



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Ce document est tiré du registre aux fins de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, accessible à partir du site Web de la Fiducie du patrimoine ontarien sur **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Notice of Intention to Designate – 190 Church Street (B'nai Israel Synagogue)
City of St. Catharines

On June 24, 2024, St. Catharines City Council resolved to pass a Notice of Intention to Designate the following property under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, as amended, as a property of cultural heritage value and interest:

B'nai Israel Synagogue
190 Church Street, St Catharines On
CP 2 LOT 3678 TO LOT 3680 PT

RECEIVED
2024/07/11
(YYYY/MM/DD)
Ontario Heritage Trust

Property Description: The B'nai Israel Synagogue is located at 190 Church Street, on the south east corner of Church Street and Calvin Street.

Statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property:

The property at 190 Church Street, better known as the B'nai Israel Synagogue is located on the south side of Church Street in the City of St. Catharines. The property contains an art deco style synagogue constructed in 1925 and designed by prominent local architects Nicholson and Macbeth. The property is an important site for the Jewish community of St. Catharines and acts a physical reminder of the role of the Jewish community throughout the City's history.

The Synagogue has design value as a unique example of an art deco style Synagogue. Both the interior and exterior contain a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit through a number of its architectural features. The overall composition of the exterior is symmetrical and detailed with cut stone and brick working together to form an aesthetically pleasing façade. Originally the Synagogue had a pair of copper domes, which contributed to the composition. Within the Synagogue, the Ark is a one-of-a-kind wooden religious structure that reflects a high quality of craftsmanship. The Star of David comprised of stained glass and wood in the centre of the sanctuary ceiling also displays a high degree of both craftsmanship and artistic merit.

The property has historical and associative value for its direct relationship to the Jewish community in St. Catharines. As a spiritual, social and recreational hub for the Jewish community, the building is a physical representation of the community's presence in the City. Though not always accepted as part of the wider community, the Jewish community has played a significant part in the City's history, and members of the congregation played an important role in the political and commercial fabric of the City. The property is also associated with the theme of religion in St. Catharines. St. Catharines has a large number of important religious buildings that have served various communities throughout the City's history. These buildings have been important places for community building and have played an active role in the lives of many of the city's citizens. Many of the City's religious buildings are among the best examples of the work of some of the City's most prominent architects. The Synagogue is no exception, being an important example of the work of Nicholson and Macbeth, the city's most prominent architecture firm. The building's design is reflective of their attention to detail and craftsmanship. Furthermore, the property is reflective of the work of Newman Bros. who have been a prominent construction company in the City for over 140 years and have been involved in countless significant building projects throughout the City's history.

Notice of Intention to Designate – 190 Church Street (B'nai Israel Synagogue)
City of St. Catharines

Overall, the Synagogue is an important contributor to religious and spiritual life in St Catharines and represents the best of the City's architecture.

Contextually, the property helps to maintain the character of Church Street, which is well-known for its religious buildings. Though the Synagogue is on a part of Church Street that is outside of the downtown, where many of its companion religious sites are located, the property still contributes to the street's contextual association with the religious community. While this association is with the wider religious community in St. Catharines, there is no doubt that the property is an important landmark for the Jewish community in St. Catharines.

Cultural Heritage Attributes

The following exterior attributes are reflective of the design by Nicholson and Macbeth and/or representative of the art deco style or representative of religious institutional buildings and/or reflective of a high quality of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

- The height, form and massing of the original Synagogue building
- The symmetrical front façade
- The use of brick and cut stone materials
- The leaded glass windows arranged in tall and thin fenestration patterns and grouped together in a symmetrical manner.
- The rounded arched windows on the east and west bays of the front facade and grouped in pairs or trios.
- The entrance with its poured concrete steps and parapets, wooden doors, cut stone columns and brick and stone portico.
- The cut stone banding that is located on all elevations
- The arched brick and stone motif above the banding on the front elevation

The following interior attributes are reflective of the design by Nicholson and Macbeth and/or representative of the art deco style or representative of religious institutional buildings and/or reflective of a high quality of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

- The sanctuary space including:
 - The square shape of the sanctuary
 - The second floor mezzanine with brass rails
 - The wooden floor and wooden doors that provide access to the sanctuary
 - The Ark and Dias
 - The ceiling with its recessed portion with a wooden and stained-glass Star of David
 - The four columns with decorative plaster caps
 - The rounded light fixtures with metal caps
 - The ornate metal chandeliers
 - The wooden benches with a carved Star of David at each end.
 - Note: at least one set of the benches should be retained if the congregation were to leave the Synagogue.
- The wooden staircases that provide access to the mezzanine and lower level, including their configuration and railings and balustrades

Notice of Intention to Designate – 190 Church Street (B'nai Israel Synagogue)
City of St. Catharines

- The wooden doors in the basement level that were previously the entrances to the men's and women's washrooms identified by Yiddish text.

Note: Interior attributes such as the Ark, Dias, benches, and chandeliers that are at ground level and not affixed to the ceiling are permitted to leave the Sanctuary should the congregation move to a new site and wish to take these attributes with them.

Objection:

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of intention in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality. Objections must be directed to the Office of the City Clerk at clerks@stcatharines.ca or 50 Church Street, St Catharines On L2R 7C2. The objection must include the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts.

More information:

Further information respecting this proposed designation is available from the City of St Catharines. Any inquiries may be directed to James Neilson, Heritage Planner at 905-688-5601 ext.1752, or by email at jneilson@stcatharines.ca