

Temple B'nai Israel

Culture, Conversations, and Community

Jewish life in Natchez began in the early 1840s when the first European immigrants were drawn by economic opportunity to the Mississippi frontier. The beautiful building with its signature dome was completed in 1905, a “grand new synagogue” for an already-established and respected group of Natchez citizens.

Throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century, B'nai Israel has been a vibrant and vital part of the Natchez community. The Jewish community grew and thrived here, and even as numbers have diminished over the years, congregants still meet regularly in the building and also invite their friends and neighbors to partake in celebrations, cultural events, exhibits, and fellowship beneath the dome.

This building, and the legacy of Natchez's Jewish citizens which it so beautifully represents, is part of the Natchez landscape – and always will be. In the years to come, and with your help, we envision this space continuing to serve as a hub for culture, conversations, and community.

This campaign will ensure the temple is safe, secure, and accessible for extensive public use by the local community and tourists, which will increase awareness and appreciation of 200 years of Jewish presence in the state of Mississippi.

Culture, conversations, and community have been the hallmarks of the rich history of people coming together beneath this gorgeous dome. **We need your help to keep those traditions alive.**



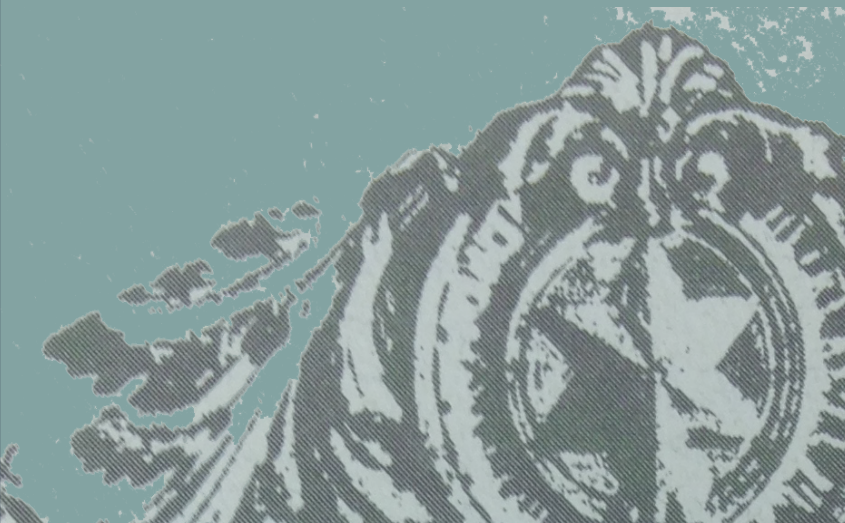
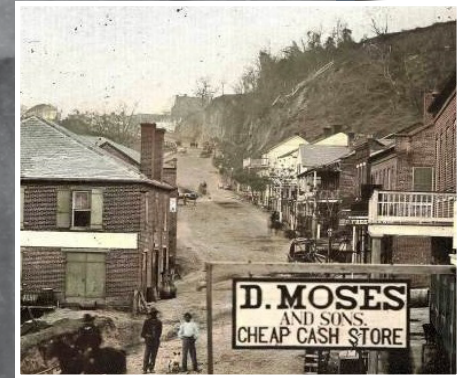
CULTURE

The Museum

The Institute of Southern Jewish life is committed to preserving Temple B'nai Israel in perpetuity as a museum and symbol of the Jewish legacy in the region.

A visit to the Temple B'nai Israel Museum will include an introduction to Jewish life and culture within the beautiful historic sanctuary and a modern exhibition featuring history of the Natchez's Jewish citizens and their influential relationships with their community.

The exhibition will be inclusive of many voices, feature the community's involvement in historic social change movements, and highlight the value of cultural and ethnic diversity in Natchez.



CONVERSATIONS Jewish Programs

While the congregation still continues to be active today, Temple B'nai Israel must plan for a time when there may no longer be a living Jewish presence in Natchez. The ISJL will ensure that the legacy of the Natchez Jewish community can continue to be celebrated.

The ISJL's Southern States Jewish Programming Series provides top-tier authors, speakers, musicians, and film screenings, appealing to a diverse range of interests across our 13-state region. Temple B'nai Israel will be able to host a variety of Jewish programs touring the region to maintain a Jewish presence and attract a diverse audience in Natchez.



COMMUNITY

The Venue

Natchez's tourism industry is growing, as is its need for meeting and performance venues. With renovations planned to increase accessibility, Temple B'nai Israel can be an attractive option for groups interested in authentic, historic spaces.

No other venue in the city currently seats 300 people. The temple's acoustics are desirable for dynamic speakers and performances. The venue can be rented for annual events arranged by organizations like the Natchez Literary and Cinema Festival and the Natchez Music Festival.

The Historic Natchez Foundation, with offices only a block away, conducts programs that require this type of space. The ability to have formal presentations to several hundred persons as well as having areas for break-out rooms and group fellowship make the building desirable for multiple uses.



Natchez Tourism

Natchez is supported by a vibrant tourist economy, welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Few cities offer an in-depth look at the past and present southern lifestyle like Natchez, where visitors can visit antebellum homes, historic landmarks, and modern museums. Enjoy the Natchez Trace, gamble in casinos, hear live music, and indulge in southern cuisine. There's a vast array of Natchez attractions for every interest.

- Natchez was named the “7th Friendliest City in the US” by *Condé Nast Traveler* and was chosen as one of AARP’s “7 Great Getaways for Women” in 2013.
- Natchez hosted 24,398 international visitors in 2015, more than any other city in the state.
- In 2014, *USA Today* named Natchez as one of the “10 Best Bucket List Road Trips.”
- Natchez is a featured stop for visitors sailing on the *American Queen* riverboat, which docks in town once a month during the spring and fall seasons.
- Natchez is home to three libation producers: Charboneau Rum Distillery, Old South Winery, and Natchez Brewing Company, a craft beer brewery.
- Natchez is a part of several famous tourist trails, including the Tamale Trail, Southern Barbecue Trail, Americana Music Triangle, Great River Road, and Blues Highway.



Supporting Historic Preservation

Although Temple B'nai Israel has always been valued and cared for, as the number of congregants has dwindled, it has fallen on fewer and fewer shoulders to address the naturally-occurring needs of an old structure. The funds raised in this campaign will be put towards restoring the temple, making it more accessible to all, and ensuring that the entire Natchez community can continue to celebrate a shared southern history and legacy of fellowship.

1. The building does not comply with current codes for exits and fire safety.
2. The building does not comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with regards to handicap accessibility. Requires the installation of an elevator within the core of the building without destroying the temple's historic fabric.
3. The building's masonry, although structurally sound, still has its original mortar. This has degraded in many areas, resulting in wall leakage and plaster damage.
4. The roof has not been fully investigated, but appears to be in sound condition. It requires only minor repairs but needs to be re-coated. Access to this roof with lifts will be difficult and therefore expensive.
5. The building's air conditioning is antiquated and expensive to operate. Requires complete replacement.
6. The building's electrical system is old and undersized, particularly in light of the need for new and better air conditioning.
7. The stained glass is of exceptional quality. It requires minor restoration, but complete replacement of the plastic covers which were added in the mid-to-late twentieth century.



The total cost of restoration will be in the range of \$1,500,000 to \$1,700,000.

Phases of Preservation

When you support Temple B'nai Israel, you ensure an everlasting legacy for the Natchez community. This comprehensive preservation will require funding throughout multiple phases of the project.

Phase One: Securing an Endowment

The first phase of our capital campaign is to secure a \$300,000 endowment. These funds will allow the ISJL to maintain daily operations of the temple building.

Phase Two: Planning and Development

The ISJL will conduct a master plan to determine the overall cost for restoration of the historic building and design for a modern, interactive exhibition.

Phase Three: Restoration

With proper funding, improvements to Temple B'nai Israel will be completed to ensure its preservation for future generations.

Phase Four: Education and Interpretation

An expertly designed exhibition will be developed and installed in the lower level of the building. Groups will regularly visit the museum, and public programs will be held in the sanctuary, fulfilling the mission of having Temple B'nai Israel continue as a vital part of the Natchez community.

We seek support from families and institutions with the desire to ensure that both the temple and the city's Jewish legacy are preserved and interpreted in perpetuity.

The Institute of Southern Jewish Life is currently working with historic preservation architect **Robert Parker Adams** to develop a master renovation plan and install a ramp along the side of the temple building to increase accessibility. This first phase of renovation is made possible by a generous Community Heritage Preservation Grant from the **Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH)**.



Temple B'nai Israel is one of the Mississippi Heritage Trust's **Ten Most Endangered Historic Places in Mississippi**.



Donor Levels

Sanctuary Naming Rights – \$1,000,000

At this time, the rights still exist for the naming of the beautiful Temple B'nai Israel sanctuary space. Adorned with an ark of white carved marble, significant stained glass windows and fanlight over the main entrance, an elegant dome, and a historic pipe organ at the main level, the sanctuary represents the legacy of Judaism in Natchez, Mississippi. This gift includes a donor family interpretive panel with a photo and description prominently featured in the Temple B'nai Israel exhibit and a donor family history profile on our website.

Bimah Naming Rights – \$500,000

The ornate marble ark has the opportunity to be rededicated in honor of the congregation, past, present, and future, of Temple B'nai Israel. This gift includes a donor family interpretive panel with a photo and description prominently featured in the Temple B'nai Israel exhibit, and a donor family history profile on our website.

Elevator Naming Rights – \$100,000

An elevator is essential for ensuring that the temple is safe, secure, and accessible for extensive public use by the local community. This gift includes a donor family interpretive panel with photo and description prominently featured in the Temple B'nai Israel exhibit, and a donor family history profile on our website.

Reception Gallery Naming Rights – \$50,000

Temple B'nai Israel's downstairs reception gallery will host programs and social events promoting Jewish culture and heritage. This gift includes the donor name displayed prominently in the gallery, name featured on the donor display in the museum, and donor family history profile on our website.

Community Kitchen Naming Rights – \$50,000

A newly refurbished catering kitchen will allow Temple B'nai Israel to continue the tradition of hosting holiday meals and also support use of a meeting facility. This gift includes the donor name displayed prominently in the kitchen, name featured on the donor display in the museum, and donor family history profile on our website.

Exhibit Gallery Naming Rights – \$25,000 (3)

Temple B'nai Israel will feature multiple exhibition spaces, each with the opportunity to be named for a donor or donors. Galleries include one upstairs Orientation Gallery, and the downstairs Heritage Gallery and Family History Gallery. This gift includes the donor name displayed prominently in the gallery, name featured on the donor display in the museum, and donor family history profile on our website.

Window Rededication Plaques – \$25,000 (16)

Each historic stained glass window in the sanctuary was dedicated by a member of Temple B'nai Israel when the building was constructed in 1905. The windows carry on the memory of those congregants, and now your gift will create the opportunity to rededicate the windows in honor of Natchez Jewish family legacies.

Pew Plaques – \$10,000-\$15,000 (48)

Legacy members of Temple B'nai Israel will have names permanently displayed on brass plaques mounted on the pews within the sanctuary. Members can choose from the short pews (\$10,000) or long pews (\$15,000) to provide their family with a way to honor and memorialize their connection to the Natchez Jewish Community.

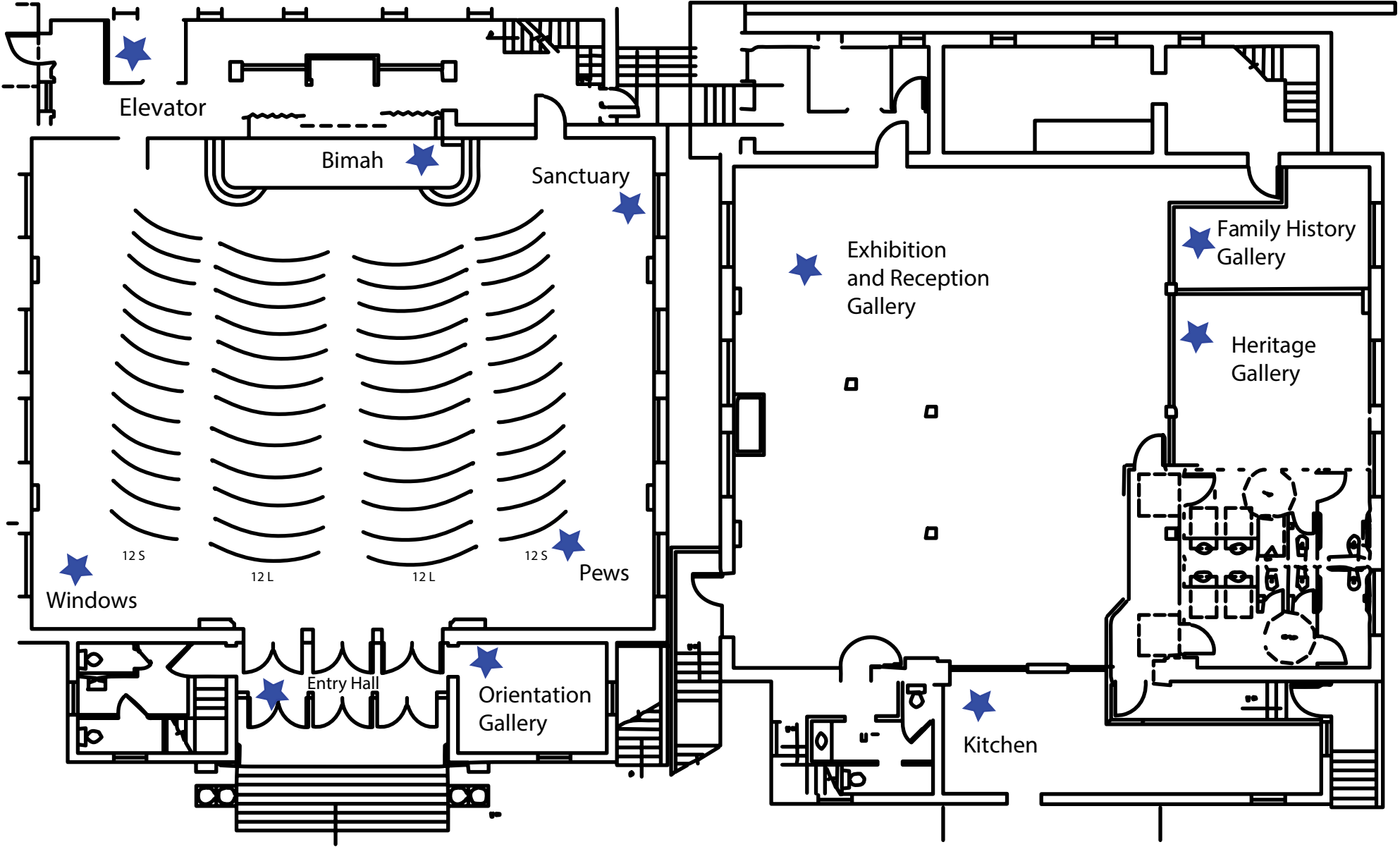


Naming Opportunities

Sanctuary	\$1,000,000
Bimah	\$500,000
Elevator	\$100,000
Exhibition and Reception Gallery	\$50,000
Kitchen	\$50,000
Orientation Gallery	\$25,000
Heritage Gallery	\$25,000
Family History Gallery	\$25,000
16 Windows	\$25,000
24 Long Pews	\$15,000
24 Short Pews	\$10,000
Entry Hall	\$10,000

Top Level

Ground Level



Elevator

Bimah

Sanctuary

Windows

12S

12L

12L

12S

Pews

Entry Hall

Orientation Gallery

Exhibition and Reception Gallery

Family History Gallery

Heritage Gallery

Kitchen

Temple B'nai Israel

Home to Natchez's Historic Jewish Congregation

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For more information,
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