

1. Property Description

1.1 Basic Description: The Sons of Jacob Synagogue is found at 302 McIntyre Street West, at the intersection of McIntyre Street and Cassells Street in North Bay, Ontario. The Sons of Jacob Synagogue has been a place of worship for the Jewish community in North Bay since 1925. Built in the year 1906 or 1907 the committee's research has indicated that the building has operated as a furniture store, a grocery store, a wallpaper store and a second hand store before being established as a Synagogue (Appendix A).

1.2 Materials and Construction

- The synagogue was created through a retrofit of an existing commercial building. The date of the retrofit is uncertain, however judging by style and material it appears to have taken place during the 1950s.
- The building is constructed using a masonry exterior finish. It remains unknown if the masonry is structural or a veneer upon a framed construction. It is probable that the floor and roof structures are of wood construction.(Appendix B)
- The owner noted that there is a basement that has a low ceiling, accessed from a separate stair entry on the building's exterior.
- A recent flood caused significant damage to the building's interiors. Much of the interior, particularly on the main floor has been recently renovated due to this damage.

1.3 Exterior Design Features

- This modest sized building occupies the busy intersection of Cassells Street and McIntyre Street. The facades facing this street consists of a two storey structure of painted brick masonry, with a raised wood siding profile patterned in evenly spaced bays upon the second level. The main floor windows of the street fronts are a series of romanesque arched openings that feature stained glass windows. (Appendix C)
- The main entrance is demarcated by a larger rounded arched opening and is located between two arched window openings facing McIntyre Street. The main entrance feature double wooden doors, with a paneled style, and a stained-glass transom within the arched opening above.
- Another secondary entrance, leading to a stairway to the second level is located on the corner facing McIntyre Street. The door is recessed within the wall, emphasizing a more private function. The entrance is marked by a mosaic tile pattern at the threshold which continues into the interior landing area. (Appendix D)

1.4 Interior Design Features

- The rounded windows on the front are also the primary features of the interior worship space. The stained glass window patterns, featuring a Star of David motif in the arched portion of all windows and the doors transom is quite noticeable throughout. (Appendix E)
- Many of the main floor finishes have been replaced due to the water damage. Flooring is new, and the walls and ceilings have been renewed with wall board.
- The interior furnishings are quite prominent, which include wooden pews and a refurbished bema. Much of the furnishing appear to be new, likely replaced due to damages. The owner noted that the bema had been replaced with a renewed bema styled in the same manner as the original. (Appendix F and G)

- The lighting was noted to be new, but was selected to closely replicate the fixtures of the original synagogue. Some of the original lighting fixtures remain intact at the upstairs level for comparison. (Appendix H)
- The upstairs level contained a small kitchen a classroom and a gathering area. The wall and ceiling finishes are mostly plaster. The ceiling plaster is curved at the cove of each major roof beams, providing an interesting detail within the space. Although some ceiling plaster is damaged within the classroom, it appears that the upstairs areas did not sustain as much significant damage as the main floor level, offering a clearer impression of the original finished style.
- Other interesting details that may not be architectural, but are furnishings unique to Jewish tradition, are the *Mezuzah*, which are metal fixtures in the shape of scrolls affixed to the right-hand doorpost of every doorway of a Jewish residence or place of worship. The interior worship space also contained memory tables which included names of members of the congregation (see Appendix I).

2. Evaluation

2.1 Historic Significance

- This is the site of North Bay's first and only synagogue. The Congregation "Son's of Jacob" commenced worship in the shul in late 1925. Previous to that date the growing Jewish population worshipped in various homes and businesses. It would be difficult to assess the importance of the Jewish business community on the growth of Main Street and the community of North Bay. The Son's of Jacob Synagogue was the Jewish community's place of worship from 1925, the year North Bay was incorporated as a city by the way, and it has been for over eighty years. It is the oldest synagogue north of Toronto still being used as a place of worship. It has been lovingly looked after by the congregation – as example the excellent restoration work done after a burst hot water pipe caused extensive damage to the main shul hall. This is perhaps another case of the site being more important than the actual architectural values exhibited by the building itself.
- From Gerald L. Gold's: A Tale of Two Communities, The Growth and Decline of Jewish Communities in Northern Ontario and Southwestern Louisiana. "North American Jews are usually thought of as an urban minority even though many small towns in both Canada and the United States, particularly trading centres, have included influential historic Jewish minority communities. These rural Jewish minorities, however, have declined drastically in the past forty years and, in many instances, formerly thriving communities have disappeared entirely. Rural Jews, in their role as tradesmen rather than as capitalists, have often played an active role in their communities by influencing the economic decisions that led to particular regional developments. The early involvement of Jews in the definition of communities also gave them a "pioneer" status and a commitment to their region equal, at least, to their ethnic commitment to Judaism. This is particularly the case for Jews who moved into frontier communities in the nineteenth century, at the very time when cities in those communities were defining a relationship to the surrounding rural hinterland. Later Jewish settlers, of course, did not share this pioneer status. Moreover, there were often enough Jewish families in small towns and service centres for some Jews to become concerned with the institutional aspects of being Jewish in a Christian environment and at some point to develop Jewish institutions.

2.2 Architectural Significance

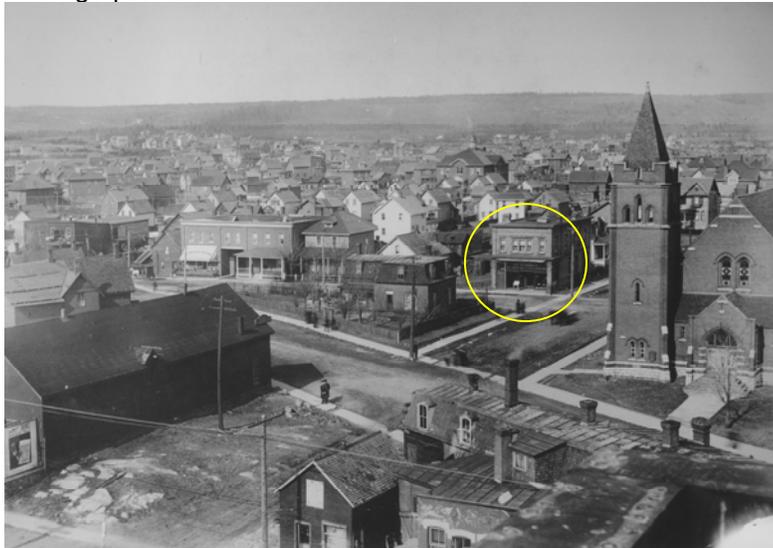
- The stature of this small building may not be as architecturally prominent as other places of worship, but its location does make it easily recognizable to most citizens of North Bay. Its features make it easily identifiable as a synagogue, and it has become a familiar piece of the architectural landscape of the immediate area.
- Originally a small commercial building, its conversion to a synagogue has not significantly altered the heritage fabric of the neighborhood. The immediate neighborhood features many other notable historic buildings, including other places of worship.
- Unlike many of North Bay's other heritage properties, the architectural interest in this property lies within its conversion to a synagogue from a neighborhood commercial enterprise. During the site visit, a picture of the original neighborhood was circulated, which shows the building in its original, typical street commercial style. The building was a typical storefront building, with a large picture window opening unto the street with another side entrance to an apartment or office above. It showed two colors of brick masonry, one for the featured trims and another for the body of the walls. The rounded openings and painted masonry seems a very intentional approach to converting a prototypical retail shop into a prototypical synagogue. Although clues to the original use remain apparent through a close study of the facades, the efforts made to recreate a typical synagogue speak toward the conventions of building type in architecture. The story of this building is unique in local heritage matters in that the conversion has actually added architectural interest to the original building, despite its lack of attempt to conserve it. It can easily serve as a discussion piece of local heritage interests.

2.3 Existing Condition

- The existing structure of the building remains intact, but the exterior wood siding seems to be in poor condition and may require replacement in the near future.

2.4 Pictures

Photograph circa 1915:



Looking north-east at the intersection of Algonquin (Klock) and Cassells Street circa 1920. The proprietor appears to be J.F. Farrell and furniture appears in the storefront window.

Appendix A

| Historical Background of Lot 236 Cassells and McIntyre Street | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--|-------------|----------------------------|
| Date | Owner | | Purchaser | Price | |
| September 1, 1885 | Crown | to | John Ferguson | | |
| January 11, 1888 | John Ferguson | to | Alexander Sharpe McDonald | \$110.00 | |
| May 31, 1893 | Alexander Sharpe McDonald | to | John Lynch | \$725.00 | |
| September 8, 1906 | Bertha Lynch - executrix | to | John W. Deegan | \$920.70 | |
| January 25, 1907 | John W. Deegan | to | Joseph E. Farrell | \$2,400.00 | |
| March 17, 1913 | Joseph E Farrell | to | Cecilia Farrell | \$1.00 | |
| 1914 - 1915 | grocery store - J. Mcleod mgr | | National Railway Assoc. Grocers | | |
| 1915 - 1916 | vacant | | | | |
| 1916 - 1923 | walpaper, furniture, picture frame business | | Arthur Laing | | |
| 1923 - | Retail - hard goods, new and second hand | | Max Sklar | | |
| May 18, 1923 | Cecelia Farrell | to | Max Sklar | \$10,000.00 | Lot Subdivided |
| April 21, 1925 | Max and Hannah Sklar | agreement to purchase registered | Solomon Waiser, Herman Fried Harry Ritter, Oslas Schacter Philip Adams. Trustees of the Sons of Jacob | \$9,500.00 | Part Lot 236 32' x 746" |
| September 2, 1925 | Max and Hannah Sklar | to | Sons of Jacob | | |

Photographs from 2008

- The following pages contain photographs taken during the property evaluation for records and information.

Appendix B





Appendix C



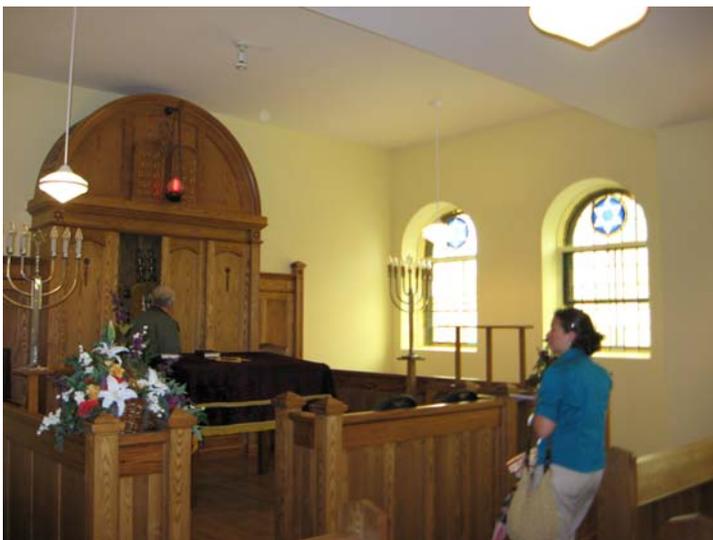
Appendix D



Appendix E



Appendix F



Appendix G



Appendix H



Appendix I

3. Concluding Report & Recommendations

3.1 Heritage Evaluation Scoring

A. Architecture (maximum 35)

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----|----|---|---|
| 1. Style_____ | 20 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| 2. Construction_____ | 15 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| 3. Age_____ | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 4. Architect_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 5. Design_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 6. Interior_____ | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

B. History (maximum 30)

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----|----|---|---|
| 7. Person_____ | 25 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| 8. Event_____ | 25 | 10 | 5 | 0 |
| 9. Context_____ | 25 | 10 | 5 | 0 |

C. Environment (maximum 15)

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|
| 10. Continuity_____ | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 11. Setting_____ | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 12. Landmark_____ | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 |

D. Usability (maximum 10)

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Compatibility_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 14. Adaptability_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 15. Public_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 16. Services_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 17. Cost_____ | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 |

E. Integrity (maximum 10)

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 18. Site_____ | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 19. Alterations_____ | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| 20. Condition_____ | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 |

Total Score _____ 93

Priority..... 1 2 3 4

3.2 Recommendation(s)

The Municipal Heritage Committee recommends that the Sons of Jacob Synagogue of North Bay be recognized as a Priority 1 heritage building.