

P140690678

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 29 1977

DATE ENTERED APR 6 1978

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
Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim *ly g...*

AND/OR COMMON
Beth Elohim Synagogue

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
90 Hasell Street

CITY, TOWN
Charleston

STATE
South Carolina

VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Charleston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#1

CODE
045

CODE
019

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Beth Elohim Congregation

STREET & NUMBER
86 Hasell Street

CITY, TOWN
Charleston

STATE
South Carolina

VICINITY OF

29401

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance

STREET & NUMBER
2 Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN
Charleston

STATE
South Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE
1963

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN
Washington, D. C.

STATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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 _____ |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first synagogue on the present site was built ca. 1794, but was destroyed in the Charleston fire of 1838. The present Greek Revival structure was completed in 1841. It was designed by Cyrus L. Warner, a New York architect, and built by David Lopez, a Charleston contractor. Specifications for the building are outlined in a contract between the trustees of the congregation and Lopez. (It is displayed in Beth Elohim's museum room.)

Exterior: Greek Revival in design, the structure is approximately 46' high, 56' wide, and 119' long. Foundations are brick, with granite ashlar facing. Walls are brick, covered with stucco painted white and scored to resemble stone. Antae at the corners have capitals with anthemion, palmette and egg and dart moldings. An imposing portico has six fluted Doric columns of stucco over brick. The architrave is of sandstone; the cornice and pediment of stuccoed brick. The entablature is in the Doric order and encircles the building. Five granite steps ascend to the portico, the floor of which is alternating blue-grey and white marble squares. The portico ceiling is coffered. The entrance is nearly 18½' high and has a stucco architrave and double sliding doors. The windows (of which there are two on the front and rear facades and five on each side facade) have stucco architraves and sandstone sills. The stained glass windows appear to date from the 1880s-1890s. The gable roof is covered with tin, according to the original specifications.

Interior: A vestibule extends across the front of the structure. At each end are stairways which ascend to the gallery level. Three doorways lead from the vestibule to the auditorium. Here, located in the eastern end, is a raised platform, which contains the ark (a large oval case of mahogany which contains the scrolls of the Torah). On the platform, four Corinthian columns support an entablature which covers the ark. A less elevated space in front of the platform is defined by a mahogany balustrade and carved rail.

The ceiling of the auditorium features a suspended plaster saucer dome with pendentives, and paneled segmental spandrel arches on the east and west walls. The center of the dome is decorated with acanthus leaves and palmettes and is encircled by a ring of rosettes. Panels with egg and dart moldings radiate from the centerpiece. A gallery, at the west end of the auditorium (opposite the ark) is supported by four wooden Ionic columns and two engaged columns at the ends. In the center of the gallery's west wall is the organ which has a 19th Century paneled case. Originally, the gallery extended along the side facades, but these portions have been removed. The walls are plaster and feature wainscoting. The pews date from ca. 1879 when the interior was renovated.

The robing room is located at the rear of the structure, behind the ark. The museum and archives of the synagogue is also housed in this area.

Surroundings: Beth Elohim is located on a landscaped lot with an early wrought iron fence extending along its Hasell Street boundary. Included within the nominated property is an 18th Century Charleston single house (86 Hasell Street) which is used as the rabbi's office. This building is thought to have been built ca. 1797. It is of Charleston "grey" brick and has a cornice of dentils and a hip roof. The large brick chimneys feature a white stuccoed frieze commonly called the "Charleston band." The interior retains the original pegged staircase, dentiled mantels, six paneled doors, and other woodwork typical of the Federal period in Charleston. Alterations--primarily on the ground floor--have been made to the structure. (see continuation sheet)

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 checked="" 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 1841

BUILDER/ARCHITECT David Lopez/Cyrus L. Warner

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Beth Elohim is one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the United States, having been founded ca. 1749. It was incorporated by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina in 1791. Worship was held in various locations before a structure was built on the present site ca. 1794. This edifice was destroyed by the Charleston fire of 1838. The present house of worship--considered an excellent example of Greek Revival design--was completed in 1841.

Throughout its history Beth Elohim has been an influential and outstanding congregation. Barnett A. Elzas, rabbi of Beth Elohim ca. 1900, wrote, "at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Jewish community of Charleston was the largest, the most cultured, and the wealthiest Jewish community in America...."¹ In 1790 the congregation wrote to George Washington, congratulating him on his election as President. A copy of his reply is in the synagogue's museum. In 1824 a portion of the congregation broke away from the parent synagogue and established the first Reform Jewish group in the United States. The synagogue has also been involved in meeting the social and humanitarian needs of Charleston; the Hebrew Benevolent Society, founded by members of Beth Elohim, dates from the synagogue's early history.

Architecture: Beth Elohim is considered "one of the most scholarly and well proportioned examples of the Greek Revival period in the City [of Charleston]."² Designed by Cyrus L. Warner, a New York architect, and built by David Lopez, a Charleston builder, it is included in Group 1, the highest category in the inventory of "Historic Architecture of the Peninsula City Charleston, S.C." In 1963 measured drawings were done for the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Also included within the nominated property is a late 18th Century Charleston "Single House." Used as the rabbi's office, it is included in Group 3 (significant buildings) in the Charleston inventory.

¹Barnett A. Elzas, The Jews of South Carolina (1905; rpt. Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1972), p. 147.

²Albert Simons and W. H. Johnson Thomas, An Architectural Guide to Charleston, South Carolina (Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, n.d.), n.p.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Elzas, Barnett A. A Century of Judaism in South Carolina 1800-1900. Reprinted from The Centennial Edition of the News & Courier, May 1904.

_____, ed. Constitution of the Hebrew Congregation of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim or House of God, 1820. Charleston, S. C.: Daggett Printing Company, 1904.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ca. 1/2 acre
 UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1,7 | 5,9,9,9,4,0 | 3,6,2,7,4,6,0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The combined property of Beth Elohim Synagogue and its office building at 86 Hasell Street consists of two adjacent lots. The property is bounded on the south by Hasell Street; on the west by Kerrison's Department Store, in a 19th Century commercial building; on the north by a parking lot belonging to Kerrison's and separated from it by a high fence; and on the east by the King Charles Inn, a contemporary, three story brick structure.

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kappy McNulty Robert P. Stockton, Preservation Society of Charleston, S.C.
 ORGANIZATION DATE
 S.C. Department of Archives and History June 2, 1977
 STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE
 P. O. Box 11,669, Capitol Station (803) 758-5816
 CITY OR TOWN STATE
 Columbia South Carolina

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

Charles E. Lee

TITLE Charles E. Lee
 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 12/15/77

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |
| DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION | KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER |
| ATTEST: <i>W. D. ...</i> | DATE: 4/6/78 |
| <i>Walter ...</i> | DATE: 3-13-78 |
| KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Also included within the synagogue's property is a 20th Century, two-story masonry building used as a fellowship hall. Although included within the nominated acreage, this building is not of architectural or historical significance.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE TWO

- _____. ed. A History of the Congregation of Beth Elohim of Charleston, S.C., 1800-1810. Charleston: The Daggett Printing Company, 1902.
- _____. The Jews of South Carolina. 1905; rpt. Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972.
- McCord, David J., ed. The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Vol. VIII. Columbia: A.S. Johnston, 1840, pp. 162, 369.
- Mazyck, Arthur. Guide to Charleston Illustrated. Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, [1875], pp. 64-65.
- Mills, Robert. Statistics of South Carolina. 1826; rpt. Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972, pp. 416-417, 434,
- Ravenel, Beatrice St. Julien. Architects of Charleston. 2nd ed. Charleston: Columbia Art Association, 1964, p. 157.
- Simons, Albert and W. H. Johnson Thomas. An Architectural Guide to Charleston, South Carolina. Charleston: Historic Charleston Foundation, n.d.
- Sloan, Irving J., ed. The Jews in America, 1621-1970. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1971, p. 6, 67.
- Stoney, Samuel Gaillard. This is Charleston. 2nd ed. Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1960, p. 58.
- "The Congregation 'Beth Elohim,' Charleston, S.C.," Charleston Yearbook, 1883. Charleston News and Courier, 1883, pp. 301-316.
- Wallace, D.D. The History of South Carolina, Vol. I. New York: The American Historical Society, 1934, p. 417.
- Stockton, Robert P. "Original Contract Details Beth Elohim Construction." Charleston News and Courier.
- _____. "Protection Probable for 86 Hasell Street." Charleston News and Courier, February 7, 1977.
- _____. "Reformed Society of Israelites Formed Here 150 Years Ago." Charleston News and Courier, November 25, 1974.

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| DATE ENTERED | April 1978 |

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE three

Historic American Buildings Survey, South Carolina Lowcountry Project, 1963.

Feiss, Carl, Russell Wright and Robert N. Anderson, Jr., inventory consultants.
"Historic Architecture of the Peninsular City, Charleston, S.C." (A Summary Report on the 1972-73 Historic Architecture Inventory).