*292*

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: __Beth Israel Synagogue__

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

__N/A__

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

APR 0 8 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

## 2. Location

Street & number: __307 Townes Street__

City or town: _Greenville_      State: _SC_      County: _Greenville_

Not For Publication: ☐      Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national      ___statewide      __x_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

__x__A      ___B      __x__C      ___D

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**Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy Historic**

**Preservation Officer:**

*Elizabeth M. Johnson*      Date 3/28/2016

**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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

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**Signature of commenting official:**      **Date**

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**Title :**      **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

1

## 4. 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:) _____

_for Edson H. Beall_                    _5.23.16_
Signature of the Keeper                 Date of Action

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:            | X |

Public – Local      | |

Public – State      | |

Public – Federal    | |

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)    | X |

District       | |

Site           | |

Structure      | |

Object         | |

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## Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 1 | | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __0_____

## 6. Function or Use
**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/synagogue

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
WORK IN PROGRESS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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## 7.  Description

### Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
  _LATE 19TH/20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival_____

### Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:  _Brick, cast stone_____

### Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property.  Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Beth Israel Synagogue, located in the City of Greenville, South Carolina, and associated originally with Orthodox Judaism, is a one-story-over-raised-basement brick-veneered building with cast stone accents that was built 1929-1930. The building is situated on Townes Street in the Stone Avenue neighborhood, which was the predominantly Jewish area of the city. The synagogue, which was last used as a synagogue in 1957 when the congregation moved to a larger building, has since had multiple uses including as a Pentecostal church, a photography studio, a labor union cooperative, and a storage facility. The area surrounding the building has changed drastically in the intervening years. While once predominantly residential, the neighborhood has some larger commercial buildings that have been constructed in the last thirty years, and the Highway 123 overpass was built adjacent to the synagogue as well. Remnants of the original residential area are intact beginning approximately two blocks away from the synagogue. The residential areas make up three separate locally-designated historic districts.

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## Narrative Description

*Exterior Description*
The Beth Israel Synagogue was designed by local Greenville architect Joseph G. Cunningham
and built 1929-1930. The congregation associated with the synagogue originally practiced
Orthodox Judaism, and as such, the building reflects this connection. Built on land donated by
Charles Zaglin, the congregation's first rabbi, the synagogue is located on Townes Street,
between Central Avenue and West Park Avenue, in the City of Greenville. This area is located in
what was once the original Jewish neighborhood in the city.

The synagogue is a one story brick-veneered building on a raised basement, separated by a cast
stone belt course. The red and dark striated brick façade is laid in a running bond pattern. The
façade (east elevation) features concrete steps with solid brick cheek walls and cast iron lamp
posts that appear to be historic.  A wooden entablature and pediment supported by flanking
monumental Tuscan order columns shelters a recessed double-door entry with a consoled
architrave and decorative surround. The pediment has been filled in with vertical wooden planks,
but originally featured a stuccoed tympanum like the identical pediments on the north and south
sides of the building. The front entry features a pair of wooden six paneled doors.  A tripartite or
Palladian window motif dominates the entry, with flanking single sash, twenty-four paned
window. These windows have deteriorated and their panes replaced with red plexiglass.  Due to
their deteriorated state, they have been removed recently and will be replaced with aluminum-
cladded wooden units that mimic the original windows. Above the entry is a large, round-arched
window with dark brick and cast stone detailing that completes the Palladian ensemble.
Flanking the central classical surround are two brick-framed blind panels.  Above the flanking
paneled blocks is a cast stone belt course that delineates the building's parapet that features a
brick and tile Star of David on either side.  The belt course surrounds the building, as does a
simple cast stone cap.

The basement level is accessed from underneath the front stairway by dual entrances. At the
north entrance, a marble tablet reads:

<div align="center">

Beth Israel Synagogue 1929-1959

Grace Evangelical Methodist Church 1959-1964

Greenville Labor Temple Cooperative 1964-1977

Faith Tabernacle Apostolic Church 1977-1988

Crosby Stills 1988

</div>

This tablet was most likely added during the renovation of the building David Crosby, a local
photographer. The 1959 date most likely references when the building was sold to Grace

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Evangelical Methodist Church, not when Beth Israel left the building for their newly built temple in 1957.

Two sets of concrete stairs lead to a covered area beneath the main entrance. Double wooden paneled doors are flanked by a window on either side. Beneath the entrance there is a concrete block pool. It is not entirely clear whether this structure was constructed as a ritual bath, or mikvah, while the building was in use as a synagogue or whether it was added as a baptismal pool by later tenants (more on this in Section 8 below).

The north and south façades both feature engaged brick square columns with cast stone bases and capitals. These columns support a wooden pediment with stuccoed tympanum and architrave. A prominent Palladian style window dominates this elevation and is flanked by triple sash windows with sixteen panes. These windows are in varying states of disrepair. The triple sash windows are missing the panes out of the bottom two sashes and have been covered over with plastic sheeting. The uppermost sash has had red plexiglass panes inserted in the place of the original glass panes. The sash framing of these windows has begun to break down and rot. Similarly, the Palladian window has begun to deteriorate and its glass panes have been replaced with red plexiglass. Below the belt course, at the basement level, two sets of paired windows in the center of the wall. One of these units is a synthetic vinyl replacement. These windows are flanked by two sets of single windows on either side. Two of these single units are not extant and have been covered up with plywood. Due to the condition of the windows, they have been removed and aluminum wrapped wooden units built to replicate the original windows will be installed at a later date. The replicated Palladian unit will differ in that the windows will be fixed and not operable.

The north elevation mirrors the south with the exception of a secondary entry to the basement level. It is a single paneled door with a three paned transom above it. A later addition to the building was constructed just behind this entry. The brick is lighter in color and laid in stock bond. The addition is currently listing away from the building and appears to have been used as a storage room. It has an exterior entrance and an interior entrance accessed from the basement level storage room. Once again, the rotting windows on the north elevation have been removed and will be replaced with units replicating the originals.

The rear (west) elevation is considerably less decorative than the other elevations, with no detailing save for a brick-faced pitch at the roof line meant to simulate a pediment. There are four windows on this façade; two rectangular window frames at the upper level that have been boarded up and two square windows at the lower level that are filled with glass block. There appears to have been a large square window in the center of the façade that was bricked in after the congregation left the synagogue. A vinyl synthetic rear door allows an exit from the basement level.

The roof of the building is low pitched and currently covered by a TPU membrane. There is a large cupola with a row of square windows around the perimeter. The domed metal roof is covered in metal and is painted silver. There is a row of small square windows just below the roof line of the cupola. A decorative finial adorns the center of the roof.

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*Interior Description*

The main sanctuary, accessed from the front entrance, is a large open room. The walls are plaster and the floors feature pine planking. The ceiling of the sanctuary was plaster originally but it has since been removed to reveal the original wooden truss system.

To the right of the main entrance there is a temporary staircase to the basement level. This was a later addition to the building as originally there was no interior access to the basement level from the main sanctuary. Congregants had to go outside and down the exterior steps under the main entrance to access the basement level hall. There is also the ghost of a staircase that appears to have once led to a closet on the upper level. It is possible that this staircase also once led to a balcony that may have spanned the main entrance to the sanctuary. Oral interviews suggest that such a balcony once existed, though its placement above the front entrance would have been somewhat awkward and obscured the large windows on the front facade.

The interior has been stripped of any ornament associated with the original congregation. Some elements such as the Ark would have been removed when the congregation relocated to their new synagogue. Any remaining evidence of the building's past use as a synagogue has been removed as the building eventually became a Methodist, and later an Apostolic Christian, church. Later still it was used as a labor cooperative before being used a photography studio. It was at this time that the interior of the dome was altered. A painted ceiling of stars was added, and retractable panels were placed there to control the light. Currently, the painted ceiling has been retained while the retractable panels have been removed. Natural light still streams in from the windows, in keeping with the cupola's original purpose.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria**
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

[ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[ ] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
  Religion
  Architecture

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**Period of Significance**
1929-1957


**Significant Dates**


**Significant Person**
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)


**Cultural Affiliation**


**Architect/Builder**
Cunningham, Joseph G.


**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Beth Israel Synagogue is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A at the local level in the area of religion as an example of a public building representative of Jewish life in small southern city, and under Criteria for C as a notable example of Classical Revival public architecture designed by well known local architect Joseph G. Cunningham. The period of significance for the building is 1929, when construction began, to 1957, when the congregation moved from this building to a larger synagogue.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

## Criterion C: Architecture

The Beth Israel Synagogue was designed by local architect Joseph G. Cunningham in the Classical Revival style. Cunningham began working on the synagogue in June of 1929.[1] It was the second synagogue to be built in the City of Greenville but the first orthodox congregation to construct a building.

Beth Israel Synagogue was built on Townes Street in the southern section of an established neighborhood that included many Jewish families. The location was significant. As with many places of worship, it was located nearby to the people who it served. This consideration may have been especially important for a Jewish congregation because Jewish law (Halakha) forbade extensive travel on the Sabbath so having a synagogue in close proximity was paramount.[2] Similarly, the reform synagogue, Temple of Israel, was built in 1928, just eight blocks north of Beth Israel. The Gothic Revival building could hold just over 100 congregants and included a kitchen and Sunday School classrooms at the basement level.[3] While the buildings are not similar in their architectural style, the important components of the interior design are the same. While the area around Beth Israel has since been taken over by largely commercial development, it was originally a residential neighborhood.[4]

Building in an accessible public area was a departure for the Jewish community. For centuries they were relegated to the back streets of most cities in an attempt to keep the Jewish faith out of sight. Beginning in the 18th century, governments became more enlightened and began encouraging Jewish congregations to build well-designed, beautiful buildings along public streets and squares. However, these buildings were rarely denoted as belonging to the Jewish population. So successful were these overtures that by the middle of the 19th century, many began to worry that synagogues would be mistaken for Gentile churches and so a wave of more exotic architecture took hold. Moorish and Far Eastern architectural elements were increasingly deployed in order that synagogues would be set apart from other ecclesiastical architecture.[5] In some societies, particularly those who allowed greater freedoms, the Jewish community continued to build their synagogues in a manner that more closely followed the designs of other

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[1] John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *South Carolina Architects, 1885-1935: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond, VA: New South Architectural Press, 1992), 36.
[2] "Life of the Synagogue," William A. Rosenthal Collection, accessed on July 1, 2015, http://lifeofthesynagogue.library.cofc.edu.
[3] "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: Greenville, South Carolina," Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, accessed June 21, 2015, http://www.isjl.org/south-carolina-greenville-encyclopedia.html.
[4] Anna Lee, "Uncertain Future for 82 Year Old Beth Israel," *Greenville News*, December 29,2012, accessed June 16, 2015, http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20121230/DOWNTOWN/312300015/Uncertain-future-82-year-old-Beth-Israel.
[5] Kerry Olitzy and Marc Lee Raphael, *The American Synagogue: A Historical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 15.

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prominent public buildings. The design of Beth Israel Synagogue and, to some extent, the Temple of Israel, suggests that the goal was to blend with other local architecture rather than diverging sharply from it. Whereas the Temple was built in the Gothic style, Beth Israel's architect chose the Classical Revival Style, a form common to other religious buildings in the region and state. Congregants seemed to prefer a popular style in designing Beth Israel; this preference was shown again when a new synagogue was constructed in 1957. The building, still being used today, was built in the modern International style. The square brick building is one story and very plain save for the linear stained glass windows and the large stone replica of the two tablets (the Ten Commandments) as decoration on the front elevation of the building.

Joseph Gilbert Cunningham, who designed Beth Israel, was born in Anderson County and attended Clemson College (now Clemson University). After obtaining his textile engineering degree in 1903, he worked with prominent textile mill architect Joseph Sirrine before joining his older brother Frank to form Cunningham and Cunningham. The two were responsible for several well-known buildings in Greenville including the Imperial Hotel (1911) and St. Paul's Methodist Church (1909). They were responsible for the Pickens County Jail (1928) in Pickens, SC and the Science Building at Converse College (1914) in Spartanburg, SC. They also designed a host of schools in different cities throughout South Carolina including Woodruff High School (1925), Orangeburg High School (1915), and Bamberg High School (1922).[6] The Cunninghams seemed to not favor one style over another when designing buildings. For example, the auditorium at Easley High School was constructed in the Renaissance Revival Style, while Woodruff High School was built in the Collegiate Gothic Style. The Imperial Hotel, Greenville's first "skyscraper" was built in the Commercial Style.

After Frank's death in 1928, Joseph continued to practice on his own and at times with fellow Greenville architect Lewis J. Walker.[7] In addition to Beth Israel, he also designed several large homes in the Augusta Road neighborhood of Greenville, S.C.; schools in Jonesville, Pickens and Travelers Rest; and the Greenville Memorial Auditorium (along with Walker; first sketches submitted in 1939).

While Cunningham designed the exterior of Beth Israel to fit in with other public buildings in the Greenville area, he also built it to last. The brick walls are 17 inches thick and the downstairs hall was built first and used as a meeting space until the sanctuary was finished.[8] The interior of the sanctuary featured three rows of pews and two aisles arranged in front of the Ark (the cabinet that holds the Torah scrolls) and the Bimah (the platform where the leader of the service reads the Torah), which were located on the back wall of the sanctuary. From a 1941 photograph of the interior during the wedding of Ruth Knigoff and Sydney Berkowitz, it appears that the Bimah had a dark wood railing around the platform. The Ark is mostly obscured by the Huppah, but it appears to be of neoclassical styling. It is made of dark wood in the shape of a temple with square columns and Corinthian capitals. There are neoclassical swags and other motives on the

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[6] Wells and Dalton, 36.
[7] Kelly Lee Odom, *Greenville's Augusta Road* (Mt. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 48.
[8] Eric Connor, "Saving Greenville's Beth Israel is a Leap of Faith," *Greenville News*, April 4, 2015, accessed July 6, 2015, http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/greenville/downtown/2015/04/03/saving-beth-israel-synagogue-leap-faith/25262689/.

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entablature. This arrangement deviates from its established heritage. Beth Israel was attended by a largely Ashkenazi population; those congregations often placed the Bimah in a more central location in the middle of the room.[9] It was the Sephardic congregations that chose to place the Bimah and Ark at the rear of the sanctuary.

At the time of Beth Israel's construction, the congregation still identified with the orthodox view. As such, men and women would have been seated separately in the sanctuary. As remembered by Anna Lurey, a long time member of the congregation, there was a balcony above the main entrance for women to sit in so that they would be separated from the male members of the congregation. She does not remember this balcony ever being used. As a child she would often sit on the left side pews or the center pews. In her interview, she noted that women sat on the left, and men on the right. She would often sit in the center with her father. Following World War II, the congregation began to identify with Conservative Judaism, so men and women began to sit together during services.

Another orthodox observance would have required the presence of a mikvah. This ceremonial bath was used by the ladies of the congregation as Jewish law required them to cleanse themselves every month. Many have speculated that the mikvah was located at the entrance of the basement level hall, where the baptismal pool is now.[10] However, this was most likely not the case because a portion of the water used in a mikvah had to be from a natural source. Another theory was that the mikvah was located under a trap door in the synagogue office.[11] As there is a creek running at the rear of the property, it likely that a mikvah was constructed there; in fact, an article in the *Greenville News* cites that as the actual location.[12]

In designing a synagogue, access to light played a particularly important role. The Jerusalem Talmud stated "the synagogue should have great light" and cautioned against praying in a windowless room.[13] While many synagogues were not able to follow through with these instructions, the design of Beth Israel did conform to these directives. In addition to the dodecagon shaped dome (which represents the 12 points on the Star of David), there are fifteen extant windows in the sanctuary. There is also evidence of a large window located at the rear wall of the building that was later covered over. It appears that this was a later addition as the window does not appear in a 1941 photograph of the property. The ample and large windows meant that the sanctuary would have been filled with natural light, which supplemented the artificial light also available. The light also served a practical purpose, as there was a great deal of reading during the service so sufficient lighting was necessary.

[9] Hyman J. Brand (former congregant) interviewed by Caroline Wilson, telephone, June 26, 2015; "Life of the Synagogue."
[10] Lee, "Uncertain Future for Beth Israel."
[11] R.C. Berman, **"**After 45 Years, A Jewish Community Breaks Ground for New Mikvah" *Chabad Lubavitch Headquarters News*, March 25, 2008, accessed July 27, 2015, http://lubavitch.com/news/article/2022372/After-45-Years-A-Jewish-Community-Breaks-Ground-For-New-Mikvah.html.
[12] C. Eric Connor, "Saving Beth Israel Synagogue is a Leap of Faith," *Greenville News*, April 4, 2015, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/greenville/downtown/2015/04/03/saving-beth-israel-synagogue-leap-faith/25262689/.
[13] 'The Synagogue," Torah Lab, accessed July 27, 2015, http://www.torahlab.org/community/article/synagogue/.

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Having plentiful light would have also facilitated another important purpose in the synagogue: education. It was a primary function from the beginning. When services were not being held in the synagogue, men and boys would gather to study historic and religious texts. Education began at the age of 3 when children learned Hebrew. At the age 5, they were expected to attend Cheder to learn the Torah. Girls were educated too, but this often occurred at home. By the age of 13, boys and girls were expected to fully observe the commandments. This confirmation was eventually celebrated with a bar mitzvah. Eventually the observance spilled over to include females who were bat mitzvahed at the age of 12.[14] In Europe, there were often formal Jewish schools that provided both religious and secular education. But in the United States, public school was required and so congregations adapted.[15] In smaller communities, education meant studying with the rabbi, if available. In larger communities, local synagogues would provide evening and weekend classes to teach their children. Beth Israel was able to do this and these classes were held in the basement hall area. Though a basement level can sometimes be dark, it appears that the design of Beth Israel took the need for light into consideration as there are twenty windows on this level. The original configuration of this level was an open space with a stage flanked by two storage rooms. There was access to the stage from each of the rooms, along with an exit to the exterior of the building from the room on the right side of the stage. There was also access to a small kitchen and bathroom that was located behind the stage. There were never any windows or doors on this wall, so the current configuration was a later addition.

While many components of a synagogue were universal, there was much diversity in interior decoration. There are no traditions guiding the décor, but, as with many synagogues, and much ecclesiastical architecture generally, the interior of the building was designed as a showpiece. The concept of "Hiddur Mitzvah" or "beautification of the commandments" led many congregations to have elaborate displays for the Torah, which was placed in a place of honor in the sanctuary.[16] Most likely, the Torah would have been housed at the rear of the sanctuary at Beth Israel, in the decorative Ark, as pictured in the 1941 photograph. Where many synagogues used stained glass windows to decorate the interior, it is not known if the windows at Beth Israel were stained glass. Though red plexiglass was installed in many of the window panes at a later date, it appears that stained glass was not used in the original windows. For example, the Palladian windows in the building are original and feature clear glass instead of stained glass.

## Criterion A: Religion

The beginnings of the Jewish community in Greenville can be traced all the way back to the founding of the South Carolina colony. The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, established in 1669, allowed for great religious freedom in the colony. Even though these sections were never endorsed by General Assembly, Jewish immigrants were quick to locate to Charleston

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[14] "Bar Mitzvah 101," Chabad Lubavitch, accessed July 26, 2015, http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1912609/jewish/Bar-Mitzvah-101.htm.
[15] "Life of a Synagogue."
[16] Ibid.

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upon hearing of these religious freedoms.[17] These first immigrants were largely Sephardic Jews of Spanish and Portuguese descent and were often the culturally elite among their people.  Given that they had been driven into central and western Europe during the Inquisition, these Jews brought a kaleidoscope of cultures, languages, and rituals with them. There were also members of the Ashkenazi who arrived during this time. These Jews were exiled after the fall of Jerusalem and were more nomadic than their Sephardic counterparts. Their Germanic-Judeo language would eventually become known as Yiddish and they had a tendency to fill manual labor positions where they settled.[18]

Wherever Jews settled, they were quick to assimilate into society. As was the case for many immigrants, they frequently settled in port cities, which would account for their early presence in Charleston. Here they often became the "middle men," or "factors," to the numerous plantation owners, and a few were able to become a part of the elite planter class itself. They appropriated local traditions but struggled to keep the stringent rules of their faith. In order to keep their numbers "pure," marriages only occurred within their religion. Their mobility up and down the Eastern seaboard allowed for these unions to take place while growing their number.[19]

In 1749, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim was formed to serve the spiritual needs of Charleston's Jewish community.[20] Given the Sephardic background of many Charleston Jews, the synagogue was initially very orthodox in its approach. Services were spoken in "mongrel Spanish" and congregation divided by gender. Its leaders served as the authority in the community, and their rules were very strict. Fines were levied against those who broke rituals and laws including severe penalties for marrying a non-Jew.[21] For nearly a century, Jews lived and worshiped in Charleston before the radical reform movement from Germany swept in. It was 1824 when these reformists asked for several changes to better accommodate the modernizing population at Beth Elohim and in Charleston as a whole. For one, they believed that services should be conducted in English so that congregants could better exercise moral judgment and decency. They also asked for a shorter service that spent more time emphasizing the important parts of the liturgy.[22] These reformists were met with resistance and so on November 21, 1824, they organized the Reformed Society of Israelites and eventually claimed fifty members and two hundred likeminded Jews. Although this experiment was successful initially, by 1833, the Society was disbanded due to familial pressures and lack of theological knowledge. But the reformers did not lose hope. Almost a decade later, Beth Elohim was divided once more by schism so great, the American court system was involved. The result was dissenters leaving to form the reform congregation of Shearith Israel.[23] This effort was much more successful and many historians consider this the beginning of the American Jewish Reform Movement. Nonetheless, this movement was the first of its kind and would indicate things to come. As a wave of German

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[17] Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten, *A Portion of the People*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 60.
[18] Ibid, 60.
[19] Ibid, 62.
[20] "About," Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, accessed June 20, 2015, http://www.kkbe.org/index.php?page=about.
[21] Barnett Abraham Elzas, "A Century of Judaism in South Carolina: 1800-1900", *News & Courier*, 1904, 7.
[22] Ibid, 8-9.
[23] Ibid, 16.

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immigrants arrived in the States in the middle of the 19th century, Reform Judaism took hold in cities across the nation. The basic tenants of what would become Progressive or Liberal Judaism were that, while the Torah was sacred, it was ever evolving and should not be governed by ritual observance. Additionally, services were conducted in English, and men and women could sit together and fully participate in service and rituals.[24]

By 1860, there were 150,000 Jews in America and 200 recorded synagogues.[25] But not all communities flourished. In many instances, smaller communities struggled to establish a synagogue. Families would often meet in houses or public buildings, but oftentimes there were not enough congregants to support an ordained rabbi and synagogue building. This was difficult as Jews identified their community with the synagogue. It was more than a building, especially in a nation that was largely protestant. When the Jewish population of a town grew large enough to support a synagogue, it was usually a conservative congregation. For many years, this would be the only synagogue. But as a community drew more Jews to it, a reform congregation would invariably develop. This was the case with Greenville, South Carolina. While the bulk of Greenville's Jewish population would develop following the Civil War, there are records of early Jewish residents. The first postmaster of what would become Greenville (then it was called Pleasantburg) was Jewish. Credit reports and city directories of the 1850s show that approximately eight Jews lived in the slowly developing town of Greenville. Historian A.V. Huff believes that Jews were not necessarily welcomed in Greenville because most did not stay long in the area. Negative comments on credit reports for Jewish-owned businesses from R.G. Dun & Company support this theory.[26]

Following the Civil War, Greenville with its plentiful water supplies and railroad connections became a Mecca for the textile industry. New found wealth spurred the city's development and Jews once again appeared in the community. As early as 1878, thirty-five Jews were listed as residents. Some even ran successful mercantiles on Main Street, including Harris Marks, Hyman Endel, and Lee Rothschild.[27]

The Jewish families settling in Greenville were largely of Ashkenazi origin or hailing from Poland, Russia, and Germany.[28] But the first congregation to formally organize in Greenville would lean towards Orthodox Judaism. In 1910, twenty-five families formed Beth Israel and were led by Harris Bloom, a prominent department store owner. By 1912, officers had been elected and Charles Zaglin of Wilmington, North Carolina was chosen to be the rabbi, shoket, and mohel. The congregation met in a variety of places for many years including the Bank of Commerce building in downtown Greenville, and the Woodmen of the World building.[29] The congregation had many different rabbis throughout the 1920s, but in 1929, they finally

[24] "Variants Within Judaism," Israel & Judaism Studies, accessed June 15, 2015, http://www.ijs.org.au/variants-within-judaism/default.aspx.
[25] Olitzky and Raphael, 6.
[26] "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: Greenville, South Carolina."
[27] Ibid.
[28] Brand Interview.
[29] Archie Vernon Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 266.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900                                        OMB No. 1024-0018

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established a synagogue. Located on Townes Street, the orthodox synagogue's hall was completed in 1930.[30] The location of the new synagogue was no accident. Roughly seventy-five percent of Greenville's Jewish population lived nearby on East and West Stone Avenue. On High Holy Days, families had to walk to the synagogue so proximity was important.[31]

By then however, Beth Israel was not the only congregation. Almost simultaneous to the creation of Beth Israel, five Reform minded Jewish families began meeting in the home of Lee Rothschild in 1911. The group was formally chartered in 1917 and became known as the Children of Israel. They were able to build the Temple of Israel on Buist Avenue in 1928. It was a large synagogue with a sanctuary on the first floor and classrooms and a kitchen on the ground floor.[32] Though the Temple of Israel and Beth Israel congregations were divided by religious beliefs, they each served the growing Jewish community in Greenville.

By the 1930s, some thirty stores in downtown Greenville were owned by Jews.[33] There were department stores, dry goods stores, pawn shops, and even a meat market operated by Charles Zaglin, who had resigned as Beth Israel's rabbi. His butchery provided both kosher and non-kosher meats because there were not enough Jewish families available to support a kosher only shop. Additionally, in order to purchase kosher meat, a person or family had to belong to a synagogue.[34] Alex Davis, the son of a profitable auto parts store owner, remembers how families would gather after sundown for the ritual butchering of the meat on Saturday evenings. The weekly event became an important social custom in the community.[35]

Though the Jewish community was predominantly involved in retail, many got involved in Greenville's textile boom. In the late 1920s, Shephard Saltzman moved from New York to open the Piedmont Shirt Factory, and would also contribute a great deal with the Jewish community and Greenville. Saltzman employed other Jews in high ranking positions in the factory, including Harry Abrams as a supervisor. Harry was integral to integration some years later; in fact, Piedmont was the first factory in South Carolina to do so.[36] Saltzman and Abrams would also go on to resurrect the Temple of Israel. It had closed due to not employing a rabbi. In 1937, a full-time rabbi was employed and the Temple opened once more. Both Saltzman and Abrams felt it was important for the children in the Jewish community to be educated in history and culture.[37] Saltzman would later play a pivotal role in the history of Greenville. During World War II and the resulting Holocaust, he was instrumental in sponsoring European Jews in their attempts to immigrate to the United States. One immigrant by the name of Max Heller was employed by Saltzman upon his arrival in Greenville. Heller would eventually go on to manage the factory and later open his own Maxon Shirt Factory. But, more importantly, Heller would be elected mayor of Greenville in 1971 and would use federal funding to redevelop and preserve

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[30] Lee, "Uncertain Future for 82-year-old Beth Israel."
[31] Alex Davis and Suzanne Lurey, interviewed by Dale Rosengarten, Greenville, SC, February 28, 2007
[32] "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: Greenville, South Carolina."
[33] Ibid.
[34] Max and Trude Heller, interview by Dale Rosengarten, Greenville, SC, February 28, 1997.
[35] Interview with Alex Davis and Suzanne Lurey.
[36] Irving and Majorie Kohler Abrams, interview by Dale Rosengarten, Greenville, SC, February 27, 1997.
[37] Ibid.

Beth Israel Synagogue                                                                Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                                     County and State

Greenville's downtown.[38] Heller's efforts marked the renaissance of Greenville as both a destination for tourists and a home base for many nationally and internationally recognized businesses.

Though Greenville was a progressive community, there were many important parts of the Jewish faith missing. For one, there was no full-time Hebrew school for the children. The rabbi and shoket of each congregation was in charge of preparing the children for their bat or bar mitzvah. They would learn to read the Hebrew part of the Torah; the boys would also learn how to lay the tifillin. Other Jewish customs and traditions, Hebrew language education, were not available until the late 1930s when Rabbi Samuel Wrubel came to pastor Beth Israel.[39]

Another important ritual to the Jewish faith is the ceremonial burial upon death. Burials could not happen in a Gentile cemetery and until 1938, Greenville's Jews had to be buried in Columbia, South Carolina. Some were sent as far away as Jacksonville, Florida and Augusta, Georgia. In 1938, Morris Zaglin spearheaded an effort to purchase property for a Jewish cemetery. This project marked a compromise between Beth Israel and the Temple of Israel as both congregations were involved. Three acres of land were purchased on White Horse Road. In order to be buried there, however, a person had to be an investor in the project and then purchase a plot. The cost of each was $25 and the initial investment was used to purchase the property.[40]

Both congregations have continued to grow along with Greenville. In 1959, Beth Israel sold the synagogue on Townes Street and moved to a new building on Summit Drive. Similarly, the Temple of Israel left their original location on Buist Avenue for a new synagogue in 1989. The Beth Israel Synagogue has gone through many changes. Since the congregation vacated it, the building has served a Pentecostal church, a labor cooperative, and a photography studio. Most recently it had been abandoned by its owner, the parent company of a local coffee chain. It is now in the beginning stages of being restored into a private home.

While Charleston remains the epicenter of Jewish life in South Carolina with over 6,000 Jews, Greenville currently has a Jewish population that numbers approximately 2,000, the third highest in the state behind Charleston and Columbia.[41] Beth Israel Synagogue is an important living testament to the history of Judaism in Greenville.

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[38] Interview with Max and Trude Heller.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Alex Davis and Suzanne Lurey interview.
[41] "Jewish Population in the United States, 2011," Berman Institute (North American Jewish Data Bank ) - University of Connecticut, accessed on June 17, 2015, http://www.jewishdatabank.org/Reports/Jewish_Population_in_the_United_States_2011.pdf.

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National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900                                    OMB No. 1024-0018

Beth Israel Synagogue                                                    Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                         County and State

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            http://www.ijs.org.au/variants-within-judaism/default.aspx.

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Beth Israel Synagogue                                                    Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                         County and State

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**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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

**Primary location of additional data:**

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
        Name of repository: _____

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** _____

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**10. Geographical Data**

 **Acreage of Property** __0.17_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1.  Latitude: 34.857970                    Longitude: -82.397858

2.  Latitude:                                       Longitude:

Beth Israel Synagogue                                                    Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                         County and State

3. Latitude:                    Longitude:

4. Latitude:                    Longitude:

**Or**
**UTM References**
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:              Easting:              Northing:

2. Zone:              Easting:              Northing:

3. Zone:              Easting:              Northing:

4. Zone:              Easting :             Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries for the nominated property are coincident with the dark red line delineating a portion of parcel number 0012000105000 on the accompanying Greenville County tax map drawn at a scale of one-inch equals eighty feet and labeled "Beth Israel Synagogue." The property is bounded on the east by Townes St., on the south by a parking lot, and on the north and west by adjacent property lines.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries encompass the entire footprint of the historic Beth Israel Synagogue.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: _Caroline Wilson, Principal Consultant_____
organization: _Upstate Preservation Consultants_____
street & number: 203 N Miller Street_____
city or town: Greer_____ state: _SC_____ zip code:___29650__
e-mail_upstatepreservation@gmail.com_
telephone:_864-266-8350_____
date:_10/21/2015_____

Beth Israel Synagogue                                          Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                              County and State

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Beth Israel Synagogue
City or Vicinity: Greenville
County:    Greenville                          State: South Carolina
Photographer: Caroline Wilson
Date Photographed: July 9, 2015

1 of _27: Front Exterior - East Façade with Adjacent Building

2 of _27: Front Exterior - Exterior - North Façade (from Parking Lot)

3 of _27: Exterior - North Façade Palladian Window

4 of _27: Exterior - South Façade

5 of _27: Rear Exterior - West Façade

6 of _27: Exterior - East Façade Lower Entrance

7 of _27: Exterior - West Façade Lower Entrance

Beth Israel Synagogue                                                       Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                           County and State

8 of  27: Exterior - West Façade Lower Entrance

9 of  27: Exterior - East Façade Main Entrance

10 of  27: Main Sanctuary facing East

11 of  27: Main Sanctuary facing West

12 of  27: Main Sanctuary facing South

13 of  27: Main Sanctuary facing North

14 of  27: Main Sanctuary Triple Sash Window

15 of  27: Main Sanctuary - Northeast Corner Triple Hung and Double Hung Windows

16 of  27: Main Sanctuary - Cupola

17 of  27: Main Sanctuary - Ceiling

18 of  27: Exterior - Lower Level Entrance (West Side)

19 of  27: Exterior - Lower Level Entrance (East Side)

20 of  27: Lower Level Entry Doors and Baptismal Pool

21 of  27: Lower Hall facing East

22 of  27: South Exit to Walkway and Adjacent Building

23 of  27: Example of Double Hung Window - Hall Lower Level

24 of  27: Lower Level Hall facing West - Main Entry Doors (Staircase not Original)

25 of  27: South Exit - Later Addition Connects Here

26 of  27: Parking Lot on the North Side of the Synagogue

27 of  27: Creek Bed on the West Side of the Synagogue that may have served as the Mikvah

Beth Israel Synagogue                                                    Greenville County, SC
Name of Property                                                         County and State
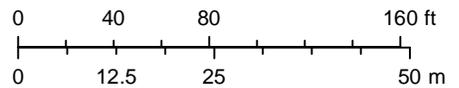
this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
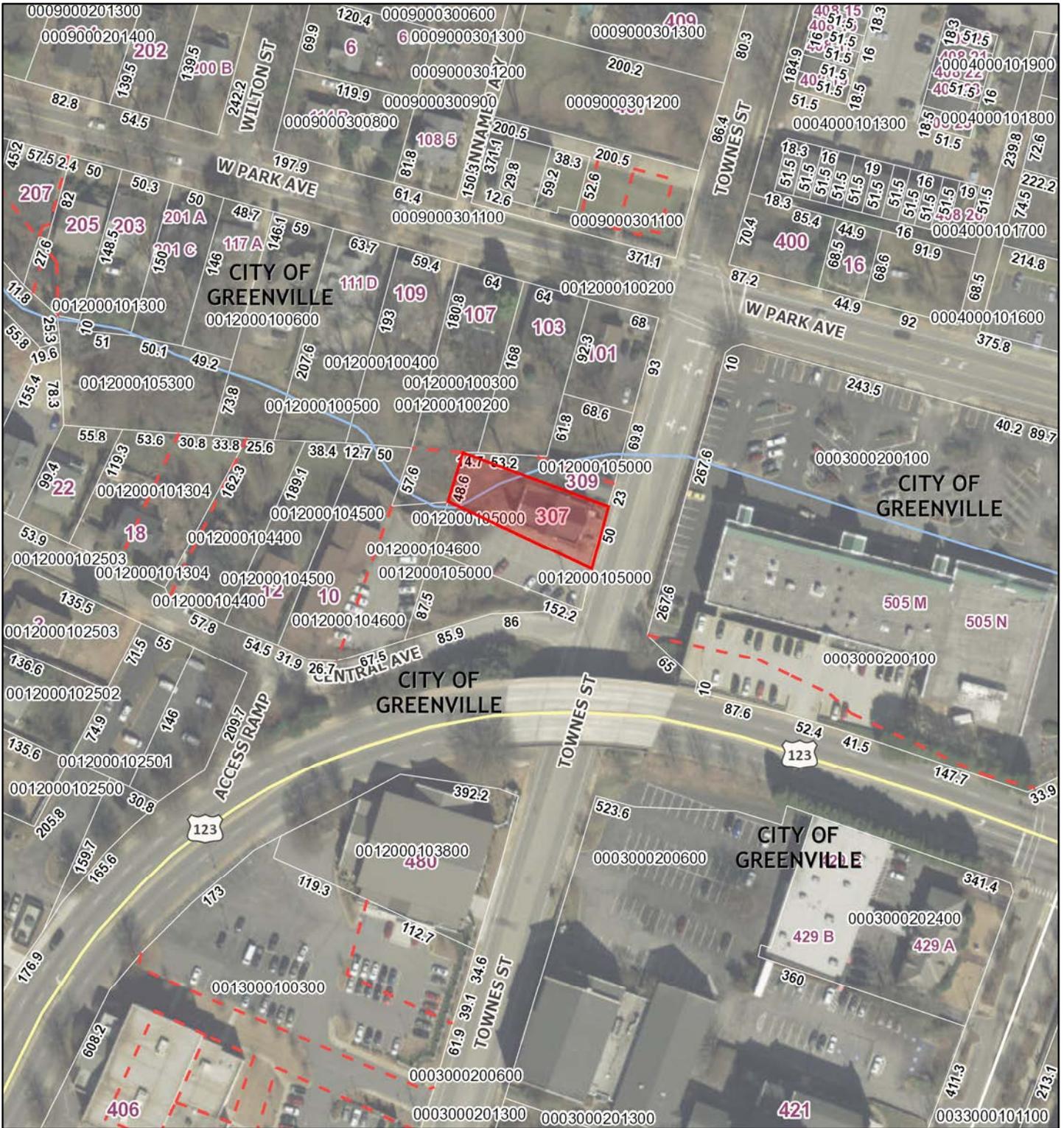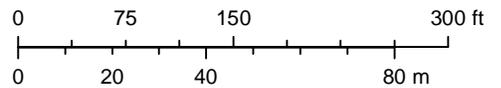
# Beth Israel Synagogue



W PARK AVE

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115A  111A  109  64 0012000100200  87.2  0004000101401
146.1  0012000100500  68  W PARK AVE  0004000101500
111D  107  92.3  10 9.6
0012000100600  193  0012000100300  101 0012000100100  243.5
207.6  0012000100400  168  61.8 68.6  93  CITY OF GREENVILLE
180.8  69.8  TOWNES ST  267.6
0012000101304  0012000100200  0003000200100
25.6 29.4  38.4 12.7  50  14.7  53.2  12.2
0012000104400  57.6  48.6  0012000105000  23
0012000104500  53.1  0012000105000  50
189.1  49.8  505 A 505 B
0012000104600  0012000105000  CITY OF GREENVILLE  505 E
0012000104900  50.4
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12  10  0012000104600  0003000200100
54.5  205.4  85.9  CENTRAL AVE  86  86 0012000104900  10
31.9  26.7  67.5  TOWNES ST  65  87.6  52.4  41.5
209.7  0012000104200  123  123
ACCESS RAMP  CITY OF GREENVILLE  123
173  392.2  TOWNES ST  523.6  341.4
119.3  0012000103800  0003000200600  360  429 C
0013000100300  480  0003000202400

March 28, 2016

1:960

0        40        80        160 ft
0      12.5      25        50 m

Greenville County GIS
Greenville County South Carolina GIS Division

# Beth Israel Synagogue



March 28, 2016

1:1,600

| 0 | 75 | 150 | 300 ft |

| 0 | 20 | 40 | 80 m |

GRACE EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH

307

307

Beth Israel Synagogue
1929-1959

Grace Evangelical Methodist Church
1959-1964

Greenville Labor Temple Cooperative
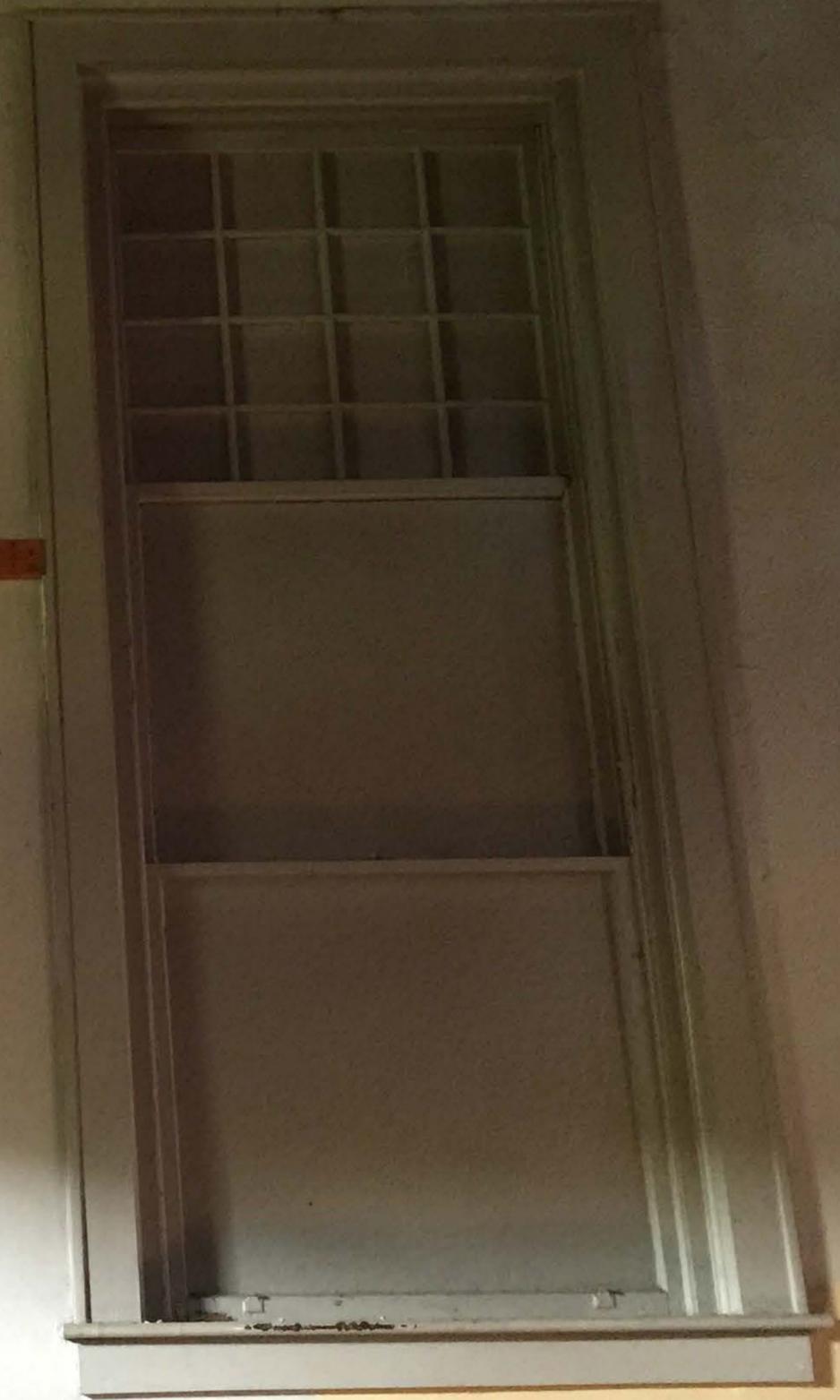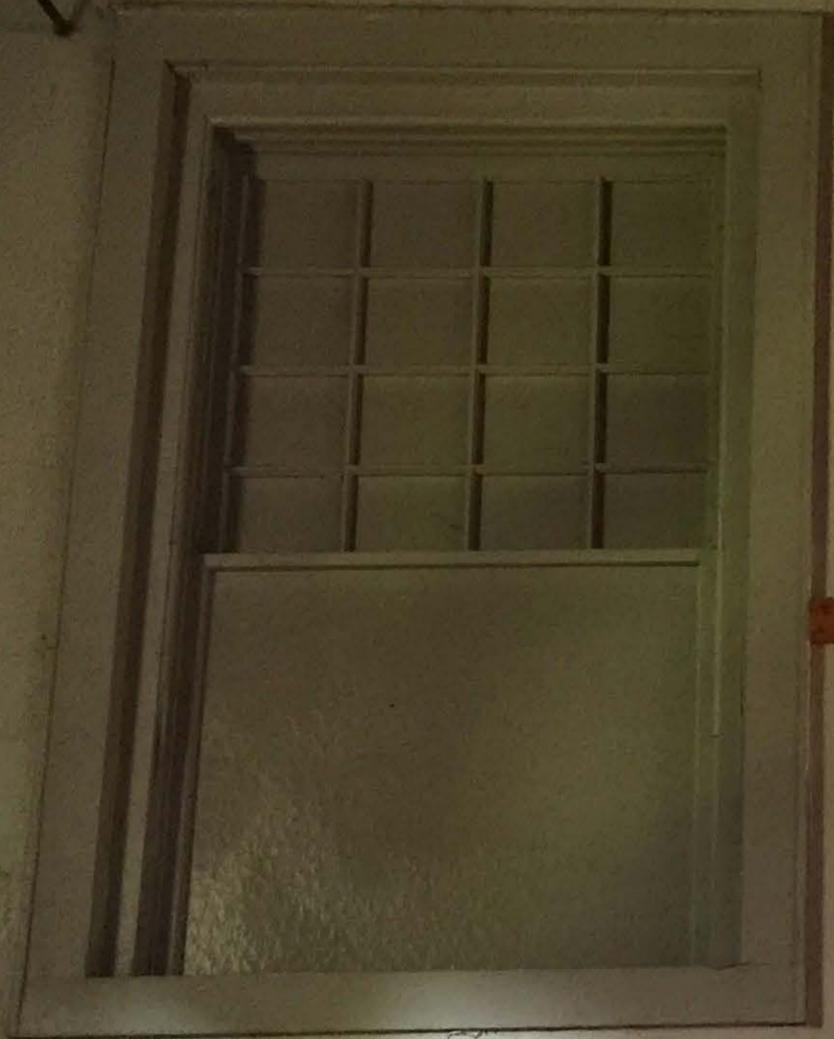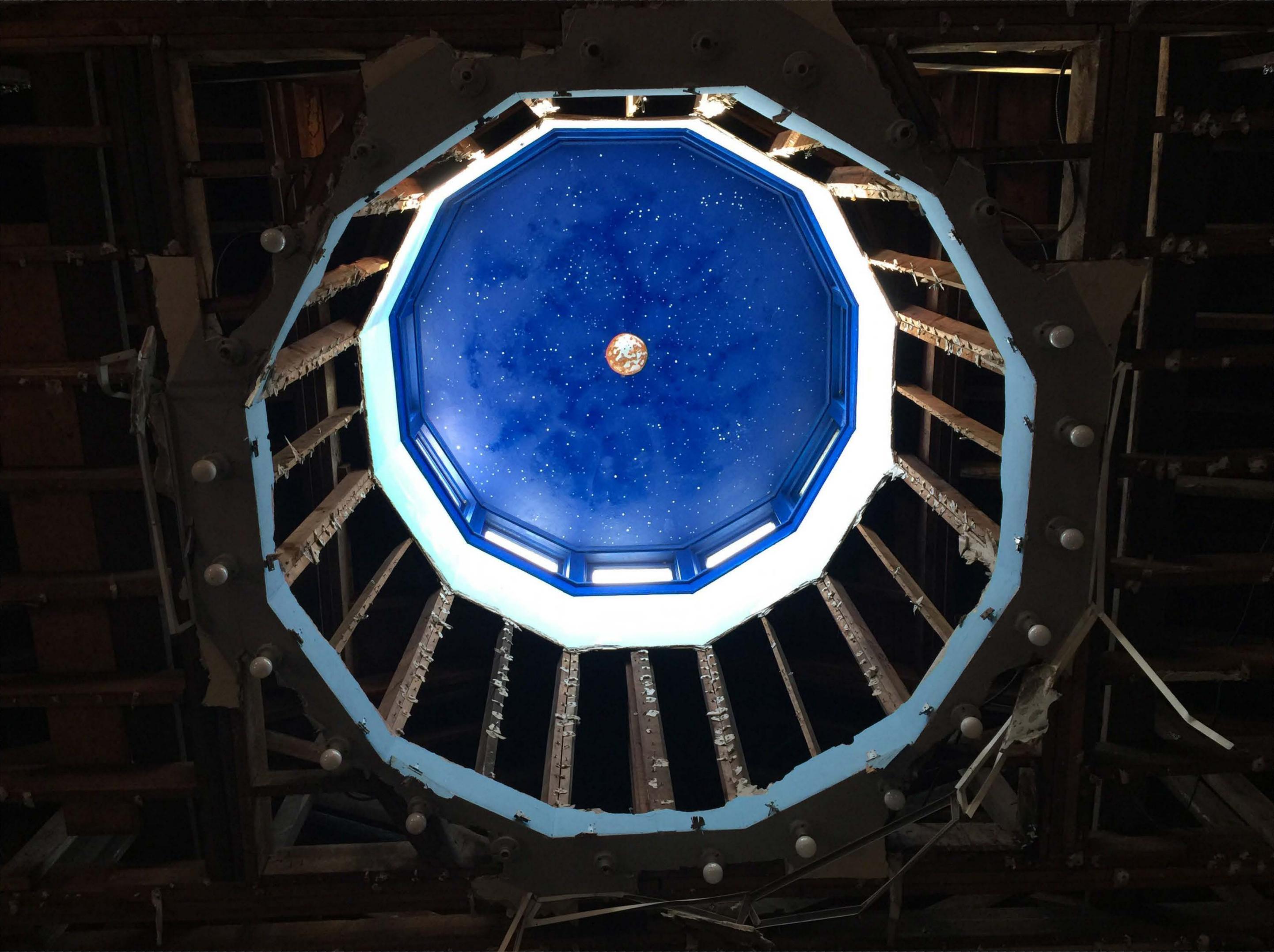1964-1977

Faith Tabernacle Apostolic Church
1978-1988

Crosby Stills
1988

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION:   NOMINATION

PROPERTY    Beth Israel Synagogue
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY:   SOUTH CAROLINA, Greenville

DATE RECEIVED:       4/08/16        DATE OF PENDING LIST:  4/29/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY:    5/16/16        DATE OF 45TH DAY:      5/24/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER:   16000292


REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:   N   DATA PROBLEM: N   LANDSCAPE: N   LESS THAN 50 YEARS:   N
OTHER:    N   PDIL:         N   PERIOD:    N   PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:   N
REQUEST:  N   SAMPLE:       N   SLR DRAFT: N   NATIONAL:             N

COMMENT WAIVER:   N

___✓ACCEPT      ___RETURN      ___REJECT    5-23-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**


RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____        DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____        DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
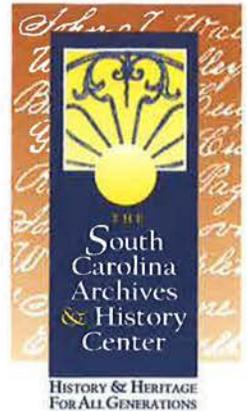nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

March 28, 2016

THE
South
Carolina
Archives
& History
Center

HISTORY & HERITAGE
FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Paul Loether
National Register Chief
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye (I) Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC  20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for Beth Israel Synagogue in Greenville County, South Carolina. The nomination was approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. We are now submitting this nomination for formal review by the National Register staff.  The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for Beth Israel Synagogue to the National Register of Historic Places.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6182, fax me at (803) 896-6167, or e-mail me at efoley@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Ehren Foley, Ph.D.
Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office
8301 Parklane Rd.
Columbia, S.C. 29223