pp.
- Wischnitzer, Rachel, Synagogue Architecture in the United States, Philadelphia. Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	7 1 4 62 10	4 3 3 1 01 10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Hamilton County Auditors Record
Plat ID Book 77, page 1
Parcels 63,64,65,66

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carolyn Pitts

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Historic Sites Survey

DATE

2/27/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington.

STATE

D.C.

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Plum Street Temple

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The architect was James Keys Wilson (1828-1894) who had studied his profession under James Renwick and Martin E. Thompson. Wilson is better known for his buildings in the Gothic Revival style so he must have collaborated directly with Rabbi Wise. This New World "Alhambra" is one of the outstanding examples of the Moorish style.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Ohio, Cincinnati, A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors. Cincinnati: The Wiesen-Hart Press 1943.

Cincinnati Commercial, May 13, 1865, Description of the Design of the New Temple.

Patton, Glen, James Keys Wilson (1828-1894), Architect of the Gothic Revival in Cincinnati. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. Vol. XXVI No. 4 December 1967.

Smith, S. Winifred, Museum Echoes: Plum Street Temple Published by the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. September 1948.

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