

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **AUG 13 1980**
DATE ENTERED **OCT 16 1980**

**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 Beth Jacob Social Hall and Congregation

AND/OR COMMON Beth Jacob Synagogue

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 301 & 311 Washington Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN Miami Beach

VICINITY OF
CODE

STATE Florida

COUNTY Dade
CODE

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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Beth Jacob Congregation

STREET & NUMBER 311 Washington Avenue,

CITY, TOWN Miami Beach,

VICINITY OF

STATE Florida

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dade County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Miami

STATE Florida

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

The original Beth Jacob Congregation building, now the Social Hall, was erected in 1929, designed by architect H. Frasser Rose.¹ The building, faced in stucco, has a rectangular plan two stories high and has a gable roof, end to front. The front elevation, facing west, has a water table approximately ten feet high, in rusticated stucco, which extends out on both sides of the building, ending in two arched openings.

The central entrance consists of three double doors of simple, vertical panels and large iron hinges of Spanish style. The doors are raised five steps, the steps flanked by pylons. Above the doors, an aluminum canopy was added, but the vertical thrust of the entrance openings is continued to the second level by windows with semi-circular arched heads. These windows, originally casement type,² are now aluminum awning and have air conditioning units in two of the openings. On each side of these central windows is a circular stained glass window. The top of the facade has a plaque reading "Beth Jacob Social Hall, 5689-1929." Above, the facade is crowned by the Tablets with the Ten Commandments.

Inside, the main Hall is two stories in height. Alterations are limited to suspended fluorescent lights and the air conditioning system, paneled off above the vestibule.³ An addition of concrete block to the east was done in 1946, containing offices and meeting rooms.⁴ Windows on the side elevation are all original, flat transomed double hung sash, except for arched casements in the vestibule space and modern jalousies in the rear addition.

The present Beth Jacob Congregation was built in 1936, the design of Henry Hohausser,⁵ one of the most prominent architects in Miami Beach at the time.⁶ This is a fine example of religious architecture, strongly relying on the Art Deco style for its decorative details.

This building is sensitive to the design of the older one, as it maintains the basic massing, scale, setback and materials. The front elevation has the same gable end treatment as its neighbor, but the height is increased by the extension of a continuous parapet. The two story rectangular plan is treated in a very classical, symmetrical composition. The front elevation has a large central arched opening, flanked by a smaller arched window.

The central double door has insert panels, highlighting the Star of David as main decoration. The main entrance is elevated and fronted by ten steps which approached from three sides. Above the door is a large arched stained glass window, depicting a scene of symbolism of Jewish religion and history. The entrance is flanked by coupled fluted pilasters of cast stone, topped by Composite capitals; the fluting continues in the arch. Above, the Tablets again top the gable end.

The side elevation is also symmetrically composed, through the fenestration and the flat parapet, which rises and curves at the center. This central portion has a slight forward projection. The building is crowned at the "Crossing" by a shallow dome mounted in an octagonal drum,

6 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" 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 1928, 1936.

BUILDER/ARCHITECT H. Frasser Rose/Henry Hohausen

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Beth Jacob Social Hall and Synagogue, built in 1929 and 1935 respectively, are significant as the first religious structures of the Orthodox Jewish Congregation of Miami Beach.¹ The building of the synagogue satisfied an urgent need of the small Jewish community consisting of residents and winter visitors who had first established themselves on the Beach in 1915. It also established that the Jewish people were accepted on the Beach² as hitherto they had been denied permission to build a synagogue and had, at first, ferried to religious services at the Zion Congregation on the Miami mainland.³ When Orthodox Jews, who could not travel on the Sabbath and High Holidays, joined the Miami Beach Congregation, they had to hold their services in the Royal Apartments, 221 Collins Avenue.⁴ Almost every Jew who was a permanent resident between 1927 and 1932 was a financial contributor to the building funds of the Beth Jacob Synagogue. Among the early members of the Congregation were the first physician on the beach, Dr. Max Dobrin and his wife Lois Dobrin who was the first professional worker for Jewish agencies. Baron de Hirsch Meyer, founder of the Miami Beach Federal Savings and Loan Association and later vice-mayor of the City of Miami Beach and a trustee and benefactor of the University of Miami was also of the congregation. So too, was the Weiss family, commemorated in the park named after Rose Weiss.⁵

The Synagogue, known as the Beth Jacob Congregation, later moved into a new larger building adjacent to it in 1936, and the original structure was turned into the "Beth Jacob Social Hall." This still serves the community in a ritual capacity on week days in the summer.⁶ The new Synagogue was designed by Henry Hohausen, one of the foremost architects of the Art Deco style in Miami in the 1930's.

The initial role of the Synagogue as the religious and social center of the Jewish community, soon developed into being also the Jewish cultural center.⁸ A Hebrew school was established, lectures, scholars and cantors were invited and distinguished members of the rabbinical community visited the Synagogue and a mikvah (a ritual bath for women) was built.⁹

The early thriving congregation of Beth Jacob Synagogue has since dwindled as the younger, more affluent Jewish community has moved northward. It is now situated in the poorest section of Miami Beach with its congregation composed of retirees on low, fixed incomes. It is one of twelve Orthodox synagogues in the beach area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet three

**UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one (1)

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 586800 2850580
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B _____
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C _____

D _____

E _____

F _____

G _____

H _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northeast corner of Lot 9, 10 and 11, Block 7, run south 150 feet, west 130 feet, north 150 feet, east 130 feet to point of beginning.

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

Elizabeth A. Kirby, Historic Preservation Planner July 28, 1980

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Florida Division Archives, History and Records Management/904-487-2333

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Tallahassee

Florida

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE July 28, 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Frank W. Ray
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

10/16/80

ATTEST: Court Davis
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

10/15/80

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all sheathed in copper. Each side of the drum has an octagonal stained glass window with a central Star of David.

The rear elevation is also a symmetrical composition with windows flanking the central projecting beam. Above this projection, a semi-circular stained glass window depicts the Menorah.

The fenestration is one of the most striking features of the design. The tall, slender arched window openings are divided into three parts-- the lower portion is an operable double hung sash window. Above, a spandrel panel of cast stone has an Art Deco bas relief design of stylized acanthus leaves flanking a central Star of David. The second story window is fixed glass. All windows are stained glass. A continuous string course around the building provides the springing for the arches of all the upper windows.

Inside, the floor of the Congregation slopes down. The ceiling is a shallow barrel vault. Fine Art Deco chandeliers hang from the ceiling, the largest one suspended from the top of the dome.

Minor alterations include the front entrance canopy in 1947,⁷ and the air conditioning unit, which although visible from the front, has ductwork, which by running along the north elevation in the narrow space between the two buildings, is almost concealed.

¹Miami Beach Building Permit #2462, April 1920.

²Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce (Pamphlet, circa 1930, "The Lure of Miami Beach." (Photograph).

³Miami Beach Building Permit #37019, July 1952.

⁴Ibid., #27491, June 1948.

⁵Ibid., #7985., February 1936.

⁶Miami Beach Florida Code Enforcement, Construction Division Building Permits, 1921 to present.

⁷ Miami Beach Building Permit #25007, July 1947.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Lehrman, Irving and Rappaport, Joseph, The Jewish Community of Miami Beach (booklet), American Jewish History Center and the Jewish Theological Seminary, pp. 14-16.

²Redford, Polly, Billion-Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach, "The Tents of Israel," (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1970), pp. 204-215.

³Ibid., Chapters 4, 5, and 13.

⁴Liebman, Malvina Weiss, "A Historical Sketch of the Early History of Beth Jacob Congregation," (unpublished report: copy on file at the Florida Division of Archives, History and Records Management) (Miami Beach, Florida: 1978), p. 2.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

⁶Gudis, Mrs. Ruth, Secretary, Beth Jacob Congregation. Personal Interview by Pauline Ramos (Dade Heritage Trust, Miami Beach, Florida, June 7, 1979).

⁷"Architects Who Have Made Dreams Come True," The Florida Teacher, IV (5) (January, 1961), p. 66.

⁸Lehrman, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

⁹Liebman, Seymour, History Professor Miami-Dade Jr. College, Past President Jewish Historical Society, Miami Beach. Telephone interview by Pauline Ramos (Dade Heritage Trust), Miami, Florida, April 1979.

¹⁰Redford, op. cit., pp. 262-264; pp. 269-272.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.

- "Architects Who Have Made Dreams Come True," The Florida Teacher, vol. VI, No. 5, (Jan. 1941.).
- Gudis, Mrs. Ruth, Secretary for Rabbi, and Historian, Beth Jacob Congregation. Personal interview, Pauline Ramos (Dade Heritage Trust).
- Lehrman, Irving and Rappaport, Joseph. The Jewish Community of Miami Beach (booklet), American Jewish History Center and the Jewish Theological Seminar.
- Liebman, Malvina Weiss, "A Historical Sketch of the Early History of Beth Jacob Congregation," (Paper), Miami Beach, Florida, 1978.
- Liebman, Seymour. History Professor at Miami-Dade Jr. College, and Past President of the Jewish Historical Society, Miami Beach. Telephone interview by Pauline Ramos (Dade Heritage Trust), Miami, Florida, April 1979.
- Miami Beach, Florida, Code Enforcement, Construction Division, Building Permits, 1921-present.
- Polk, R. L. Polk's Miami and Miami Beach City Directory, Jacksonville, Florida: 1928-1930.
- Redford, Polly. Billion Dollar Sandbar: A Biography of Miami Beach, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1970, "The Tents of Israel."