

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sons of Jacob Synagogue

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 24 Douglas Avenue

n/a not for publication

city, town Providence

n/a vicinity

state Rhode Island code R.I. county Providence

code 007 zip code 02908

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Thomas R. Williams
Signature of certifying official

18 July 1989
Date

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH/20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sons of Jacob Synagogue is located in Smith Hill and sits on the north side of a pie-shaped wedge of land formed by the junction of Douglas Avenue and Orms Street. It faces east, toward the intersection. The north side of the building abuts the sidewalk, like the neighborhood's small shops and multi-family houses. The building is a rectangular, brick-clad block with a broad, slightly taller front entrance pavilion, set on a high, limestone-faced basement with a broad flight of stairs leading up to the main entrance. The facade has projecting strips of brick work which suggest classical pilasters and an entablature with perhaps what might be called dentil work, although the horizontal banding of raised bricks just above the upper floor windows is in the wrong place for dentils. The facade has a stepped parapet which rises above the gable roof of the main building block behind the entrance pavilion. Four small arches embellish the top of the parapet at the corners and above the narrow side windows. At the center and highest point of the parapet are two arches representing the Tablets of the Decalogue, originally intended, perhaps, to hold marble tablets carved with key words from the Commandments. Above these arches at the roof line is a small metal Star of David. Broad front stairs lead to the main entrance, which consists of two sets of wooden double doors with transom lights surmounted by a bracketed hood upon which the name of the synagogue is gilded in English and Hebrew. In the center of the facade at the second story, just above the entrance, is a wide, three-part window.

The sides of the building are broken by five sets of windows, arranged in two rows, with arched upper windows and rectangular lower ones. The window sets are vertically grouped with spandrel panels between them ornamented with Stars of David. The first and last sets of windows are separated from the three central ones of brick piers. Above the windows, projecting brick bands corresponding to the architrave of a classical entablature run horizontally the length of the building. Above the central set of windows, a pair of small

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7.2

arches, perhaps again suggesting the Tablets of the Decalogue, interrupt and rise above the untrimmed eaves to either side.

At the east end of the first floor is the vestibule, which leads into the sanctuary beyond and also provides access to the ground floor and gallery via staircases at either side of the room. Three sets of marble tablets line the walls of the vestibule to either side of and between the two sets of doors into the sanctuary. Among those listed on these tablets are the members of the building committee of 1922, the year that the upper level of the synagogue was completed.

The sanctuary occupies the two-story space behind the vestibule. Five ranks of plain wooden benches fill most of the room. Near the west end of the room is the bimah, a raised platform containing a desk where the Scrolls are read. The pulpit, a second, larger platform, abuts the west wall. A curtained central pavilion at the back of the platform houses the ark. This arrangement of the sanctuary, with the pulpit and ark located on the westerly wall, does not conform to the standard Jewish practice of placing the pulpit and ark on the east, so that the synagogue is oriented toward Jerusalem (Krinsky, 35). This departure is probably due to the restrictions imposed by the site. To either side of the ark are marble memorial tablets. At the rear and sides of the sanctuary is a gallery, with a stepped floor and balustrade. Above the sanctuary is a shallow vaulted ceiling.

The sanctuary is lit by five sets of windows, arranged in two ranks or rows. Arched upper windows light the gallery, while the rectangular lower windows light the main floor. The windows have clear-glass panes, framed with narrow panels of stained glass. An electric crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling above the bimah, while two smaller, star-shaped lights hang above the gallery to either side of the ark. The ark itself, as well as the memorial tablets flanking it and the arch above it, are outlined with rows of small white light bulbs. An electric menorah stands on the pulpit platform in front of the ark. Large illuminated globes rest upon turned wooden posts at the corners of the two platforms. A number of additional light fixtures, apparently installed when the sanctuary was first constructed, are located on the sides of the gallery and in the ceiling.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7.3

The most striking feature of the sanctuary is its many murals. Above the ark is a mural depicting two lions supporting a tablet bearing the Commandments. This mural is framed by a wooden arch painted to look like marble. Beyond the arch surmounting the ark, the wall is painted to resemble blue sky framed by red curtains tied with gold cord to columns at the sides. A painting of an animal appears above each of the four windows at the west end of the auditorium. The animals depicted are the deer, the lion, the eagle, and the tiger. Along the painted border of the central section of the ceiling are twelve images representing the months of the year, or possibly the signs of the zodiac. Within the border, the ceiling is covered with painted clouds. Several examples of trompe-l'oeil painting are evident in the room. The area from which the chandelier hangs is painted to approximate an elaborate medallion. The fronts of the gallery are painted to suggest inlaid marble panels, while the posts supporting the gallery are painted to resemble marble columns. Sam Shore, congregation president from 1923 to 1936, who was "artistically inclined," supervised the painting of the sanctuary and himself painted the pictures symbolizing the twelve Jewish months (Klein). No one now remembers who painted the rest of the murals.

The ground floor is reached from the main floor by stairs at either end of the vestibule. At the front, under the vestibule, is a second vestibule providing access to men's and women's rooms, to the kitchen, and to the lower shul, or sanctuary. The lower shul, rectangular in plan, occupies approximately two-thirds of the ground floor space. It is located on the south side of the building and extends from the vestibule at the east end to the westerly wall. The kitchen is located at the northeast corner of the basement, just behind the vestibule. It is L-shaped in plan, with the furnace located in a recess within the inside angle. A dining room, rectangular in plan, is located at the northwest corner of the basement and is entered through the lower shul.

At the west end of the lower shul is a raised platform serving as the pulpit. Affixed to the wall at the rear of the platform is the ark. The applied velvet curtain behind which the Scrolls are kept is flanked by pilasters and surmounted by a pediment within which two lions hold tablets on which are written in Hebrew key words of the Ten Commandments. A larger red curtain hangs from the ceiling and frames the ark itself. Two

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7.4

narrow panels to either side of the curtain are painted with landscape scenes. The panel to the left depicts a walled city, perhaps Jerusalem. The panel to the right shows a river running through a fertile valley in the foreground with mountains in the background; the scene may represent Babylon. [Note: Krinsky notes that murals depicting scenes of the Holy Land were not uncommon in eastern European synagogues from the late seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries (57-58, 76)]. This panel is signed with the name Dr. Shadvac in the lower right corner.

While very few alterations have been made to the upper portion of the building--beyond paneling applied to the walls of the vestibule and stairways in the late 1940s or early 1950s--the lower portion has been extensively remodeled. All of the walls of the lower level were paneled at the same time as the vestibule and stairways. Additional rooms have been created at the east end of the lower shul by installing plywood partitioning. One of these rooms is used as an office; the other serves as a cloak room. The floor of the lower shul is now carpeted, while the floor of the dining room is now covered with linoleum. Modern fluorescent light fixtures hang from the original pressed-metal ceiling.

On the whole, the building is in very good condition, both inside and out. The only obvious problem has been a moderate amount of water damage, caused by roof leaks, which has marred the wall surface in the southeast corner of the sanctuary and along the north edge of the vaulted ceiling. The roof has since been replaced.

The main sanctuary in Synagogue Sons of Jacob is used now, as it has always been, primarily for services on High Holidays. As in many other synagogues, daily services and ordinary Sabbath services--as well as weddings, important functions, and social events--are held in the lower shul, often called the bes medrash (house of study), in the section of the building that was constructed in 1906 and served as the only place of worship until the upper portion of the building was completed in 1922 (Wolfe, 41).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1906-1939

Significant Dates

1906

1922

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marshak, Harry

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

As the only synagogue still in use in the Smith Hill area, Sons of Jacob Synagogue is the last remaining symbol of the once-thriving Jewish community in this neighborhood. Thus, it is historically significant as a manifestation of the establishment, growth, and evolution of the Jewish community of the Randall Square-Smith Hill area. The history of the congregation for which it was built offers insight into the social, economic, and geographic mobility of successive generations of local Jewish families and into the history of Orthodox Judaism in Rhode Island. The Sons of Jacob Synagogue is also architecturally significant as an example of early twentieth-century synagogue architecture in Rhode Island, especially insofar as it reflects the requirements of Orthodox tradition. Few synagogues were built in Providence in the early twentieth century and few of these have escaped demolition or extensive remodeling. Thus, Sons of Jacob Synagogue, still standing and largely unaltered, is an important cultural resource. Though religious buildings are normally not eligible for nomination to the National Register, Sons of Jacob Synagogue derives its significance from its historical importance and architectural distinction, and is eligible for nomination under National Register Criteria A and C.

Unlike Newport, which had a substantial community of Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Providence did not have a significant number of Jewish inhabitants until the middle of the nineteenth century. Though documentation is sparse, it appears that the first Jewish families arrived in Providence in the 1820s or 1830s. The first wave of immigrants came from Germany, Holland, Hungary, and Poland. Many settled in the downtown and became proprietors of small shops.

Near the end of the century, a new wave of Jewish immigrant began to arrive in the Providence area from Austria, Poland,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8.2

Romania, Lithuania, and Russia. Their number increased dramatically with the advent of the Russian pogroms in 1881-2, and by the early 1900s the great majority of Providence Jews were of Russian background. The newcomers settled around Randall Square, in the adjoining Constitution Hill and Smith Hill areas, and in the Willard Avenue-Prairie Avenue section of South Providence. They were generally poorer than the earlier immigrants, and more strongly dedicated to Orthodox religious practices.

In the years after 1870, as the Jewish population expanded, a growing number of congregations came to be organized along particular ritualistic, national, and/or neighborhood lines. (for example, Congregation Sons of Israel, known after 1874 as Congregation Sons of Israel and David, became increasingly identified as the congregation for Reform Jews of German background.) Over the next half-century, nearly two dozen more synagogues were chartered in the city (Kempner, 11). Most of the congregations being formed at this time were too poor to buy or build their own houses of worship; therefore, members worshipped in whatever spaces were available to them, such as rooms in each others' homes or rented meeting halls (Smith, 136). In South Providence, six congregations of Russian and Eastern European Orthodox Jews succeeded in buying or constructing synagogue buildings between approximately 1898 and 1921. In the Randall Square-Smith Hill area, Eastern European Orthodox Jews built at least four other synagogues in addition to Congregation Sons of Jacob. (Smith, 138-39; Horvitz, 30-34).¹

Congregation Sons of Jacob was founded in 1896 by a small group of Russian Orthodox Jews. For its first ten years, the congregation held services in a small room on the upper floor of a shop at the corner of Shawmut Street and Chalkstone Avenue, an area of particularly dense Jewish concentration. Soon after the

¹ The other synagogues were Congregation Beth Davis at 161 Chalkstone Avenue, Sons of Zion at 45 Orms Street, Congregation Tefares Israel at 107 Orms Street (mid-1920s), and Sons of Israel at 6 Shawmut Avenue (c. 1920). Another synagogue, listed only as "Jewish church," appeared in the street directories from the early 1910s to the early 1920s. This was probably not a synagogue building, as earlier and later directories list several private occupants of the same building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8.3

turn of the century, the congregation bought land on Douglas Avenue. Still too poor to build a complete synagogue structure, the Congregation made plans, first, to build the lower floor of a synagogue and, later, to complete the upper floor. In 1906, the basement of the new building was constructed and on Sunday, September 16, the congregation took possession of their new home. For a small congregation at that time to have completed even a partial building was a significant accomplishment, and the neighborhood turned out to celebrate. Thousands of people lined the streets to watch and cheer the procession, led by a marching band and nearly three hundred Hebrew school children, which transferred the Scrolls from the old synagogue on Chalkstone Avenue to the new one on Douglas Avenue. (Providence Journal, September 17, 1906, 3).

Over the next sixteen years, the congregation worked hard to accumulate the funds to erect the upper floor of the building, which was to be the main synagogue. Finally, in 1922, the main synagogue [sanctuary] was built, at a cost of nearly \$50,000. Dedication ceremonies were held on Sunday, August 27, of that year. (Providence Evening Bulletin, August 30, 1922, p. 7).

The architect for the upper portion of the building was Harry Marshak, probably the first Jewish architect active in the Providence area. Born in the mid-1890s in Central Falls to Jacob and Minnie (Ficofsky) Marshak, Russian immigrants, he lived in Providence for most of his life. Marshak had no professional training as an architect. He worked for other builders for a time and then opened his own firm in 1923, Nationwide House Plan Service, of which he was president for forty-five years until his retirement in 1968. During his career, Marshak built a number of homes on the East Side for prominent Jewish families, such as the Silvermans, the Leaches, the Feins, and the Gladstones. He also designed Temple Beth Israel (1921, altered 1960s), 155 Niagara Street, as well as the 1958 addition for Congregation Shaare Zedek at 688 Broad Street. Late in his career, Marshak virtually stopped building houses and concentrated his efforts on preparing house plan books to be sold in loan companies and lumberyards. Harry Marshak died in 1973, at the age of seventy-nine (interview with Mrs. Harry Marshak: Rhode Island Herald, May 4, 1973).

While architectural historians have examined in some detail the larger synagogues being erected in American cities at this time by prestigious congregations, scholars have taken less

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8.4

notice of the many smaller structures built by less affluent congregations. As the synagogue commissioned by Congregation Sons of Jacob is one of the last remaining examples of such smaller buildings in the Providence area, it is difficult to determine whether or not it reflects local stylistic trends for small synagogues. Nevertheless, by comparing the building with photographs of other early synagogues in Providence, it is possible to make some generalizations regarding exterior similarities among the group as a whole.

These smaller synagogues tend not to resemble Christian churches; instead, they suggest a variety of other building types. Congregation Linnath Hazedek, at 142 Willard Avenue, a one-story, flat-roofed brick structure, resembled a small store. Nachzekas Hadas Congregation, once on Willard Avenue and Caswell Court; the South Providence Hebrew Congregation, once located at 201 Willard Avenue; and Congregation Sons of Jacob could be mistaken for fraternal halls. Congregation Sons of Zion's twin towers give the building something of the character of a church; yet, the proportions of the building and Queen Anne styling of the towers impart a residential flavor to the structure.

These synagogues tended to be small and relatively free of outside ornamentation. As much as anything else, this may be due to the fact that these congregations could not afford larger and more imposing structures. Most of them do not appear to have been modeled upon other synagogues. Only Congregation Sons of Jacob seems to have been inspired by a European example. It may well have been based upon an engraving of a synagogue erected in 1836-39 in Kassel, now in West Germany (Krinsky, p. 315, fig. 164). The Kassel synagogue, like Sons of Jacob, is a rectangular block set on a high basement. Like Sons of Jacob, the synagogue in Kassel has a broad entrance pavilion on the front which contains the vestibule and stairways. Both synagogues have similar window treatments on the sides of the buildings, and both have what appear to be adaptations of classical pilasters on their facades. Both facades have gabled central sections, broken, on the Providence synagogue, by the Tablets of the Decalogue. Both synagogues also have small decorative elements rising above the roof line to either side of the gabled central part of their facades and at the front and back corners of their pavilions.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8.5

Congregation Sons of Jacob's interior plan and furnishings were devised to conform to the congregation's Orthodox ritual practices. In the Orthodox tradition, women do not sit with men during worship, and the services, conducted without music, focus on the reading of the Torah and recitation of prayers. As a consequence, Orthodox synagogues have separate galleries for women's seating, a bimah from which the Holy Scriptures are read, and no organs or choir lofts. The bimah, a raised platform with a large desk for holding the Torah scrolls, is placed in the center of the room, with the desk facing the Ark, which is usually located on or near the east wall. (In Congregation Sons of Jacob, as previously mentioned, the Ark is located on the west wall; the bimah, consequently, is facing west.) Candelabra, or chandeliers, often hang from the ceiling above the bimah, illuminating the reading table. Seats are arranged facing the bimah, with the area between the bimah and the Ark usually left empty.

Traditionally, the bimah and the Ark, by placement, size, and decoration, are given equal importance, reflecting the balance between prayer (directed toward Jerusalem and the ark wall) and reading (at the bimah). "As new elements of mysticism became prominent in Judaism [during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries], synagogue architectural historian Carol Herselle Krinsky observes, "they affected some of the rules and traditional practices in synagogue building" (p. 49). Prayer was given greater emphasis than reading; consequently, the importance of the bimah declined while that of the ark increased. In Congregation Sons of Jacob, the bimah is visually subordinate to the ark. The bimah is positioned toward the front of the sanctuary, near the ark, rather than remaining in its customary place at the center of the room. The space between the bimah and the ark is filled with fixed seating, facing the elaborately decorated and elevated ark.

while it appears that wall paintings like those on the walls and ceiling at Congregation Sons of Jacob were not common in American synagogues, some late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century synagogues in this country and a number of eastern European synagogues from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries were richly painted (Krinsky, 56; Wolfe, 52, 60). Many pictorial motifs found on the walls of Sons of Jacob have European origins--and have established religious iconography. The two lions above the ark holding the Tablets of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8.6

the Decalogue refer to the lion ornaments of Solomon's palace (Krinsky, 56). The animals above the westerly windows refer to a passage from the Mishnah: "Be fearless as a leopard, right as the eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to do the will of your heavenly father" (Krinsky, 56).

At least one other synagogue in the Providence area also had extensive pictorial murals. This was Synagogue Sons of Zion, which stood just down the street from Sons of Jacob at 45 Orms Street until it was demolished about 1970. Murals above the ark in both Providence synagogues show red curtains tied at the sides to columns, a common motif used in eastern European synagogues to display the ark. While the curtains in the mural in Synagogue Sons of Jacob frame blue sky, the curtains in the mural in synagogue Sons of Zion opened to reveal a landscape scene beyond, probably representing the Holy Land, as paintings of Jerusalem and other views of the Holy Land appeared in a number of eastern European synagogues (Krinsky, 57-58). It is possible that a similar scene lies beneath the marble tablets now placed to either side of the ark in Synagogue Sons of Jacob, had marbleized wooden panels on the sides of the gallery, a decorative element possibly inspired by European examples, as painted imitation marble, brick, and stone had become popular in European synagogues by the mid-nineteenth century (Krinsky, 76).

Even when completed in 1922, Congregation Sons of Jacob was considerably less imposing than Temple Beth El, constructed in the previous decade by the fairly well-to-do members of the Reform Congregation Sons of Israel and David; it was; on the other hand, a much more impressive structure than most of the other small synagogues being erected in Providence at this time by relatively poor Orthodox congregations. Considering that the members of Congregation Sons of Jacob were themselves not prosperous, the fact that they were able to erect such a building is remarkable. At the time that the upper portion of the structure was completed, most members of the congregation were, like the majority of Providence's Jewish population, first- and second-generation eastern European Jews of modest means (Kempner, 11). They earned their livings as peddlers, proprietors of small neighborhood businesses, butchers, bakers, slaughterhouse workers, clerks, and junk dealers. Few were professionals, such as doctors, teachers, or lawyers. None owned large stores or factories. Most of them lived and worked close

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8.7

to the synagogue, in the Smith Hill-Randall Square area. (See Table 1).

Over the next quarter-century, Sons of Jacob grew. Membership increased and, with more membership dues, the congregation was able to offer a greater variety of religious and social services for its members and to take a more active part in city-wide programs sponsored by the Jewish community. Members of the congregation also prospered. By the mid-forties, while some remained peddlers, junk dealers, and small shopkeepers, others had become lawyers, retail store owners, and small manufacturers. While most members of the congregation still lived in the vicinity of the synagogue, many had begun to move out of the three-family houses of the Smith Hill area into the one- and two-family homes in the Elmhurst neighborhood beyond. (See Table 2).

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the fortunes of the synagogue and its congregation began to diverge. The children and grandchildren of those who had watched the completion of the synagogue in the 1920s went to college and became successful in business or the professions. They moved to single-family homes on Providence's East Side and in the suburbs of Cranston, Warwick, Lincoln, and elsewhere, and they began to worship in synagogues near their new homes. The Jewish population in the Smith Hill area declined, and Congregation Sons of Jacob's membership fell.

Social and geographic mobility were not the only reasons for Congregation Sons of Jacob's diminishing membership. The neighborhood was being physically destroyed, primarily through the Randall Square urban renewal and the construction of two new, limited-access highways: Route 146 in the center of the neighborhood and Route 95 on its eastern edge. Once located on a busy intersection lined with small shops, the synagogue now faces a turnpike overpass.

Congregation Sons of Jacob is the only Orthodox synagogue remaining in the Smith Hill area, and it serves only a remnant of its former membership. While many now living in the suburbs still return for High Holidays--the only occasions on which the upper sanctuary is used for services, only a dozen families worship in the Synagogue on most Sabbath Days, and the number attending daily morning worship services is even smaller.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8.8

neighborhood continues to dwindle, the future of the congregation and its synagogue is increasingly uncertain. The synagogue on Douglas Avenue thus reflects national urban trends: It is one of a multitude of neighborhood institutions which supported and sustained immigrants during their difficult early years in America but which have been eventually left behind by their descendants as they have moved to the middle-class suburbs and entered the American mainstream.

Period of Significance:

The period of significance is defined as 1906-1939. The period begins in 1906, when construction began on the synagogue building. Since 1906 until the present, Sons of Jacob has had continuing significance as a manifestation of the establishment, growth, and evolution of the Jewish community on Smith Hill. The period of significance, therefore, ends in 1939, following the 50-year rule.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9.1

Horvitz, Eleanor F. "Pushcarts, Surreys with Fringe on Top, The Story of the Jews of the North End," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, 8 (November 1979), pp. 10-49.

Hubka, Thomas. "Mysticism, Utopianism and Messianism: The Architectural Expression of the Polish Wooden Synagogue." Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting. Montreal. April 1989.

Jones, Robert O. National Register nomination for Temple Beth-El, 688 Broad St., Providence, R.I. 1988.

Kempner, Brian. "Jewish Immigration into Providence," Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, 9 (November 1983). pp. 5-28.

Klein, Rabbi Carol. "50 Years of Sons of Jacob," 50th Anniversary Celebration of Congregation Sons of Jacob, [Providence,] 1946.

Krinsky, Carol Herselle. Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning. New York: MIT Press, 1985.

"New Jewish Synagogue on Douglas Avenue Dedicated." Providence Evening Bulletin, 30 August 1922, p. 7.

Rhode Island Herald, 4 March 1973.

"Scriptures Moved to New Synagogue." Providence Journal, 17 September 1906, p. 3.

Smith, Judith E. Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900-1940. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Smith Hill, Providence. Providence: R. I. Historical Preservation Commission, 1980.

Wischnitzer, Rachel. Synagogue Architecture in the United States. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9.2

Wolfe, Gerard R. Synagogues of New York's Lower East Side. New York: Washington News Press, 1978.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository:

Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 19 299240 46341040
Zone Easting Northing
C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing
D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for this property encompasses Assessor's Plat 68, lot 732, in its entirety.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lot historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert O. Jones, Senior Hist. Pres. Specialist & Patricia Raub, consultant
organization R.I. Historical Preservation Commission date March, 1989
street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678
city or town Providence state Rhode Island zip code 02903



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island

Photographer: Patricia Raub

Date: February 1959

Negatives at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I.

View: Interior of the main sanctuary facing
westerly, showing the Ark.

Photo # 2



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, R.I.

Photographer: Patricia Raub

Date: February 1989

Negatives at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I.

View: View at northwesterly end of the main sanctuary,
showing portion of wall and ceiling paintings.

Photo # 5



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island

Photographer: Patricia Raub

Date: February 1989

Negatives at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I.

View: Exterior facing northerly.

Photo #1



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, RI

Photographer: Harold R. R. R.

Date: February 1980

Negatives at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
51 Benefit Street
Providence, RI

View: Interior of the lower sanctuary
Facing north-west.

Photo # 1



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, R.I.

Photographer: Patricia Raub

Date: February 1989

Negative at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I.

View: Interior of the main sanctuary facing
southeasterly, showing the Bima in the
center and entrance doors in the center.

Photo #13



Sons of Jacob Synagogue
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, RI

Photographer: Patricia Raub

Date: February 1989

Negatives at: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, RI.

View: Interior of the main sanctuary facing
southwesterly, showing the bima in
the center.

Photo # 4



SONS OF JACOB SYNAGOGUE
24 Douglas Avenue
Providence, RI 02908

19 299240 4634040

HARBOR