

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 95000560 Date Listed: 5/11/95

Beth El Synagogue New Haven CT
Property Name County State

Historic Synagogues of Connecticut MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Bethel Savage
Signature of the Keeper

5/11/95
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

10. Geographical Data: Acreage

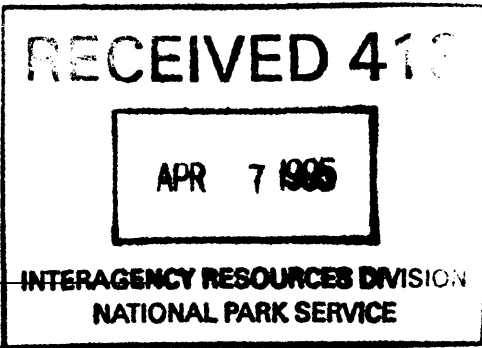
The correct acreage is less than one, or .87.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHP.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form, Multiple Property Listing
Historic Synagogues of Connecticut



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Beth El Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: _____

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 359-375 Cooke Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Waterbury Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: New Haven Code: 009 Zip Code: 06710

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Private: x
Public-Local: _____
Public-State: _____
Public-Federal: _____

Building(s): x
District: _____
Site: _____
Structure: _____
Object: _____

Number of Resources within Property

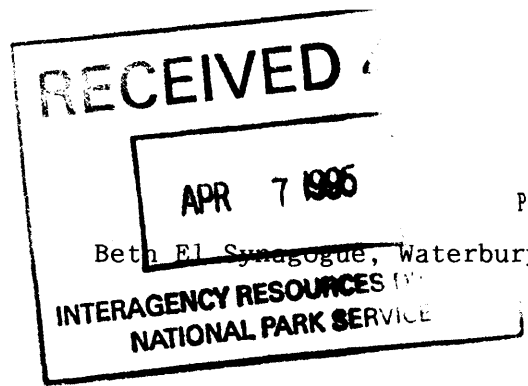
Contributing
1

1

Noncontributing
_____ buildings
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: NA

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Historic Synagogues of Connecticut



4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

[Signature] 04/03/95
Signature of Certifying Official Date
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register [Signature]
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

[Signature] 5/11/95
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Beth El Synagogue, Waterbury, CT

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: religious structure Sub: synagogue

Current: religious structure Sub: synagogue

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
<u>20TH CENTURY REVIVAL</u>	Foundation: <u>CONCRETE</u>
<u>Byzantine</u>	Walls: <u>BRICK</u>
_____	<u>Limestone dressing</u>
	Roof: <u>CONCRETE</u>
	Other: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Exterior

Beth El Synagogue is a domed buff-brick building in a 20th-century interpretation of the Byzantine style. It faces east across the street from Lewis Fulton Memorial Park in an early-20th-century residential neighborhood close to downtown Waterbury.

The synagogue is approached by a long run of wide front steps, flanked by brick and stone parapets, which lead up to triple rectangular doorways. The doorways, framed in elaborate foliate carvings, support a Decalogue which is positioned against the top of the wall of the central section of the building, rather than projecting above the roof line. The recessed central section is flanked by slightly lower brick masses which project and which have arcaded fenestration of narrow round-arched windows with enriched columns and capitals. (Photograph 28)

The principal mass of the synagogue is behind the front sections and higher. Its roof supports a large gold-colored dome. All other roofs are flat. The dome has cresting at its apex in the form of a ring of acanthus-leaf acroteria surrounding a central copper finial. Below the cornice of the lower projecting sections is a brick zigzag pattern, while in the corresponding position of the main block the brick are laid in a large diamond diaper pattern.

Beth El Synagogue, Waterbury, CT

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide:___ Locally: x

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A x B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>1929 1945</u>	<u>1929</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: Nathan Myers
Joseph Stein

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Architectural Significance

Beth El Synagogue is significant architecturally because it is the first synagogue built in Connecticut in the Byzantine style. The Byzantine style was considered appropriate for synagogue design because of its association with the East, where Judaism had its origins, and the probability that early synagogues in that region were built in the Byzantine style.

At the same time, the architecture of Beth El has two other components of interest. First, the design did not lose all touch with Connecticut's traditional Romanesque Revival features. At Beth El there continues to be a wide flight of steps leading up to a triple entranceway in a central recessed section flanked by projecting masses.

Beth El Synagogue, Waterbury, CT

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: less than five

UTM References:	Zone	^{Easting} North ing	^{Northing} East ing	Zone	North	East	ing
A	18	<u>663345</u> 4503420	<u>4603410</u> 663360	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___
E	___	___	___	F	___	___	___

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the Waterbury Land Records at volume 963, page 476.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property encompasses land that has gone with the building since it was erected.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator
Org.: Connecticut Historical Commission
Date: August 30, 1994
Street/#: 59 South Prospect Street
City/Town: Hartford
State: CT
ZIP: 06106
Telephone: 203 566-3005

The 1960s school building adjoins to the north.

Interior

In the sanctuary the wooden pews are divided by three aisles. The high space of the room is open to the dome under a slightly segmental ceiling. The front is treated as a stage with proscenium arch and canted walls covered with vertical wooden finish; the effect is contemporary, perhaps dating from the 1950s. The double door of the ark is paneled in a diamond pattern within a molded surround. Judaic symbols flank the opening, while above a Decalogue is defended by the Lions of Judah under an Eternal Light. Candelabra on either side of the ark enclosure are reminiscent of the menorah of the Temple of David. (Photograph 29) There is a gallery across the back of the room.

Beth El Synagogue, Waterbury, CT

Second, the massing and detailing of the building reflect the influence of the contemporary Art Deco style, popular throughout the United States in the 1920s. The stepped massing of the building, its flat planar quality, and the reference to classical details are characteristic of the Art Deco, as are the pre-Columbian zigzag pattern and the diaper work in the brick walls below the cornices.

Historical Background

Beth El Synagogue is associated with the Conservative Beth El Congregation, which was organized ca.1920. Its former synagogue on Park Place is no longer standing. After the original design by Nathan Myers was carried out in 1928, completion of the interior proceeded slowly as funds became available. The interior finishes of the sanctuary were the work in the 1950s of Waterbury architect Joseph Stein, particularly the detailing of the paneling of the bimah and the carving around the ark. Joseph Stein practiced in Waterbury for many years, counting among his prominent commissions the Bronson [Waterbury Public] Library on Grand Street next to City Hall, ca.1960s, a Miesian composition, and the Superior Court building at 300 Grand Street.

Registration Requirements

Beth El Synagogue qualifies under Criterion C for inclusion in this multiple property listing as an urban building constructed as a synagogue in Connecticut by meeting the following requirements:

- Constructed as a Jewish house of worship
- Located in an urban setting
- Exhibits integrity of design and workmanship
- Constructed prior to 1945

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Stephen Bedford and Nora Lucas, Historical and Architectural Resource Survey of Overlook, Waterbury, Statewide Historic Resource Inventory, Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, 1987, Inventory Form for 359 Cooke Street.

Beth El Synagogue, Connecticut Historic Synagogue Information Questionnaire, 1991.

Gary Brodeur, Congregation Beth El Historian, conversation, February 13, 1995.

Cornelius F. Maloney, Margaret S. Sargent, and William H. Watkins, 1674 - Waterbury - 1974 (Chester, CT: The Pequot Press in association with the Mattatuck Historical Society, c. 1974), np.

David F. Ransom, "1843*1943 - One Hundred Years of Jewish Congregations in Connecticut: An Architectural Survey - 5603*5703," Connecticut Jewish History, 2(Fall 1991)1.

Waterbury Assessor's Records.

Waterbury Land Records, volume 798, page 449 (1961); 943/476 (1971).

Waterbury Republican, November 11, 1928, p. 7.

Previous documentation on file (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: Specify Repository: _____