

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

B'Nai Zion Temple, Shreveport, Caddo Parish, LA

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### Legal Property Description

Lots 1, 2 and the northeasterly one-half of Lot 3, TEN ACRE LOT NO.5, W. R. CARTERS SUBDIVISION, a subdivision of the City of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, as per map thereof recorded in Book D, Page 726 of the Conveyance Records of Caddo Parish, Louisiana.

### Justification

Boundaries follow the property lines of the parcel of land upon which the nominated building is located.

1545

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

DEC 16 1993

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name B'Nai Zion Temple

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 802 Cotton Street N/A not for publication

city or town Shreveport N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Caddo code 017 zip code 71101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Jonathan Fricker* 12/13/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date  
State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

*Greg M. Lapsley* Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register Date of Action 12/24/93

B'Nai Zion Temple  
Name of Property

Caddo Parish, LA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		_____ buildings
		_____ sites
		_____ structures
		_____ objects
1	0	_____ Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work in Progress

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Beaux Arts

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof slate; other: tar and gravel

other terra cotta

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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'Nai Zion Temple, Shreveport, Caddo Parish, LA

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The B'nai Zion Temple (1915) is a massive three story brick and terra cotta building occupying a corner lot in downtown Shreveport. The Beaux Arts building has been little altered since its construction.

Built on a sloping site, B'nai Zion takes the form of a two story temple set on a high rusticated basement. In some places the basement is a full story high, with its own entrance on the Common Street side of the building. The principal entrance is on Cotton Street where, due to the slope of the lot, the temple is only a little over two stories high. The impressive entrance is approached via two flights of monumental steps. The five bay facade culminates in a colossal composite order pedimented portico. The portico is rather shallow, protruding only enough to allow the columns to be free standing. The central portion of the facade protrudes somewhat to emphasize and reinforce the portico. In addition, the shape of the pediment is echoed and reinforced by a parapet crowned with anthemion acroteria. This articulation using advancing and receding wall planes is very typical of the Beaux Arts tradition. Other noteworthy exterior features include the Star of David inscribed in the tympanum, the use of brick quoins, cartouches and scroll pediments over the three entrance doorways, an entablature with a modillion cornice and dentils encircling the building, and modillions and dentils outlining the tympanum. Windows take various forms. Each side elevation features five two-story stained glass windows culminating in boldly formed Roman lunettes. The windows are defined by composite order pilasters. Other windows are capped by pediments resting on consoles while others feature a simple terra cotta surround with a keystone. Openings on the basement story are segmentally arched.

The central entrance opens into a foyer which leads to the two story worship space, a grand auditorium-like room with colossal composite pilasters, a full entablature and a semi-vaulted ceiling. The ceiling, which consists of cove edges and a flat top, features a set of decorative ribs placed so as to echo the pattern of the pilasters below. The entablature's cornice features modillions, dentils and egg and dart molding. The worship space is lit by the previously mentioned stained glass windows. No two stained glass treatments are exactly alike, but each features a design using various Hebraic symbols.

Flanking the foyer are men's and women's parlors. Behind the worship space is a range of meeting rooms and offices, one of which has a fireplace and was thus no doubt reserved for the Rabbi. An enclosed staircase is located at each corner of the building. The basement contains a fellowship hall and kitchen.

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Alterations

After the B'nai Zion congregation moved to another location in the 1960s, the temple was taken over by the Knights of Columbus. At that time the entablature of the entrance portico was fitted with "Knights of Columbus 1108" in large letters. This has been taken off as part of an in-progress restoration to reveal the original name; however, the attached pictures do not reflect this. The portion of the roof that was originally metal has been changed to slate. In any event, it cannot be seen from the street. (This change is also not evident in the photos, which were taken right before restoration work began.) Also, the stained glass windows on the side elevations are being fitted with large sheets of non-tinted protective glass mounted flush with the pilasters. The wood framed glass will curve at the top to follow the shape of the windows. A closeup view is attached. An overall view was impossible because of the scaffolding.

Assessment of Integrity

The protective windows, while regrettable, represent a change that is easily reversible. This change is of comparatively minimal importance given the building's overall tremendous visual presence. Finally, it is the only noticeable alteration in an otherwise virtually pristine building.

**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.)

- 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.
- 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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

**Period of Significance**

1915

**Significant Dates**

1915

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Edward F. Neild & Clarence Olschner,  
Architects

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- 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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

B'Nai Zion Temple  
Name of Property

Caddo Parish, LA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than an acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 5 | | 4 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 0 | | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 0 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1993

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name J. C. Dellinger Trust (Jolene C. Harms & John Hartley, Trustees)

street & number P. O. Box 306 telephone (805) 238-3484

city or town Paso Robles state CA zip code 93447-0306

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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B'nai Zion Temple is significant in the area of architecture on the state level as a rare and important example of the Beaux Arts style.

What has come to be known as Beaux Arts is a flamboyant Greco-Roman style popular during the early years of this century for official buildings such as city halls, courthouses, libraries, and major urban railroad depots. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office can determine, some twenty major examples once existed in Louisiana, of which ten are still standing. Thus, the Beaux Arts style is rare in the state and all surviving examples are significant.

Beyond this, B'nai Zion is conspicuous among Louisiana's extant Beaux Arts buildings because of its interior, which is both impressive and very well preserved (see description). The worship space is truly Roman in scale with colossal composite pilasters, two story round-head windows and a partially vaulted ceiling (see description). Many of the other surviving examples never had such a space, or if they had, it has since been compromised. Five of the other examples are parish courthouses in which the courtroom (the only major space) is large but less richly adorned. Also, many have undergone alterations such as lowered ceilings and new wall covering. Another extant Beaux Arts building, Union Bank & Trust in Opelousas, is only one story and thus can not boast a space of the magnificence of B'nai Zion. Still another example, the Journalism Building at Louisiana State University, has purely functional interiors. Thus, B'nai Zion stands with the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Shreveport and the Louisiana State Supreme Court Building in New Orleans as among the three finest examples of the Beaux Arts taste in the state.



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**Bibliography**

B'Nai Zion Temple Cornerstone.

SHPO staff knowledge of extant Beaux Arts buildings.

Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robison, R. Warren. The Courthouses of Louisiana. Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1977.

Cable, Mary. Lost New Orleans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980.