

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 21 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 16 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

B'Nai Israel Temple

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

249 South 400 East

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Utah

___ VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ___ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ___ PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- ___ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- ___ YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE

- ___ AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ GOVERNMENT
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ MUSEUM
- ___ PARK
- ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ___ RELIGIOUS
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- ___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ali A. Manteghi

STREET & NUMBER

249 South 400 East

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Utah

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorders Office, Salt Lake City

STREET & NUMBER

450 South State Street

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Utah Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1976

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Utah State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah

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

At the laying of the cornerstone in 1890 the plans for the Temple were described by the Salt Lake Tribune.

"This building is remarkable from (sic) its being a facsimile in miniature of the great temple in Berlin, Germany. The size is 55 x 112 feet, including the vestibule. There will be two wings and it will seat 500 people. A fourteen foot gallery over the chancel will accommodate a \$3,500 organ and a choir. The interior height is forty feet, while, toward the rear of edifice, towers a mosque-like dome eighty-eight feet in the air. The font is of cut Kyune stone, the sides and rear being of pressed brick and the style is Moorish. The cost of the temple complete will be \$37,500. The supervising architect is H. Mondheim, the contractors Joy & Black. The building will be an ornament to the city."

(From Salt Lake Tribune, 27, Sept. 1890)

The structure once completed was in fact as much an ornament to the city as it was a statement of Jewish wealth and importance. The similarity to the Fasanenstrasse synagogue in Berlin, the "great temple" that local pride had wished to emulate, was somewhat remote. It has been suggested that Philip Meyer's original plans were modified during construction by Henry Monheim. The building in Berlin was an immense and decidedly neo-Byzantine structure with three domes; the B'Nai Israel temple in Salt Lake City was Romanesque Revival with many eclectic flourishes.

The plan as executed holds to the dimensions originally laid out by Meyer and Mondheim: 55 x 112 feet by 40 feet high, excepting the dome which is 88 feet. The facade of the building, high lighted by two fine stained-glass windows, is of rusticated Kyune stone with corner elements more finely cut. A strong string course divides the building. The front cornice of the building and the cornice of the dome are bracketed. The dome is of brick covered with stucco, as are the side exterior walls. The roof is a cross shaped gable with the dome at the crossing, with gabled roofs over the arms of the cross. Some classical motifs can be found in the exterior decoration, especially atop the main facade and repeated on both North and South projecting wings.

A central nave has an apsidal end formed by the dome, with a narthex at the west end. Within the nave side aisles radiate north and south and into pillared alcoves that support galleries on the north and south. There are choir lofts at both ends of the nave, one backed by the stained-glass windows of the facade, and the other behind and above the sanctuary of the ark. Access to the choir lofts and galleries is through corner stairways located at the east end of the nave and in the northex. The sanctuary area is distinguished by fine decorative carpentry.

In 1929 a concrete block addition was made to the temple on the east end. It contains a kitchen, social area, and classrooms. It has no merit.

The building is basically sound and is now in use as a restaurant, having been sold by Congregation B'Nai Israel in order that they could join with Congregation Montefiore to form a unified Reform and Orthodox community synagogue known as Congregation Kol Ami. Points of deterioration include some brickwork and stonework scattered around the building,

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

but especially around the porch area at the main entrance. Recent beneficial changes include opening up the galleries which had been closed off to provide classroom space. The interior space remains basically unaltered, although the restaurant decoration of the space is exceedingly lavish.

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 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 checked="" 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 1890/1 Constructed BUILDER/ARCHITECT Philip Meyer/Henry Monheim

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Temple of Congregation B'Nai Israel was the culmination of the community building efforts of Utah's pioneer Jews, who, despite being few in number, played an important part in the social, economic, and political development of Utah.

Utah's earliest Jews were converts to Mormonism, and among these the most prominent were Alexander Neibaur, a surgeon who arrived in 1848, and Morris Rosenbaum, a merchant, who embraced Mormonism after his arrival in 1854. In that same year of 1854 Julius Gerson Brooks and his wife Fanny arrived in Utah to begin entrepreneurial careers that would establish both husband and wife as leading merchants in these early years of settlement.

Jewish movement into Utah did not accelerate until after the conclusion of the Utah War of 1857, and the establishment of a United States military presence in the territory. At that time an increasing number of Jewish merchants and peddlers, as well as craftsmen, took advantage of the improved business climate generally and opportunities for supplying troops in particular, to found many business houses. From this period of the late fifties and early sixties come the Jewish names important in the development of Utah....Auerbach, Bamberger, Ranschoff (Ranschoff), Kahn, Siegel, Ellis, and Watters. There were many sets of brothers among these early entrepreneurs, and most had honed their business skills in the mining camps of California and Nevada. Practically all of them were bachelors during the early years of building up their businesses in Utah, and it is interesting to note that Jews are not well organized as a community --with the exception of gatherings to celebrate High Holy Days --until significant numbers of Jewish women are brought to Utah as the wives of these successful businessmen.

A curious feature of Jewish life in pioneer Utah was that of their position of "favored Gentiles" within the larger Mormon community of Utah that thought of itself as Latter-day Israel. Mormonism also gave emphasis to certain Jewish beliefs and practices not usually found in Christian churches, and, as one Utah Jewish historian has pointed out, there was a fascination with Jewish history and ritual among leaders of the Mormon Church. The very territory of Utah closely resembled ancient Palestine in topography and character, even to the parallel of two Jordan rivers, each connecting a dead sea-water lake with a body of fresh water. The result of this identity of interest was cordial and supportive treatment of Jews by Mormons in the earliest settlement phase. However, the economic development of the territory inevitably led to the polarization of Mormon and Gentile business activity, with Jews taking positions of leadership in the Gentile group by reason of their numbers and prominence.

The creation by Brigham Young of the Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution to monopolize trade within the Mormon community, caused several Jewish merchants to withdraw from Utah or to sell out to the Church in 1869. The slightly reduced Jewish/Gentile group quickly

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

regained its economic strength, however through involvement in mining speculation and development. Mormons, with one or two exceptions, followed Church counsel to avoid mining ventures.

For many years Jewish religious services utilized private homes, Masonic halls, or premises lent to them by the Mormon Church. In 1881 leading Jews of Salt Lake City came together to incorporate as "B'Nai Israel of Salt Lake City." A small lot was purchased, and eventually the first synagogue was dedicated in 1883. Located at the northwest corner of First West and Third South Streets, this synagogue also served as a Hebrew school.

Difficulties in retaining the services of a Rabbi and bitter internal squabbling over the majority decision to turn to Reform ritual, eventually caused a rift in the Salt Lake Jewish community that was an echo of the schisms in American Jewry in the late 19th Century. Those who chose to remain with Orthodox practices separated from B'Nai Israel, and eventually incorporated as Congregation Montefiore.

Meanwhile, the social status of Utah's Jews demanded a more distinguished structure in which to worship. In 1889 land was purchased at the present site and by 1891 a large and imposing synagogue had been dedicated. The Salt Lake Tribune described it as having "an air of quiet elegance" and asserted that "a more attractive place of worship does not exist in the west."

In deciding that their temple should be a replica of the Great Synagogue of Berlin, Utah's Jews made a gesture to the original homeland of most of their number. The architect chosen to execute the design was Philip Meyer, a nephew of Utah magnate Frederick H. Auerbach, who was brought from Germany to work with local architect Henry Monheim. Meyer later returned to Germany where he became an architect in the service of the Prussian state and of the Imperial household, and much later, sadly, ended his life in a Nazi death camp in 1943.

The importance of B'Nai Israel is that it represents the fruits of many years of Jewish activity and community building in Utah; it is a visible symbol of the importance of Jews in the development of the state, Commerce, government --the second Jewish governor of an American state was Simon Bamberger, elected in 1916 --and many branches of education and the arts have been enhanced by the contributions of Utah's Jewish citizens. B'Nai Israel temple is one of the last remaining tangible achievements of Utah's pioneer Jews.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- B'Nai Israel Records, Jewish Archives in Special Collections, Marriott Library of the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
 Ester Jacobsen, "Sketch of the Jewish Community in Utah," World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah; Salt Lake City, 1893.
 Juanita Brooks, The History of the Jews in Utah and Idaho, Salt Lake City, 1973.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Salt Lake City, north

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,2 4,2,5 8,7,0 4,5 1,2 6,5,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE John S. Smith, Historian

ORGANIZATION Utah State Historical Society DATE

STREET & NUMBER 307 West 200 South TELEPHONE (801) 533-6017

CITY OR TOWN Salt Lake City STATE Utah

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X 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 *Michael D. Gallivan*

TITLE Michael D. Gallivan, State Historic Preservation Officer DATE May 25, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles Atkinson DATE 11-16-78
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION
William H. Bradham 11-15-78