

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Temple de Hirsch

and/or common Old Sanctuary

2. Location

street & number 15th Avenue and East Union Street not for publication

city, town Seattle vicinity of congressional district 3rd - Don Bonker

state Washington code 053 county King code 033

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Congregation Temple de Hirsch Sinai

street & number 15th Avenue and East Union Street

city, town Seattle vicinity of state Washington 98102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. King County Assessor

street & number King County Administration Building

city, town Seattle vicinity of state Washington 98104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Seattle Inventory of Historic Resources/1979;
title Designated Seattle Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April, 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Seattle Office of Urban Conservation

city, town Seattle vicinity of state Washington 98104

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Temple de Hirsch was designed by Seattle architect J. F. Everett and built at the corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Union Street in 1907. Essentially neo-classical in character, the external form of the temple consists of a rectangular form with a gable roof, twin towers* incorporated at the two flanks of the main, or west facade, and a projecting portico at the center of the main facade. The entrance is approached via two flights of concrete stairs which rise to meet a platform directly in front of the portico. The temple is faced in a buff colored brick detailed with recessed brick courses in the lower level which simulate rustication. Embellishment of the other surfaces and important details is accomplished with the use of terra cotta, most notably in the modified, four-columned Doric Portico.

Fenestration involves a variety of square, rectangular and round arched windows. The west facade features a large and impressive round arched window centered directly above the entrance portico as well as smaller rectangular openings at a lower level. The main facade also features three terra cotta framed portals at the lower rusticated level; the central portal is detailed with a broken pediment, and the side portals are detailed with arched pediments. The side elevations are both graced with four large round arched windows in the upper, or sanctuary level, which are aligned above four rectangular windows in the lower level. The rear elevation of the temple is highlighted by a large round arched opening filled with a stained glass window depicting Moses. This window is relatively unique for a synagogue since figurative art was generally absent in traditional synagogue architecture.

The interior of the synagogue combines the characteristics of both a nave and a meeting house form. The main sanctuary is completely neo-Palladian not only in detailing but in form and disposition as well. The space is oriented East-West (east toward Jerusalem), with the east end terminating in the rostrum and bema, surmounted by the Ark and Torah above which is the stained glass window depicting Moses. Fundamentally the space features a shallow, barrel vaulted ceiling with four equal bays whose transverse arches are supported by Tuscan Columns on pedestals. Galleries are attached to the columnar structure on both sides of the temple and also across the rear of the west end. Glazed lunettes within each bay provide light in the balcony areas but are hidden externally behind the exterior cornice.

Abutting the old temple at its northwest corner is the two-story brick Temple Center which extends to the north along 15th Avenue. Built in 1924, the center has a concrete base and a street facade of buff-colored brick trimmed with pinkish-tan terra cotta. This terra cotta ornament includes dentils, Greek key, and anthemion motifs which relate to the classical theme of the old temple. The temple center was renovated on its interior in 1970 at which time its auditorium and gymnasium were converted into a reception hall. North of the temple center, and connected to it by a second story bridge, is a two-story concrete block classroom building that occupies the corner of 15th Avenue and Pike Street. This utilitarian building, faced with permastone and featuring glass brick

*Originally the twin towers terminated with rich baroque belfries and cupolas which unfortunately have been missing for some time. Reconstruction is being contemplated by the congregation.

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windows, was completed in 1951 and is currently leased by the Seattle OIC for use as its Career Intern Program headquarters.

Appended to the northeast corner of the temple center, fronting on both Pike Street and 16th Avenue, is the Congregation's "new" temple. Designed by architects B. Marcus Priteca, John Dethé, and Raymond Peck, the new temple was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1960. Housed within the building are the Temple offices and the sanctuary, whose circular shape is expressed on the exterior by concrete ribs that rise vertically at a convergent angle from a base of concrete grillwork and stained glass. The temple is connected on the south by the extension of a low entrance wing to the Schoenfeld-Gardner Chapel, completed in 1974. Constructed of concrete with a sheathing of aggregate panels, the chapel follows unusual angular lines. Between the chapel and the new temple is a paved landscaped courtyard which unites the complex along its 16th Avenue frontage. To the south and west of the chapel, at a lower grade level along Union Street, is a parking lot which extends to the rear of the old temple on 15th and Union.

The five-building complex of the Temple de Hirsch Sinai thus occupies an entire city block. With the exception of the adjoining temple center, the newer buildings are visually distinct and physically removed from the old temple. In spite of the fact that these accretions are indirectly connected to the old temple through the temple center, their visual impact upon the most historical element of the complex is minimal. The temple center, appended to the north of the old temple along 15th Avenue, is of compatible scale, materials and design and thus complements rather than detracts from its historicity. The original Temple de Hirsch, as a distinct and separate building, has been designated a Seattle City Landmark, and it is this element of the complex which is placed in nomination.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1907 Builder/Architect J. F. Everett, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Temple de Hirsch Sinai is of regional significance in areas of architecture and religion. Architecturally, the temple would appear to be a twentieth century element in the evolution of synogogue form and philosophy. Germain Bazin, in his book The Baroque, states that, "It was only in Protestant and Slav countries that the Jews were able to openly build places of worship. (17th-19th c). In some points these resembled Protestant Churches, the Protestants having adopted some Hebrew traditions. Just as preaching is the central activity in Protestant worship, the focal point of (orthodox) Jewish ritual (was) the reading of the sacred texts; thus there is a need for a pulpit or dias around which the faithful may gather. A synagogue is (often) a rectangular hall lined with galleries in which the hechal or tabernacle containing the Sepharim, the Books of the Law, face a dias or teba from which the rabbi gives his readings of the Books." This form is particularly evident in Temple de Hirsch.

Temple de Hirsch is also strongly reminiscent of the widely recognized temple in Newport, Rhode Island, designed by Peter Harrison between 1762 and 1763. Harrison took advantage of the need for galleries, which were set aside for the women of the congregation, to create fine neoclassical colonades. The Newport Synagogue also represents a turning away from the Baroque toward a "neo-Palladian" style, characteristic of the late Eighteenth Century, particularly in English speaking countries.

Temple de Hirsch Sinai owes its existence to seven Jewish pioneers in Seattle who met together on May 29, 1897. The following year it was again decided to mark the holy days with services, and subsequently the heads of 70 Jewish families subscribed the sum of \$2400.00 to help make the temple a reality. The temple was named for Baron de Hirsch, widely known at the time for his generosity and love of fellow man, particularly for his efforts in assisting less fortunate persons in Eastern Europe to immigrate to America to start new lives.

Early assemblies took place in Morris Hall, a multi-purpose facility at Ninth Avenue and Yesler which proved unsuitable as a permanent location. A site was soon acquired for a temple at Boyleston and Marion, and it was decided to complete a basement first which could be used provisionally for worship. Services were held in this partial structure in mid 1901. However, it soon became apparent that even this site would not be adequate for the growing congregation. This realization resulted in the acquisition of the present site in 1906.

The cornerstone of the temple at the present site was laid in an impressive ceremony in August 1906, and the first Friday evening services were held in the completed vestry room late in November of 1907. On May 24, 1908, the completed temple was dedicated. The temple functioned continuously as the spiritual center of the congregation in conjunction with ancillary buildings on the site until late 1960 when a new temple was constructed.

9. Major Bibliographical References

75th Anniversary Journal, Temple de Hirsch Sinai, 1974
Germain Bazin, The Baroque, New York Graphic Society, 1968
Seattle Office of Urban Conservation Case Files

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Seattle South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	5	1	7	8	0	5	2	7	3	3	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of Lot 1 and the south 14.5 feet of Lot 2, Block 3, Renton's Addition to the City of Seattle.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Staff

Edited by F. K. Lentz
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

organization Office of Urban Conservation

date February, June, 1980

street & number 400 Yesler Building

telephone (206) 625-4501

city or town Seattle

state Washington 98104

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Jacob E. Skon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 12/1/83

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

James A. Alvarez Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 1/5/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The Temple de Hirsch congregation is the oldest and the largest in the region, and has contributed greatly to the growth of the community, to the metropolitan Seattle area and to the Northwest. Outstanding community leaders, members of the congregation, have included:

Nathan Eckstein
Morton Schwabacher
Louis Friedlander
John M. Friedlander
The Rabbis Joseph, Koch, Levine, Plotkin and Starr
Alfred Shemanski
Mrs. J.R. Hiller
Mr. & Mrs. Bailley Gatzert

The old temple is no longer frequently used by the Temple de Hirsch Sinai congregation but is instead rented on a part time basis to the Orthodox Bikur Cholem congregation. However, plans are currently under consideration for its increased use in special occasions and rites by members of the parent congregation. Nonetheless, the building is believed to be the oldest synogogue in continuous use for Jewish worship services in the Pacific Northwest.