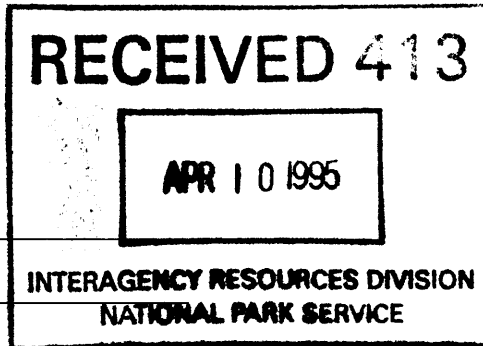


USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form, Multiple Property Listing
Historic Synagogues of Connecticut



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Beth Israel Synagogue

Other Name/Site Number: NA

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 232 Orchard Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: New Haven Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: New Haven Code: 009 Zip Code: 06511

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: x

Public-Local:

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

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

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

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.

John W. Shannahan 3/29/95
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
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Edson A. Beall 5.11.95 Entered in the National Register

Bob Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: religious structure Sub: synagogue

Current: religious structure Sub: synagogue

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: 20TH CENTURY REVIVAL
Colonial Revival

Materials: Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK

Roof: built-up
Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Exterior

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, is a buff brick building in the traditional configuration of historic Connecticut urban synagogues, but with Colonial Revival features. Located in a densely built-up downtown section near the heart of the city, it faces east in the center of the block, close to the street. It is one of two synagogues which have survived urban renewal and are still standing in New Haven's traditional Jewish neighborhood (see also Ahavas Sholem Synagogue).

At Beth Israel, a long flight of wide steps leads up to triple doors in a central recessed section of the facade that is flanked by projecting towers -- an arrangement first introduced into Connecticut by Temple Beth Israel, Hartford. The building's Colonial Revival features are the paired engaged columns with acanthus-leaf capitals on either side of the central door, the half-round pediment with keystone above, and the flanking windows with radial muntins in the towers. Traditional Judaic symbols are present in the Decalogue over the door, the Magen David in the roundel of the gable end, and Moorish overtone of the bell-shaped domes. (Photograph 17) All features appear to be original with the exception of the double doors, now metal, which presumably were wood originally.

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

The tower windows at the first floor are a single tall sash over a horizontal panel. The sash and panel are set within a striated concrete enframingent, with central keystone. At the tops of the towers, between the chamfered tower corners, the windows are shallow oriels under curvilinear pediments supported by curved brackets with pendants. The main gable also is curvilinear. Underneath the roof edge, the decorative band of small arched sections divided by pendants is unusual but perhaps is reminiscent of 19th-century corbeling.

In the side and rear elevations the fenestration continues as small-pane Colonial Revival windows, rectangular at the first floor, round-arched with radial glazing in the Colonial Revival mode at the second. In the west wall, where the glazing pattern is 10-over-10, the lights are unusually high for their width.

Interior

The three front doors open into a narthex or foyer. Stairways to the galleries at each end of the narthex are steel with marble treads. A bronze plaque on the south wall of the narthex lists the members of the building committee. Three doors open from the narthex to the sanctuary.

In the sanctuary two aisles divide the pews into three sections. The bimah is located in the central section on a spacious raised platform. The platform is bordered by a railing of wooden pickets and cast-iron posts. At the front, the area in front of the ark is approached by two canted sets of steps that flank a candelabra symbolic of the menorah of the Temple of David. In the elaborate orin kodesh (housing for the ark) the first level consists of a broad segmentally arched recessed section that is flanked by narrow round-arched recesses. Ionic pilasters flank the central section and engaged fluted Ionic colonettes define the narrow recesses. An Eternal Light hangs in the center. In the upper section the Lions of Judah protect a Decalogue in the trabeated enframingent, which is flanked by Ionic pilasters and surmounted by a round-arched pediment behind a large eagle. A Magen David window is behind the ark enframingent. (Photographs 18 and 19)

A historic photograph demonstrates that the ark, indeed, the interior of the synagogue as a whole, is virtually unchanged to the present day. (Photograph 20)

The galleries that line three sides of the auditorium have rounded corners at the rear. Their fronts are decorated with Magen Davids and a geometric motif. Pew ends on the ground floor and in the galleries are decorated with Magen Davids. The three pendant crystal chandeliers are original.

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

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>1925</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1925</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: Jacob Weinstein

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

Architectural Significance

Beth Israel Synagogue is significant architecturally because it is an example of the traditional historic Connecticut urban design, with Colonial Revival features in addition to the traditional components. In this respect, it is similar to Agudas Achim, Hartford, and Tephareth Israel, New Britain. The buff brick of the building is a material that was in fashion at the time it was built. With the exception of the front doors, which have been replaced, the building is well preserved, showing little if any change over the years. Moreover, the building's cubical shape and mass and its classically derived doorway resemble those of the historic Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island, which is one of the first in the country.

The interior appears to be unique among historic Connecticut synagogues because the bimah platform and bimah table are still in place and in use in their central location.

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

At Adath Israel, Bridgeport, the platform is in place, but not the table. Moreover, the entire interior of Beth Israel, including the galleries for women, is original and intact.

The architect, Jacob Weinstein, was a New Haven practitioner with offices at 341 State Street. The drawings for the synagogue are on file at the New Haven Building Department. Weinstein was a well-educated designer, fully capable of knowing Touro Synagogue, Newport, and using it as a contributing factor in his design of Beth Israel.

Because of the fine state of preservation of Beth Israel, particularly its unaltered interior, and because of the design resemblance to Touro Synagogue, Newport, Beth Israel is considered to have Statewide significance, and is so designated above.

Historical Background

Beth Israel Synagogue is associated with a congregation that was formed in 1913 and officially organized on January 13, 1914. It met in a store on Asylum Street through 1914, then in a house at 147 Orchard Street until the present synagogue was constructed. The ritual of worship, as well as the physical features of the building, have not changed since 1925. The synagogue has not changed, although the ethnic composition of the surrounding neighborhood has. The steadfast Orthodox convictions of the congregation are expressed in the unchanged physical layout of bimah, ark, and galleries, and the unchanged liturgy. Ownership has been unbroken. The congregation that constructed the building continues to own it and continues to conduct services in the synagogue.

Registration Requirements

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, 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

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beth Israel file, Box RG2, folder 11, at Historical Society of New Haven.

Elizabeth Mills Brown, author of New Haven, A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), statement, February 9, 1995.

Werner S. Hirsch and Renee Kra, eds., Jews in New Haven, Volume V (New Haven: The Jewish Historical Society, 1988), p. 163.

New Haven Assessor's Records.

Abraham Lipman, member of the congregation for 40 years, president (with life tenure) for 26 years, interview, July 30, 1991.

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.

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: _____

Beth Israel Synagogue, New Haven, CT

████████████████████

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4574740</u>	<u>672200</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described in the New Haven Land Records at volume 987, pages 478, 479.

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 26, 1994

Street/#: 59 South Prospect Street

City/Town: Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06106

Telephone: 203 566-3005