

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

B-3702

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

SYNAGOGUE, BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION

AND/OR COMMON

Berea Temple of the Seventh-Day Adventists

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1901 Madison Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Seventh

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

CODE

24

COUNTY

Baltimore City

CODE

510

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

Berea Temple of the Seventh-Day Adventists (Pastor William C. Scales)

STREET & NUMBER

1901 Madison Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21217

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

St. Paul and Fayette Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

B-3702

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
☐ EXCELLENT	☐ DETERIORATED	☒ UNALTERED	☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☒ GOOD	☐ RUINS	☐ ALTERED	☐ MOVED DATE _____
☐ FAIR	☐ UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Berea Temple, originally the synagogue of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, is located on the northwest corner of Madison Avenue and Robert Street in Baltimore, Maryland. Built of ashlar gray granite from Port Deposit, Maryland, it is a well-executed, nineteenth century version of a Byzantine church. It was designed by Charles L. Carson, a Baltimore architect.

The plan of Berea Temple, a Greek cross inscribed within a square, is characteristically Byzantine. In the end of each arm of the cross is a large round arched opening approximately 26 feet wide. Within the lower portion of the opening on the front (Madison Avenue) facade, is a triple main entrance elevated 13 steps above the street level. Above the entrance is a stained glass window with 13 sections separated by heavy stone mullions. Each arm of the Greek cross has a pitched roof which, with the return of the cornice across the gable, forms a pediment above the large window in each facade. In the tympanum of the front pediment is a small Norman opening with twin-arched windows separated by a heavy central shaft placed within a recessed stone arch. In each of the others is a small circular window. The corners of these projecting arms are finished in a circular engaged column extending from ground level to a Byzantine capital supporting the corner of the cornice. At the intersection of the arms is a large central dome, 40 feet in diameter, resting on a high octagonal drum pierced by rectangular windows of stained glass. Held above this large dome and the other two on the front towers are stars on top of slender poles.

Two tall octagonal towers resting on bases twenty feet square flank the main entrance. The octagonal part, about equal to the base in height, begins slightly above the cornice level. These towers terminate in an open balustraded arcade with a bell-shaped dome roof covered in dull, reddish-brown tiles. The form of the central dome, duplicating that of the others, has a lower flared position that becomes octagonal as its drum. The cornices of the domes as well as those surrounding the pediments are supported by large brackets.

Berea Temple has a high basement defined by a pronounced but plain, sloping water table. Above, a wide stone band divides the elevations with two storeys. As it intersects the large windows, it becomes the impost for their arch. The lower portion of the opening is composed of a band of five windows separated by short mullions in the form of columns with Byzantine capitals. The same situation is duplicated on a smaller scale in arched windows having only two lower divisions. On the longer side elevations (paralleling Robert Street) there is one in each recessed segment flanking the central pedimental sections. Across the entrance on Madison Avenue, the flat belt course changes to a pronounced billet molding and forms part of an elaborate lintel for the three entrances.

(see continuation sheet #1)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Synagogue, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION

Each entrance has double doors with large and ornate strapwork iron hinges. At the first floor level is a cross window in the front of each tower having the belt course for a lintel and a plain column with a Byzantine capital as a central mullion. Openings, except for arched ones, are small and rectangular.

There is a secondary entrance to the stairs midway between the basement and the main floor on the Robert Street side at the base of the tower. Over double doors there is a stone arch more likely to be found in a Romanesque revival design since its deep, though not rusticated, voussoirs springing from the water table penetrate most of the first floor division. Within the opening and flanking the doors are Byzantine columns supporting the tympanum which is plain except for a decorative semi-circular band. Exterior carving, particularly elaborate at the main (Madison Avenue) entrance, is found in few other places - notably the side entrance and in the arcade at the top of the towers.

The plan of the church is logical and efficient. Spaces within the sanctuary are vaulted. The dome rests on pendentives enriched with biblical scenes. The two front towers flanking the narthex contain half turn stairs with landings. They lead to a gallery twelve feet above the vestibule. It is lit by the upper semicircular portion of the window over the entrance and has ballusters resembling Tuscan columns. At the front of the sanctuary is the same arrangement. A stair in each corner block leads to a central choir gallery with no balustrade but flanked by organ pipes encased in a carved wooden case painted gold and white. Under the choir gallery is the church office, a space originally used for robing rooms. There is a small side entrance from Robert Street leading into the corner stair at the rear of the building.

The auditorium, 72 x 72 feet, has eight bays surrounding the central domed space. Four pink marble circular columns support the dome which is not open but has a white plaster ceiling just above the windows at the top of the octagonal drum. Each face of the drum has three small stained glass windows framed by columns with Byzantine capitals. These windows are not as elaborate as those below in the sanctuary.

At the front of the church is the platform elevated five steps. The steps, platform and central pulpit are of white marble. The polygonal exterior surfaces of the pulpit are richly carved. They project out

(see continuation sheet #2)

8-3702

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Synagogue, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

DESCRIPTION

from the platform and extend to the floor of the sanctuary. This carving, as do some of the stained windows, incorporate the Jewish symbolism of the original congregation. Risers of the steps have a band of recessed tangent discs. The vertical face of the platform is divided into panels with inscribed geometric designs of three-sided pyramids or groups of these figures arranged in threes around a circle.

Behind the pulpit is a large canopy. It is a barrel vault, extending approximately five feet from the rear wall, supported in front by two wooden columns raised two steps above the platform. The coffering of the vault and tympanum at the rear wall are carved in geometric and intertwined leaf forms. The patterns, including the wide guilloche band of the tympanum, are repeated on the exterior at the side entrance in the corner tower. Below the choir gallery, the wall is panelled. There is a deep cornice of complex design painted white and accented in gold like the canopy. It includes forms of talon and egg-and-dart moldings. A door on each side of the canopy gives access to the church office behind the altar. These doors have two panels surrounded with a small bead-and-reel molding.

The column capitals in the sanctuary are octagonal. They, as well as those of the pilasters flanking the doors from the narthex and the large side windows, are Byzantine in form. Their design combines organic leaf forms with a basket pattern and a band of intertwining circular forms finished at the top by a bead-and-reel. The arches of the vaults are accented by a combination of moldings which repeat forms similar to the others.

Though the sanctuary now has an asphalt tile floor, that of the narthex is the original marble mosaic. There, the central part is a random light brown and white pattern surrounded by a one-foot border. The heart and foliar design of the border is colored red, yellow ochre, gray, green and brown on a white background.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☒ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles L. Carson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Erected by the wealthiest Jewish congregation in late 19th century Baltimore, the massive size and lavish detail of this synagogue are a reflection of the position of its members. The Baltimore Hebrew congregation was formed by immigrants from Europe in the first half of the 19th century. As the congregation grew and prospered, it moved several times, and built the Lloyd Street Synagogue (still standing) before this structure was erected in 1891 on Madison Avenue.

The building is now owned by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and it is known as the Berea Temple.

The following information about the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation synagogue is excerpted from newspaper account printed at the time of the dedication services for the temple in 1891. In addition to giving some history of the Congregation, it expresses a contemporary view of the architecture of the building. ("A Byzantine Temple," The (Baltimore) Sun, supplement, Friday, September 25, 1891).

"Taking its design from an oriental form that well accords with the origin of the religion in whose service it is built, the new temple of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation uplifts its massive walls and turrets, arches and domes in beautiful modern reproduction of the architecture of Byzantium The general effect of the beautiful structure as it meets the eye from its commanding position, on the northeast corner of Madison Avenue and Robert Street, is one of dignity and repose, the massive proportions suggesting grandeur in simplicity in every outline of round arch, pointed gable and octagonal tower The Byzantine style is an architecture which readily adapts itself to modern uses and requirements, and throughout is seen the union of beauty with utility, which forms the happiest effort of art.

"Theentire cost of the structure, which is the handsomest Jewish synagogue in Baltimore and one of the finest buildings in the city, amounts to \$150,000. . . .

"Charles L. Carson, of Baltimore, is the architect of the beautiful building, which owes its successful erection almost entirely to the talent and skill of Baltimore artisans. Henry Smith & Sons were the builders,

B-3702

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Synagogue, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

William Wells foreman; Hugh Hanna had charge of the stone work, Burns, Russell & Co. of the tiling, Henry Selm & Co. the stained glass, and Flynn & Emrich the steam heating apparatus.

"The sole management of the building arrangements has been in charge of a building committee specially selected from the earnest workers in the congregation. Joseph Miller is chairman, Simon Rosenberg secretary, and the other members are Sody Salabes and Bernard Cahn. The committee made a careful inspection of similar edifices in other cities, so as to bring to bear in their work of supervision an intelligent conception of the duties before them, whose result has been so successful.

"Work was begun on the foundations of the temple early in the summer of 1890, and on July 22 of the same year Dr. J. Marmor, cantor of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, laid the corner-stone with impressive ceremonies. . . .

"In a modest little one-story building the first Hebrew congregation, chartered in the State of Maryland, assembled for divine service, only a handful of people at that time-1829-but it was destined to grow to be the wealthiest and foremost congregation of the denomination in the city. The humble synagogue was off High Street, in the neighborhood of Fayette Street, and was reached by a narrow alley. Only about twelve male members, with their families, constituted the congregation. All were foreigners. Here the services were held until 1837, when the congregation moved to a brick building on Harrison Street, which it purchased.

"In 1845, the first regular synagogue was built by the congregation at Lloyd and Watson Streets, which remained its abode until the splendid new temple was projected, resulting in the sale of the Lloyd Street Synagogue and the temporary occupancy in 1889 of the vacant Methodist Episcopal Church on Charles and Fayette Streets, the gratuitous use of which was obtained through the kindness of its owner, Mr. B. F. Bennett. The Lloyd Street building was purchased in February 1889 by the Lithuanian Catholic congregation.

"The late Rev. Abraham Reis was the first resident rabbi of the congregation. His death occurred in 1862. Among the rabbis who have officiated since his death to the present time were Rabbi Henry Hochheimer, now at Eden Street Synagogue; the late Rabbi Illoway, the late Rabbi Hofmann, Dr. A. S. Bettelheim, who officiated four years, and whose death occurred at sea one year ago. From that time until

(see continuation sheet #4)

B-3702

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Synagogue, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET

Maryland

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

4

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

the recent appointment of Rev. Dr. Adolph Guttmacher the congregation was without a rabbi and the services were conducted by a cantor.

"Dr. Guttmacher came to Baltimore from Fort Wayne, Ohio. He came of a noted rabbinical family, and is an eloquent speaker and an accomplished scholar, having graduated with high honors from prominent Hebrew universities.

"In 1873 a movement was made in the congregation toward the institution of mixed choir and organ and pews, usages not in accordance with orthodoxy. A number seceded and built another place of worship, when the movement resulted in the successful establishment of the innovations.

"At the time when the building operations were begun on the new temple the actual membership was only thirty-five, but since the recent sale of pews it has been increased to over sixty pew owners, who, with the holders of rented pews represent a congregation of about 1,000 persons.

"The president of the congregation is Samuel Stein, and the other officers are Alexander Frank, vice-president; Nathan Gutman, treasurer; Solomon Preiss, secretary, and the following trustees: Joseph Miller, Sody Salabes, Henry Hartman, Sr., F. L. Strauss and David Wiesenfeld."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

B-3702

"A Byzantine Temple." Supplement, The (Baltimore) Sun. Friday,
September 25, 1891.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 100' x 150'

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	8	3	5	9	1	9	0	4	3	5	2	0	2	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

C

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

D

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

njm

NAME / TITLE

Pamela James,

George Andreve, Architectural Historian/Assistant Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Maryland Historical Trust

January 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

21 State Circle

(301) 267-1438

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Annapolis,

Maryland 21401

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTORNEY

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Baltimore
West

B-3702



(BALTIMORE EAST)
5662 / SE

OVERLEA 6.8 MI.
BEL AIR 23 MI.

5.5 MI. TO MD. 7
HAYRE DE GRACE 37 MI.

17'30"

28 MI. TO U.S. 40

Baltimore
Hebrew
Congregation