

# HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT

## BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

(Written July, 1989)

### I. NAME

Historic: Beth Israel Synagogue

Common: Greater Galilee Baptist Church

### II. LOCATION

Street Address: 2432 North Teutonia Avenue

Legal Description: Part of Tax Key No. 324-9903-111

LANDS IN SE ¼ SEC 18-7-22 COM. 977.42' N AND 15' W OF SE COR. SD. 1/3 SEC. – TH S 96.60' – TH W TO E LI N TEUTONIA AVE – TH NWLY ALG SD E LI TO A PT 977.42 N OF S LI SD ¼ SEC – TH E TO BEG.

### III. CLASSIFICATION

Historic Structure

### IV. OWNER

Greater Galilee Baptist Church  
2432 North Teutonia Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53206

### V. YEAR BUILT

1925-26

Architect: Herman Bruns

### VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The former Beth Israel Synagogue is located in a late nineteenth century, middle-class residential area of single-family and duplex houses. It occupies a 97-foot wide lot fronting on a residential block of North Teutonia Avenue. The building is set back from the street to the line of the adjacent houses behind a monumental staircase that extends out to the public sidewalk. The building covers virtually all of the remaining lot area extending through the block to North Thirteenth Street.

The synagogue itself is a massive, brown tapestry brick, three-story, gable roofed, rectangular building of Neo-Byzantine design. Its principal elevation faces North Teutonia Avenue with architecturally treated secondary elevations on the other three sides. The west elevation, or façade, is

composed of a gabled central section flanked by two projecting, square, copper domed towers. The entrance, which is a full story above grade, is reached by ascending a broad concrete stairway that extends the full width of the body of the building. At the head of the stairs, the three pairs of oak double doors are sheltered by a shallow arcaded porch that spans the façade between the towers. The porch's three arched portals are framed in limestone with square limestone piers supporting the arches. Above the flat-roofed entrance porch is a large round stained glass window boldly enframed in a broad limestone arch. The spandrel beneath the round window is pierced by two rows of small leaded-glass windows set in wide limestone enframements. The shallow gable above the round window is trimmed with a limestone coping and crowned with an elongated limestone keystone-like decorative element with a carved ball finial.

The flanking towers are identical. Each is fenestrated with a pair of oak double doors enframed with a molded limestone architrave at the first floor level surmounted by a cluster of three arched-top leaded glass windows. A wrought iron railing ornaments the limestone balcony outside the windows. Low copper clad domes set on tall faceted drums pierced with a continuous band of arched windows top the towers.

The north and south elevations are identical. Each is composed of two elements, the six-bay main synagogue block and the lower, two-story school building wing adjoining the rear. The main synagogue elevation is divided into six equal bays inset within corbelled recesses divided by brick piers. Each of the five western bays is fenestrated with two tiers of windows. The lower tier of windows at the first story level in each bay consists of groupings of three leaded windows divided in a Roman grille pattern. The upper tier consists of groupings of three tall, narrow, arched leaded windows also divided in a Roman grille pattern. The sills of the upper windows in the two westernmost bays step up to follow the lines of the sloped balcony on the interior. The eastern bay of the synagogue block contains a door with sidelights approached by a flight of stairs from the east. These entrances are surmounted by a pair of tall, narrow, rectangular windows with fixed transoms.

The side elevations of the flat-roofed, two-story schoolhouse wing are utilitarian in character. The plain, brown tapestry brick walls are fenestrated with two tiers of evenly spaced, tall, narrow, double hung, four-over-four sash windows with fixed, three-light transoms at the first and second story levels. The raised basement is lit by the same arrangement of four-over-four sash windows, but without the transoms.

The east elevation is the façade of the schoolhouse wing facing North 13<sup>th</sup> Street. It is composed of a projecting flat-roofed entrance pavilion flanked by three bays of fenestration on the recessed main block of the school building. The entrance pavilion contains the double door main entrance flanked by broad sidelights and surmounted by a tall, arched transom. The transom and sidelights are now plastered over. Above the main doorway are three tall, narrow, four-over-four sash windows with three-light transoms. A tall brick parapet wall ornamented with a panel of diagonally laid checkerboard brickwork and crowned with a molded limestone coping conceals the flat roof. The flanking walls of the recessed schoolhouse block are fenestrated with four-over-four, double hung sash windows with three-light transoms. The open spaces flanking the projecting entrance pavilion are enclosed with balustraded retaining walls to form courtyards. The tall, square, brick chimney for the building's heating plant rises from the northeast corner of the schoolhouse block to a height of about 45 feet.

Behind the balcony on the second floor is a long narrow upper vestibule that stretches across the front of the building above the entrance vestibule. The high-ceilinged space is lit by a row of five tall, narrow Roman grille windows surmounted by the large, round, stained glass window that is the

principal ornamental feature of the upper façade. This massive leaded window is a simplified version of the ceiling skylight in the auditorium and is executed in clear and yellow stained glass. Leaded glass doors at either end of the vestibule lead into the tower stairwells, while two doors on the east wall provide access to the balcony. Between these latter doors a grouping of three arched windows allow borrowed daylight from the upper vestibule to filter into the auditorium balcony.

The auditorium is a vast rectangular room that rises three stories to a round, stained glass skylight set into a rectangular recess in the tray ceiling. The principal features of the space are the large balcony at the west end and the unusual arched apse with its flanking recessed choir areas at the east end. The steeply sloping balcony with its curving rows of pew seating is three bays deep. It is supported mainly by the sidewalls so that there are only two thin iron intermediate supporting columns to obstruct the sight lines of the main floor seats. The balcony has a paneled curving front. The underside of the balcony is plastered in two shallow coves with the soffits of the boxed beams decorated with a band of foliated and patterned plasterwork. Large, oriental-patterned plaster corbels of various designs are located where the balcony support beams intersect the exterior walls.

The treatment of the east wall of the auditorium gives the space its vaguely Byzantine character. This wall has been considerably altered from its original appearance by modifications made in the early 1960's to accommodate Greater Galilee Baptist Church. The original lower east wall was cut away so that today the raised sanctuary platform extends back into a high, recessed, arched apse flanked by low, flat-ceilinged, cave-like, choir areas on either side. At the auditorium ceiling, a deep arcade of bold arched vaults projects from the wall just below the ceiling in an exaggerated continuance of the motif of the much shallower arcading that articulates the window piers on the sidewalls of the auditorium. The original ornamental plaster corbels from which these arches spring have apparently been boxed in with plain plaster to lengthen the arcading and create a more modern look. The deep soffits of this vaulting are filled with original curving, stained glass panels of intricately patterned amber glass that is backlit. The intrados of the apse arch is also composed of backlit panels of amber colored stained glass. The original proscenium apse arch was an elaborately molded ogee shape, but it was reshaped in the 1960's into the present simple elliptical shape. A circular stained glass window is centered on the wall above the sanctuary arch.

Encircling the ceiling is a large molded plaster cornice patterned with vaguely oriental motifs. The center panel of the steep tray ceiling is enframed with a deep, patterned-plaster, box molding. Recessed within this bold, picture frame-like enframing is a large circular glass skylight of intricately patterned amber glass. Originally this skylight contained a Star of David, as did the other windows in the building, but two points were removed from the stars and the glass was reset to create the abstract patterned stained glass that exists today.

The remaining spaces in the synagogue are simple finished for use as multipurpose rooms, classrooms, meeting rooms and offices. These have plaster walls and ceilings and plain woodwork.

## **VII. SIGNIFICANCE**

The former Beth Israel Synagogue is architecturally significant as a unique late example of middle-eastern influenced synagogue architecture. It is historically important for its associations with the settlement of Eastern and Northern European Jews in Milwaukee in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their subsequent contributions to the ethnic diversity and culture life of the city. Its current role as the home of an old and prominent Black Christian congregation is illustrative of the changing ethnic character of its surrounding neighborhood.

## VIII. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Congregation Beth Israel traces its origins to the late nineteenth century during the period when Eastern European Jews were immigrating to Milwaukee in large numbers. The first German Jews had come to Milwaukee in the 1840s and established Wisconsin's first synagogue, B'ne Jeshurun Synagogue, in 1847. It was an Orthodox congregation. A second German congregation, Temple Emanu-El, was established in 1869 to cater to the spiritual needs of the city's Reformed Jews. Both had their buildings downtown, one on the west side and one on the east side. They remained the only Jewish congregations in the city until the 1880s when the Eastern European newcomers established their own synagogues so that they could worship in their native tongues.

Beth Israel was one of the first, if not the first, congregations established to cater to the spiritual needs of the growing number of non-German Jewish immigrants settling in Milwaukee in the neighborhood that was roughly bounded by Vliet, Walnut, Fourth and Sixth Streets. The congregation's history indicates that it probably began with the incorporation of Congregation B'ne Jacob on September 5, 1884. Little is known about B'ne Jacob and the congregation soon disappeared as a religious entity. Some of its members and leaders, however, founded a new synagogue, the Moses Montefiore Gemeinde on January 26, 1886. Beth Israel's centennial history states that it "is possible, though unconfirmed, that this congregation was simply B'ne Jacob renamed to honor the great Jewish philanthropist who died in 1885." It originally met on Vliet Street and later on North Fourth Street at the southeast corner of Fourth and Vliet Streets. A splinter group, Congregation Anshe Jacob, established its own congregation on April 27, 1886 and met at a small house on Market Street at the corner of Knapp Street. The two small congregations ultimately reunited and became Congregation Beth Manidrash Hazodol on August 31, 1891. The reunited congregation occupied the Montefiore Congregation's building at Fourth and Vliet. Soon it had grown to eighty members and in 1892 put a down payment on a lot on North Fourth Street. A new, red brick synagogue was built on this site with a seating capacity of about 510. It was dedicated on September 3, 1893.

Other prominent Jewish congregations active in the late nineteenth century included Anshe Sfard (for the Sfardic Jews) established about 1893 by Jews from Volynia, Russia and B'nai Israel Anshe Ungarn (Sons of Israel, Men of Hungary) established about 1886 and incorporated in 1899. Each separate immigrant ethnic group established its own congregation and by 1910 there were additional temples supported by Rumanians (Congregation Degel Israel Anshe Roumania, 1910), by Russians (Congregation Anshe Lebowich, 1906) and Poles (Congregation Agudath Achim Anshe Polen, 1904). All of these congregations followed the Orthodox form of worship.

Congregation Beth Hamidrash Hazodol, the forerunner of Beth Israel, was the first of these immigrant congregations to construct its own house of worship. At this time, it was predominantly of Lithuanian ethnicity. Its membership climbed to about 100 in 1900 and its annual income was between \$2,500 and \$3,000 yearly. The new synagogue cost \$20,000 to build rather than the anticipated \$12,500 and the congregation narrowly avoided foreclosure during the depressions of 1894 and again in 1900. In 1901 the congregation was renamed Beth Israel as part of a reorganization in response to a foreclosure action brought in 1900. 1924 described it as the "largest, oldest and most influential Orthodox congregation in the state."<sup>1</sup>

Beth Israel continued to meet at its Fifth Street synagogue for several decades even though the Jewish community was gradually dispersing north and west from the old neighborhood. Some congregations

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<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish Community Blue Book of Milwaukee and Wisconsin*, 1924

were already moving west. By the 1920s there were at least five congregations with synagogues on Eleventh Street between Vine and Lloyd Street alone.

The details are rather sketchy, but it appears that after World War I, Beth Israel had plans to move to the southeast corner of Eleventh and Lloyd Streets, but abandoned the project for unknown reasons while the new building was already under construction. A new congregation, Beth Medrash Hazadol Anshe Sfard was established in the summer of 1920 to complete and occupy the 700-seat synagogue that Beth Israel had begun.

Beth Israel next publicized plans to build a new temple on a lot at Tenth and Meinecke Streets, but decided that the site was too small for their ambitious scheme. A larger parcel was subsequently purchased on Teutonia Avenue between Meinecke and Wright Streets in November of 1924 and the old synagogue on North Fifth Street was sold. The congregation met for worship at the Rose Theater at Seventh and Walnut Streets while their new building was under construction. By this time Beth Israel had 315 members.

The groundbreaking for the new synagogue took place on February 15, 1925 and the ceremonies were attended by thousands of people. The \$165,000 to \$200,000 structure was designed by Herman H. Bruns and built to seat between 1,400 and 1,500 persons. The first service was held in the building on September 13, 1926.

As completed, Beth Israel's synagogue differed slightly in exterior detail from the original scheme planned for the northeast corner of Tenth and Meinecke Streets and published in the *Jewish Community Blue Book of 1924*. Bruns was almost certainly responsible for the first design. This scheme showed a rectangular structure whose length was divided into four bays. The façade featured a triple arched entrance above which was located a three-part arched window surmounted by a curved parapet wall. Two large, three-story towers flanked the entry area and had simple, drumless domes. A dome was located at the center of the pitched roof. The final design of Beth Israel synagogue retained the massing of the original plan, but the building was lengthened significantly to provide a larger auditorium and classroom space to the rear. The façade was simplified and the towers' domes were set on the windowed drums. The curved parapet was replaced with a shaped parapet at the center of which is located a large keystone. The dome over the auditorium was eliminated. The two-story structure housed the main auditorium space on the first floor and assembly halls, a kitchen and a chapel room in the basement. Offices and study rooms were located on the second floor. An attached, ten-room school building at the rear of the temple with gymnasium, locker rooms and showers faced North Thirteenth Street.

The synagogue on Teutonia Avenue was Beth Israel's home for several decades until the population shift after World War II necessitated the relocation of the congregation's place of worship. During the 1950s, virtually all of the City's Orthodox congregations relocated out of the old northside Jewish neighborhood around Eleventh and Vliet to new sites in the area around Center, Keefe and Burleigh Streets between 50th and 60th Streets. Beth Israel remained behind in the old neighborhood longer than the other congregations and stayed in their synagogue on Teutonia Avenue through the 1950s. Internal and external problems plagued the congregation throughout the early 1950s. In 1956 a committee was selected to locate and purchase a site for a new synagogue in the northern suburbs. After an unsuccessful attempt to building Fox Point, Beth Israel purchased 15 acres in Glendale in either March of 1957 or January of 1958 (accounts differ). The residentially zoned property was located northeast of North Green Bay Avenue and West Green Tree Road. At the time the land was purchased, Glendale's zoning ordinance allowed institutional construction in residential areas. Glendale subsequently modified its zoning to prohibit institutional construction in such areas and

created a new institutional category. It urged institutions to build only on designated parcels. Beth Israel petitioned for a rezoning of their land. After a number of prolonged hearings and charges of anti-Semitism, the congregation was allowed to rezone 3.9 acres of its holdings on February 3, 1959 to permit construction of a synagogue.

Postwar trends in the Jewish community favored a shift away from Orthodoxy to Conservatism and Beth Israel experienced internal pressure for change. The decision to move to the suburbs united certain vocal elements of the congregation who wanted to adopt the Conservative form of worship. Beth Israel's Rabbi Baumrind was opposed to the change. As the conflict escalated, he resigned, as did a number of the congregation's officers and members. They formed a new congregation called Anshe Emeth (Men of Truth) on Appleton Avenue. Beth Israel subsequently dropped Orthodox worship, resigned from the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in 1957 and hired Conservative Rabbi Milton Arm. They later affiliated with the United Synagogues of America in 1968. By the late 1950s Beth Israel's membership had declined to about 100 families, but the congregation went ahead with its plans to relocate to Glendale anyway.

The groundbreaking for Beth Israel's new building took place on December 6, 1959 and the old synagogue on Teutonia Avenue was sold to the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church in 1960. Having sold their old building, Beth Israel members worshipped at the East Side Hebrew School at 4060 North Oakland Avenue until the first portion of their new building, the Blankstein School, was dedicated in September of 1961. The social hall, Siegel Hall, was completed in May of 1966, and the main sanctuary was under construction from 1979 through 1980.

Beth Israel prospered at its new site and grew to 300 members by 1966 to 410 by 1971, and to over 600 families by 1980. Congregation Beth Israel is still located today at 6880 North Green Bay Avenue.

Historically, Beth Israel is known for its efforts to establish a Hebrew school and also for the work of its noted rabbi, Solomon I. Scheinfeld. Beth Israel was the first congregation to bring an Eastern European rabbi to Milwaukee when it invited Lithuanian Rabbi Solomon Isaac Scheinfeld (1860-1943) to lead its church. Scheinfeld came in 1892 and stayed one year, served another congregation for a period of years and then returned to Beth Israel in 1902. He remained its head until his death. Schwichkow and Gartner state that Scheinfeld "became the acknowledged rabbi of the immigrant Jewry par excellence; its overseer in matters of kashrut and representative in many communal institutions." Scheinfeld "was regularly called upon to settle domestic, institutional and business disputes and to promulgate Jewish bills of divorce." He served not only Beth Israel, although he was headquartered there, but also ministered to the congregations of Anshe Sfard, Agudath Achim and Anshe Roumania. Scheinfeld was active in the field of Jewish education, Zionism and War relief and contributed articles and philosophical and ethical essays to numerous publications.

Beth Israel, from its earliest years, was committed to education for its children and the children of the Jewish community in general. Its efforts at sponsoring and housing a day school were all the more significant in light of the fact that previous attempts to establish a community-sponsored Jewish school were only sporadically successful. Instruction was often carried out by individual teachers who specialized in preparing boys for bar mitzvah or by individual congregations who sponsored Sunday schools that boys and girls attended. Some like the Gold Shule were established by special interest groups to promote socialist Zionist secular philosophy and did not address the needs of the larger number of traditionalists.

## Architect

Beth Israel's architect, Herman H. Bruns, was born in Manistee, Michigan on December 27, 1884, one of five children of German immigrant Benedict N. Bruns and Milwaukee native Dora Kuster. Bruns was educated in parochial and public schools and came to Milwaukee with his family in 1901. Benedict Bruns was a cabinetmaker and stair builder and three of his four sons followed him in the building trades. Benedict J. Bruns became a practicing architect in Chicago, Otto C. became a practicing architect in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Herman J. became an interior designer and architect in Milwaukee.

Although he had learned cabinet making from his father, Herman Bruns's first job in Milwaukee was a six-month stint at the Steinmeyer Grocery Store on North Third Street followed by a job as millwright at the Mayo Manufacturing Company, a chair manufacturer. Bruns furthered his education by attending business school at night and taking a course with the International Correspondence School of Scranton, Pennsylvania, specializing in architecture. He subsequently apprenticed three years with the interior design firm of J. J. Jergenson while studying art under Julius Seigall, Charles Schade, and F. W. Heine and at the Milwaukee Art Institute.

By this time he was in his thirties. He then worked for two years for local church decorator Adolph Liebig and spent nine months on projects in Chicago where he was able to attend classes at the Art Institute in his free time. Some years later he married Liebig's daughter, Paula on July 22, 1918. Bruns next apprenticed a year with noted Milwaukee architect Alexander C. Eschweiler and then worked for three years as a designer for the interior design firm of Niedecken, Walbridge & Company. While working for the latter firm, Bruns also taught in the architectural department of the University Extension. During this period, Bruns furthered his education by taking courses in engineering and the strength of materials. Bruns went on to work as a designer for the Charles Solomon Company, interior decorators, during which time he studied portrait painting under Charles Schade and also studied fine arts and design at Columbia University. After Bruns left the Solomon Company, he worked for a year for Eschweiler once again, after which he established his own architectural practice.

During World War I Bruns worked for the United States Shipbuilding Corporation and was sent to Manitowoc, Wisconsin to construct one hundred houses for war workers. After the War, Bruns worked for the American Appraisal Company, with whom he spent nine months in St. Louis, Missouri, estimating the value of the property of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company. He subsequently worked for Fidelity Appraisal Company for 1-½ years appraising homes, stores and industrial properties including the main plant and branches of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio. When he returned to Milwaukee, Bruns worked for nine months for architects Kirchoff and Rose. Then he taught for 2-½ years at the Milwaukee Vocational School as an instructor in architecture, mathematics, interior decorating and estimating. The city directory shows him as associated with the Board of Industrial Education in 1921 after which he worked independently as an architect.

Milwaukee city directories catalogue his varied career, listing Bruns as a finisher (1902), painter (1903-06), artist (1907), architect (1908) and artist or interior designer (1909-1913). Beginning in 1914 Bruns listed himself consistently as an architect and in that year he had a full-page advertisement in the directory with a logo showing a capital letter H over which was superimposed a large flying insect, probably a bee or fly. The advertisement indicated that he was capable of designing residences, churches, public buildings and banks and emphasized his abilities as a decorator. His first office or studio from 1914 to 1916 was at 1907 East Park Place between Cramer and Murray Streets.

Between 1918 and 1920, Bruns and his wife lived behind his father's residence at 2357-59 North 26th Street between North Avenue and Meinecke Street. Bruns had his architectural practice there as well. In 1923 Bruns and his wife moved to 2673 North 44th Street, although Bruns maintained his studio behind his father's house through 1926. From 1927 to 1929 he had his practice at 2309 North 47th Street and then moved to 5920 West North Avenue where he had offices from 1930 through 1932. Bruns is last listed in the city directories in 1933. His wife, Paula, continued to live at 2673 North 44th Street through 1937 after which time she lived at a number of addresses and then disappeared from the directories from 1942 through 1951. Bruns's whereabouts during this period are not fully known at this time, but his father's obituary on November 24, 1942 indicated that sons Benedict J., Herman H., and Alvin C. were in Chicago. Perhaps the lack of architectural commissions brought on by the Depression led Herman Bruns to join his brother's practice in Chicago or perhaps a separation from his wife led to his relocation. At present it is not known when he died. His widow, Paula, apparently married William Schmitals, in the early 1950s. Schmitals died in 1957 and Paula died on May 10, 1964.

Not a great deal is known about Bruns's commissions. He is credited with designing and decorating the Manistee Masonic Temple in Manistee, Michigan. His other projects included Bethany Church, Jordan Lutheran Church, the Sherman Park Lutheran Church at 2703 North Sherman Boulevard in Milwaukee, the Siloah Lutheran Church, Temple Beth El on North 48th Street and the synagogue for Beth Israel, in addition to a number of stores and office buildings throughout Wisconsin and Michigan. Locally, Bruns designed the Liberty State Bank Building at 2708 North King Drive, the Bunde and Upmeyer store at 135 West Wisconsin Avenue, and the Yahr residence at 3340 North Hackett Avenue. For the later project Bruns also furnished the interiors and designed the landscaping. He also worked on plans for a multimillion-dollar project known as the Palisade Hotel. A biography published in 1931 indicates that the gifted Bruns was also known as a landscape, pictorial and mural artist and painted in oil and watercolors.

The Brunses were active in the arts locally, particularly in the vocal arts. Mrs. Bruns had performed as a professional vocalist prior to her marriage, while Herman Bruns served as the president and business director of the Milwaukee Musical Society and headed the Arion Musical Club and the Milwaukee Musical Society and was on the board of directors of the Philharmonic Orchestra and a member of the Lyric Male Chorus. Bruns was also active in the Boy Scouts and various Masonic lodges.

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### **School**

Beth Israel's first attempt to establish a Talmud Torah was made in 1886 by its predecessor, the Montefiore congregation. It lapsed after a short time, but was revived in 1892 by Rabbi Solomon Isaac Scheinfeld. A house was rented at Fourth and Cherry Streets and two teachers were hired to



instruct the pupils. It too lapsed after Scheinfeld's departure. The lack of clear direction and the poverty of the immigrant community resulted in its demise. Nearly a decade passed before a new school was established. Beth Israel, once again under Scheinfeld's leadership, opened the Hebrew Free School in 1904. He hired teachers and rented a house at Eighth and Cherry Streets for instructional purposes. In 1909 the school moved to a house at Seventh and Cherry Streets with the financial assistance of Beth Israel's women's auxiliary Eva Sisters. Enrollment soon reached forty students. Beth Israel was also sponsoring a Sunday school at this time, attended mainly by girls.

With the growth of the immigrant community, stabilization and maturing of a number of immigrant congregations and a desire for a community supported school, the Milwaukee Talmud Torah was incorporated in 1913 and occupied a remodeled house on Central Avenue. The school prospered and by 1917 had an enrollment of 200 students. The Milwaukee Talmud Torah planned to build a large new structure at Eleventh and Vine Streets and went so far as to lay a cornerstone for the proposed three-story classroom building on April 16, 1922. Lacking funds, the project never materialized and disputes arose over relocating the institution. The old organization was formally dissolved and a new Talmud Torah association was established on January 20, 1924, supported by the Federated Jewish Charities. Enrollment, which had fallen off during the period of dispute, increased from 85 to 160 students after the reorganization.

The school was subsequently housed at the Abraham Lincoln House, a settlement house or community center, on Ninth Street. By 1929 the Milwaukee Talmud Torah occupied the classrooms at the rear of the new Beth Israel synagogue and remained there through about 1944. The school attempted to provide ten hours of weekly instruction in Jewish subjects. Both boys and girls were enrolled and attended after their regular instruction in the public school. The subjects taught included Jewish history, the Bible, the Talmud, Jewish literature and the Hebrew language.

The Milwaukee Talmud Torah subsequently purchased a former public school building at 5522 West Wright Street where it remained in operation through about 1954. A separate Talmud Torah continued to be listed in the city directories at Beth Israel and possibly represents its own parochial school. Beginning around 1953, Beth Israel housed the Hebrew Academy that was in operation until around 1957 when the congregation decided to vacate its old quarters. The old Milwaukee Talmud Torah eventually merged with the Labor Zionist Folk Shule to become the United Hebrew School, which first appeared in the city directory in 1956 at 5418 West Burleigh, the Beth Am Center.

### **Greater Galilee Baptist Church**

The congregation of the Greater Galilee Baptist Church was established on April 16, 1920 and first worshipped at 838 West Vliet Street. It is one of the oldest of Milwaukee's Black congregations. The first pastor of the small church was Reverend James Moore. Under his successor, Reverend B. L. Mathews, the congregation grew from 80 to 216 members. During his ministry a senior choir, an usher board and a missionary society were organized. Under the congregation's fourth pastor, Reverend C. H. Brumfield (1834-1948), the church's membership more than doubled and grew from 300 to 750 members. It was during this time period that the congregation moved to larger quarters at 808-10 West Walnut Street and the name of the church was changed from Galilee to Greater Galilee Baptist Church. Greater Galilee continued to prosper. Through the dynamic leadership of the pastor, Reverend E. B. Phillips (1953-1971), the church grew to 890 members to become one of the largest churches in the inner city. Over thirty auxiliaries and groups were active at the church during those decades. The size of the congregation soon necessitated large quarters. In 1960 Greater Galilee purchased the former Beth Israel synagogue and moved into the structure in 1961. The mortgage was burned during ceremonies in November of 1968. The new building allowed the congregation to start a number of new projects including the E. B. Phillips Day Care Center (1962), the E. B. Phillips

Head Start program (1965) and a credit union. Greater Galilee with instrumental in helping Reverend A. J. Young of Jamaica open his mission and build a church there and later contributed to the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.

To meet its expanded activities, the church acquired some adjacent property to the north and south of its building during the 1970s in order to install a parking lot. The current pastor, Reverend Dr. Samuel C. Jones has served Greater Galilee since April of 1980. During this decade the congregation has established the Children's Church, developed a hot meal program for the needy and purchased a parsonage at 5928 North 74<sup>th</sup> Street. Greater Galilee continues an intensified program of evangelism and has an annual operating budget of a quarter of a million dollars. Future plans include a clothes closet for the needy and the construction of an Education Building and Family Life Center to house their various community outreach program.

## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the former Beth Israel Synagogue, 2432 North Teutonia Avenue, be designated as a historic structure as a result of its fulfillment of criteria one, five and seven of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 2-335(2)(e).

## **X. PRESERVATION GUIDELINES**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding this historic designation. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or the restoration and/or replacement of documented original elements.

### **A. Roofs**

Retain the original roof shape. Dormers, skylights and solar collector panels may be added to roof surfaces if they are not visible from the street. Avoid making changes to the roof shape that would alter the building height, roofline or pitch.

### **B. Materials**

#### **1. Masonry**

- a. Unpainted brick, terra cotta or stone should not be painted or covered. This is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date.
- b. Repoint defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, style, texture and strength. Avoid using mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed.
- c. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration and with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting brick, terra cotta or stone surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration and the accumulation of dirt on the exterior of the

building. Avoid the indiscriminate use of chemical products that could have an adverse reaction with the masonry materials, such as the use of acid on limestone or terra cotta.

- d. Repair or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. Avoid using new material that is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed.

## 2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Avoid removing architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. Retain the historic patina on old bronze or copper metal trim.
- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Avoid covering architectural features with new materials that are inappropriate or were unavailable when the building was constructed.

## C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore to the original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Avoid changing the size or configuration of windowpanes or sash.
2. Respect the building's stylistic period. If the replacement of doors or window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash or door. Avoid using inappropriate sash and door replacements. Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building. The leaded glass windows in the church should not be altered or removed.

## D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. Replacement features shall match the original member in scale, design and appearance.

## E. Additions

All of the elevations are integral to the structure's architectural significance. Additions are not recommended and require the approval of the Commission. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of height, roof configuration, fenestration, scale, design and materials, and the degree to which it visually intrudes upon the principal elevation.

F. Signs

The installation of any permanent exterior sign shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign with the historic and architectural character of the building.

G. Site Features

New plant materials, fencing, paving and lighting fixtures shall be compatible with the historic architectural character of the building.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed so as to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the building.

1. Siting

New construction must respect the historic siting of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the church from the street as a freestanding structure in a landscaped setting.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to the historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the church.

3. Form

The massing of new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the church as a distinct freestanding structure. The profiles of roofs and building elements that project and recede from the main block should express the same continuity established by the historic structure if they are in close proximity to it.

4. Materials

The building materials that are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the church should be consistent with the colors, textures, proportions and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic structure. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained.