

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Temple Sinai

Other names/site number: DHR No. 121-5117

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

LISTED:
VLR: 3/19/2015
NRHP: 5/18/2015

2. Location

Street & number: 11620 Warwick Boulevard

City or town: Newport News State: Virginia County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

	<u>3/27/15</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____

Title: _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News VA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION /religious facility/synagogue

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION /religious facility/synagogue

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CONCRETE; ASPHALT; GLASS;
STEEL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Temple Sinai is a synagogue building located at 11620 Warwick Boulevard in Newport News, Virginia. It is set on a lot between Warwick Boulevard (front) and Gatewood Road (back) within a residential neighborhood adjacent to Lake Maury. Completed in 1960, the synagogue was designed by architect Edward Loewenstein in the Modern style. The one-story, brick-veneered building features a rectangular footprint, a projecting, trapezoidal centered entrance bay on the southeast facade, and each gable end wall has three bays divided by narrow, rectangular, engaged columns (or buttresses) with multiple-light windows at each end and a blank central bay. Character-defining elements include the roof form, which slopes downward from each end – higher at the ends and convex in the middle – and the end walls, which slope outward from ground level up to the roofline, as well as the roof's deeply overhanging eaves and engaged columns (or buttresses) on each end wall all of which combine to recall the design of Noah's Ark. The organic form is a characteristic aspect of Loewenstein's other works, primarily in North Carolina. Soon after Temple Sinai was founded in 1955, the congregation began planning construction of a custom-built synagogue and worked closely with Loewenstein until the building was dedicated and occupied in December 1960. The congregation has remained in the original building to the present day. In 1975, a Biblical Garden (noncontributing site) was added to the northeast side of the property and was designed to include specimens of plants mentioned

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

in the Bible. The carefully maintained building has high integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

Temple Sinai is an excellent example of mid-twentieth century Modern architecture that has seen few changes since its completion in 1960.

Layout and Setting

The building is situated at right angles to the main road, Warwick Boulevard, with a brick sign placed in a grassy area between the building and road. An entrance drive is located southeast of the building and leads to a parking lot that occupies much of the property's north end. For reference, the building's east wall with the sanctuary entrance from the driveway, on the south (longitudinal or longest) side of the building, is taken as the front. One narrow end faces Warwick Boulevard (southwest) and the other faces the parking lot and Gatewood Road (northeast). The "back" or northwest longitudinal side of the building faces the Biblical Garden on the north and Lake Maury further north. The lawn is elevated about 4 feet above the Warwick Boulevard sidewalk, with the last few feet graded to slope down. The building and parking lot are otherwise flat.

Exterior

The one-story, brick-veneered building features a rectangular footprint, a projecting, trapezoidal centered entrance bay on the east elevation, and large windows on the north and south gable end walls. The building is approximately 116 feet long and 48 feet wide and has a full basement. On all four sides of the building, basement windows are visible; each opening features a pair of rectangular aluminum sash with two horizontal lights. The entire exterior is veneered with brick in a blended pattern of darker red-brown and lighter clay ginger brown. Asphalt shingles cover the sloping roof, which has a short, square brick chimney stack on its southeast slope. On the southeast side of the building, with the primary entrance at the center, the part to the left (south) corresponds to the sanctuary inside and the part to the right (north) corresponds to the social hall inside. Separating these two sections, the projecting entrance bay has outward-sloping walls that match those at each end of the building. Within the bay the trapezoidal entrance is framed with stained dark wood and has a brown canopy (6 feet wide at top, 10 feet wide at bottom) and double doors of carved wood with inlaid floral stamp pattern. The brick border naturally forms a saw tooth pattern. Another entry bay is near the northeast corner of the building and is accessed by a ramp leading to the library and offices. The entry has a flush panel door.

The back (northwest) side of the building faces the Biblical Garden. Centered on this elevation is a projecting entrance bay that contains dark-stained double doors with two-light sidelights and a stairway that leads up into the main level and down to the basement level. Additionally there is an exterior stairway composed of poured concrete and brick veneer at the northeast end of the

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

building, connecting the kitchen entry to the parking lot. At the southeast end of this elevation, a similar exterior stairway leads from the ground level up to the sanctuary (for accessing the organ).

The Warwick Boulevard end (southwest end) of the building is divided into three bays by a pair of brick buttresses that flank the central bay, which is devoid of fenestration but left-of-center has the building's name, Temple Sinai, rendered in surface-mounted aluminum letters. The northwest and southeast bays each feature a large, polygonal, multiple-light window with original aluminum frames and replacement stained glass panes. At each end of this wall, the outward sloping walls form a triangular wedge that is narrowest at ground level and widens to meet the roofline, an additional touch of resemblance to Noah's ark.

The northeast end is flanked by the poured concrete ramp on the southeast wall and the exterior stairway on the northwest wall. This end wall is identical to the southwest end, except that the windows retain original clear glass panes. The windows look into the offices and kitchen.

Interior

On the southeast façade, the primary entrance opens to a split foyer, which is half a level below the main floor (sanctuary and social hall) and half a level above the basement. Stairs lead to each floor. The foyer includes coat storage and restrooms to either side of the doors. The west and east sides. The basement contains seven classrooms on the north side facing the Biblical Garden and two classrooms and an office on the south side. One classroom on the south side can be partitioned and is approximately 18 feet deep by 22 feet wide; other classrooms vary in shape but are between 11 and 15 feet on a side.

The main floor consists of two wings: sanctuary and social hall. Typically these comprise an open space, but they can be separated by a movable partition. Consistent with the gables and sloping nature of the roof, the sanctuary contains a soaring ceiling with exposed steel beams that are clad with wood veneer. The sanctuary consists of a *bimah*, a platform from which the rabbi leads the service, at the southwest end. The *bimah* is raised 30 inches, with four permanent steps of 7.5 inches at left and right and steps in the center as well. There are gridded screens for the choir and robing areas (left and right of the *bimah*) and a partition for the organ. The *bimah* area includes the Ark for the Torah scrolls and their covers, the *Ner Tamid* or Eternal Light, and a mounted *Menorah* left of center of the back wall. The sanctuary area also includes memorial plaques at the side walls. The original clear glass windows to either side of the *bimah* were replaced in 1995 by custom-designed stained glass (our Women of the Bible windows). Much of the remainder of the sanctuary space is occupied by fixed seating for 180 worshippers. This seating was installed during a modest interior renovation during the late twentieth century.

After the Service, the congregation moves to the northeast side of the building with the Social Hall for the *motzi* (blessing over bread) and the *Oneg Shabbat* (Joy of the Sabbath) for conversation and dessert treats. The social hall is also used for meetings. It has the same style of soaring ceiling and exposed beams as found in the Sanctuary, and includes a raised stage at its

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

northeast end, making it a mirror image to the Sanctuary and creating a balanced and symmetrical use of space. To either side of the stage, doors lead to the kitchen, library, rabbi's study, and administrative offices at the northeast end of the building.

Layout Considerations

This section and the next describe the building in more general terms than a simple tour around the building would provide. The building is safely situated on the lot allowing ample parking in the rear of the building so that congregants are sheltered from the traffic of Warwick Boulevard and have privacy coming and going. The landscaping around the building with the exception of the Biblical Garden is low profile. The Biblical Garden is not visible from the street because of the slope of the front lawn. The Biblical Garden runs the length of the rear side of the building with low and high plants, a gazebo serving as a *Sukkah*, pipes representing a *Menorah*, and a concrete walkway. Modeled after the Israel Biblical Garden, the Biblical Garden contains examples of plants in the Hebrew Bible as well as the Christian New Testament.

Additional decorative features, added after the original building, are enumerated below as part of the "Living Museum" discussion.

Design Considerations

The Modern architecture is notable in the saddle-shaped building form that is patterned after Noah's Ark, the long, simple exterior showing natural brick, the terraced front area, and the open interior of the sanctuary and social hall, all of which subtly reflect the union of man and God, and in.

The exterior, while following a long and sleek Modern design, also contains some organic elements of light and dark brown veneer brick, tall, dark-stained wood doors, and large polygonal windows on the street side and parking lot side. The interior of Temple Sinai is open and warm with the social hall and sanctuary blending into one room, although retaining the ability to close off the social hall when needed. While openness to nature is a characteristic of Loewenstein's residential architecture, it may be claimed that Temple Sinai's Sanctuary provides openness to God. The original steel beams now have wood veneer, adding to the warmth and openness. The traditional elements of the architecture blend in with the prevailing architecture in the neighborhood while the Modern architecture helped Jews to move subtly forward and to worship comfortably.

Tenets of Reform Judaism are reflected in the architecture in several ways. In the sanctuary, seating is open, with no *mechitzah* (barrier) to separate men and women, as in Orthodox and some Conservative congregations. With the exception of certain prayers, the rabbi always faces the congregation and each takes an active part in the Service. The sanctuary brings Rabbi and congregation in close contact. In its early years, Temple Sinai services included a choir as well. Temple Sinai has not had a cantor except at High Holy Days but Rabbi Séverine Sokol, our

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

current rabbi, sings as a cantorial soloist in addition to leading the service. The wall plaques and photographs of Temple Presidents reflect equal leadership from both men and women.

Temple Sinai acts as a Living Museum, preserving Jewish heritage. It houses three Torahs. One of these, created in Morocco, dates back to the eighteenth century. It was acquired from a synagogue in Portugal and dedicated at Temple Sinai (while still in temporary quarters) in 1957. N. Amanda Ford, a well-known fiber artist, designed the Torah mantles; these were dedicated in 2002. Beautiful stained glass windows, dedicated in 1995, illustrate the role of women in the Torah. The artist, Marsha Maurer, employed the same technique and glass as the turn-of-the-twentieth-century artist Louis Comfort Tiffany. A Judaica Needlepoint Tapestry, designed and quilted by the women of Temple Sinai, led by master quilter and synagogue member Ruth Simmons, and representing the twelve tribes of Israel, hangs in the Social Hall; the quilt was completed in 2000. [1] In addition, two brass plates together representing the twelve tribes of Israel gird the raised stage of the Social Hall at the left and right sides. The Biblical Garden, established in 1975, is located on the northeast side of the Temple Sinai property and contains over 100 species of plant life mentioned in the Bible and which existed in the Holy Land over 2,000 years ago. The Biblical Garden Preserve in Jerusalem inspired it.

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: JEWISH
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1959-1965

Significant Dates

1960

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Loewenstein, Edward

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Temple Sinai is locally significant under Criterion A and Criterion C. Specifically, under Criterion A it qualifies under Ethnic Heritage: Jewish. Temple Sinai's building is significant as the first and only Reform synagogue on the Virginia Peninsula (Reform is one of three major movements in modern Judaism), having been designed in 1958-1959 and constructed and occupied in 1960. It is the only permanent home of the congregation (which had met in temporary quarters in its first five years.) Under Criterion C, Temple Sinai is a significant example of distinctive characteristics of a period, high artistic values, and work by Modern architect Edward Loewenstein. The property meets Criteria Consideration A because its primary significance is derived from its historic association with Jewish ethnic heritage and its architectural significance. The period of significance is 1959-1965, beginning with the start of construction and ending with the traditional fifty-year cutoff for properties where significant historic activities continued into the more recent past.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The first sections of the narrative expand on Temple Sinai's significance in the area of Ethnic Heritage with a history of Jews and Jewish congregations on the Virginia Peninsula and in Virginia overall and an explanation of differences in the three major movements in modern Judaism in the United States. The later sections of the narrative highlight the significance of Edward Loewenstein by discussing his place in Modern architecture, his life and work, and his specific interaction with Temple Sinai.

History of the Jews on the Virginia Peninsula and of Jewish Congregations in Virginia

The first Jews arrived in Newport News shortly after Collis Huntington built a railroad line from Newport News to Richmond and points west in 1881. An Orthodox Jewish congregation was established in 1893 (Adath Jeshurun) in Newport News, followed by B'nai Israel, a second Orthodox congregation in Hampton in 1910, and Rodef Sholom, Conservative, originally in Newport News, in 1913.

Temple Sinai was founded in 1955 with 20 members who left Rodef Sholom in order to worship in the Reform Jewish tradition. That membership had increased to 86 by 1960, when its building was occupied and to 194 by 1990, with slow decreases in recent years. Temple Beth El, a Reconstructionist congregation, was founded in 1959. [2]

In all of Virginia, there are twenty Reform congregations, including two others in Tidewater (Norfolk and Virginia Beach) and two in Richmond. There are eight in Northern Virginia and

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

seven elsewhere across the state. Of all these, six were founded before 1900 and only four between 1900 and 1965. [3]

Even though Temple Sinai has a small membership, that membership has demonstrated active leadership in the community as well as in Reform Judaism. In 1960, Temple Sinai members, including William and Joanne Roos of the Nachman family, were directly involved with Nachman's Department Store when it peacefully integrated its lunch counter. Nachman's was the first lunch counter to integrate in Newport News, as a response to the American Civil Rights movement [4]. One family (Ellenson) provided Dr. David Ellenson, head of the national HUC-JIR college for rabbis, although he himself was not a member. Temple Sinai, through its rabbis and programs, has featured prominently by providing a variety of programs as well as full participation in community events (rallies, discussions, Institute for Judaism) involving several Jewish congregations.

In the 1990s Temple Sinai took part in the historic Operation Exodus, the resettlement of Soviet Jews in the United States and throughout the world. Several Russian Jewish families were sponsored by Temple Sinai and were part of the national effort not only to find homes and jobs in the local community, but also provide language training, Jewish education, and healthcare [5]. It is noteworthy that this repeats a pattern of almost a century earlier, when 90 percent of the Peninsula's Jews were recent immigrants from Russia.

Many Temple Sinai members were and are still active in NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Agency) as engineers and scientists, as well as at Jefferson Laboratory (high-energy physics). A recent exhibit at the Jewish Community Center featured these and other Jewish contributors to NASA and its predecessor NACA. Temple Sinai members have been active contributors in all professions and walks of life.

History and Description of Reform Judaism and Its Sister Movements

The above paragraphs state the historical sequence of Jewish congregations on the Peninsula was Orthodox, then Conservative, and then Reform, with the latter movements thriving today. This sequence differs from the development of Jewish movements across the country. Originally all American congregations were Orthodox (Jews have been in America since 1654 and Reform, the first successor movement, did not reach the United States until 1824). Whether the movement is Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox, all Judaism is "Rabbinic Judaism," based on rabbi and synagogue, replacing the ancient Second Temple, which was destroyed in 70 CE during the unsuccessful Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire. The three major movements have evolved over time in response to overall national trends, and to demographic trends (birth and migration); additionally Reform and Conservative have subtly influenced each other. (Reconstructionist Judaism is an offshoot of Conservatism, founded in 1922 in the United States by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan).

Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism differ essentially in how they respond to the commandments in the Torah (The Written Law) and the Talmud (Oral Law) and in the timing

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

and degree of change. Orthodoxy holds that Torah and Oral Law come *directly* from God and should be followed, notably in strict observance of *Shabbat* (Sabbath), separation of men and women at Services, observance of *kosher*, etc. Reform holds that God inspired the Torah and Talmud and changes in practice consistent with the modern world are appropriate.

Reform Judaism believes in continuous revelation. In its earliest days (about 1810-1910) Reform made drastic changes in practice, not all of which are followed now. For example, Sabbath services were on Sunday, prayers were all in English, kosher was not observed, and *tallit* and *yarmulke* were not allowed in the synagogue. The objective was to avoid practices that seemed outdated and too sharply distinguished congregants from non-Jewish neighbors.

In its second century, Reform returned to some traditional roots, using more Hebrew, holding Shabbat services on Friday evening (or Saturday morning), encouraging female participation, allowing and encouraging female rabbis, and allowing men and women the option of wearing *tallit* and *yarmulke*. Most recently, this involves recognition of closely felt events: the Holocaust and the Six-Day War.

Today, female rabbis are common in Reform and Conservative, since 1972 and 1986 respectively, but are not yet ordained in Orthodox. [6]

Reform Judaism originated in Germany in 1810, following on emancipation of Jews from civil restrictions at the time of the French Revolution. Reform Judaism reached the United States in South Carolina in 1824, with many congregations existing by the time of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who came to America in 1846. Reform was organized under his leadership between 1873 and 1889. Conservative Judaism has its roots in the United States in the 1880s, and was organized under the leadership of Rabbi Solomon Schechter during the period 1902-1913. Conservatism was both a reaction to the original “extreme” changes made by Reform and a form of worship most acceptable to Eastern European Jews who had immigrated to the country. Notably, men wore *yarmulke* and *tallit*, prayers were primarily in Hebrew, and both rabbi and cantor have major roles and lead from different lecterns on the *bimah*. Orthodox practices have not changed much and Orthodox Jews observe the Sabbath laws strictly, observe dietary laws (kosher), pray in Hebrew, and keep separation of men and women at Services. The spectrum of Conservative practices overall varies from close to Reform to close to Orthodox depending on the congregation and in some ways Conservative and Reform have converged recently to a small degree. [7]

In the United States, there are approximately 800 Reform congregations with 2 million members; 800 Conservative with 1.3 million; and 1200 Orthodox congregations with membership of 1 million. [8]

Temple Sinai and Edward Loewenstein

The remainder of this narrative focuses on the work of Edward Loewenstein, architect of the Temple Sinai building and a noted mid-twentieth century Modern architect. Temple Sinai was

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

established in 1955 to serve the need for a place of worship for Modern or Reform Judaism on the Virginia Peninsula. The Modern building, subtly patterned around Noah's Ark, was designed in 1958-1959 and dedicated and occupied in December 1960. It is unique among the few Jewish synagogue buildings in the Peninsula in being continuously occupied and in its distinct architectural style. Temple Sinai is the only known Reform synagogue designed by Loewenstein in the Modern style. In 1949, he designed the more traditionally styled religious school and sanctuary wings of Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, North Carolina, a Reform Judaism congregation where he was a member. In 1962, he was responsible for the Modern-style synagogue for Beth Israel, a Conservative congregation in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Soon after Temple Sinai was founded in August 1955, the new congregation met with Edward Loewenstein as a representative of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Architects Consultants Panel. From the minutes of the Temple Sinai Building Committee, we see that the committee was impressed with him at their first meeting. They engaged him as Temple Sinai's architect on September 14, 1958. [9]

Loewenstein completed the design for Temple Sinai by 1959, and the building was constructed by several contractors and dedicated and occupied on December 18, 1960. [10] In the early discussion, Loewenstein liked the location and recommended a "contemporary" building. He wanted to avoid a "boxy" or "warehouse" building (as he characterized his own initial sketches) and succeeded in designing an excellent Modern building with Contemporary and Wrightian influences in massing and detailing.

Temple Sinai's building, while not overwhelmingly Jewish in its architecture, suggests Noah's Ark (a place of refuge and safety) while also resembling the modernist residences Loewenstein designed in North Carolina—long, open, and natural. The current building differs only slightly from original specifications of June 1958. Expansion of the building, discussed in the original design, never took place although the congregation did expand. The building is substantially the same as when first occupied.

Edward Loewenstein and His Work

Loewenstein was born in 1913 and graduated from MIT with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1935. Following military service in World War II, he moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1946 to open his own practice. He soon had a flourishing practice, in part aided by social contacts from within and outside of the Jewish community, through his wife, Frances Stern, stepdaughter of Julius Cone of the textile family. His solo practice was succeeded by a successful partnership with Robert A. Atkinson, Jr. (Loewenstein-Atkinson) begun in 1953. The firm eventually opened in Danville and Martinsville, both in southern Virginia. The JoAnne Spangler Residence in Danville is one of the few known houses in Virginia known to be an example of the firm's work.

The Irving Park area of Greensboro was the point of entry where Loewenstein introduced his modernistic style in residential buildings in contrast to more typical Ranch dwellings with Colonial Revival treatments. Loewenstein's own house, built in 1954, is significant in

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

introducing his modernistic residential style. Other dwellings, notably the Martha and Wilbur Carter House (1950) and the Eleanor and Marion Bertling House (1952), are similar and distinctive with L-shaped plans to distinguish between public and private areas, low-slung massing and organic forms merging with nature, and natural finishes. Residences featured slanted exterior walls, curving interior fieldstone walls, and broadly horizontal overhangs in antithesis to conservative, upright Colonial Revival neighbors. All of these aspects are apparent at Temple Sinai as well. [11]

By the time of Loewenstein's death in 1970, he individually and his firm collectively completed 1,600 projects in North Carolina and Virginia, primarily in the vicinity of their office locations. These included many public structures, such as schools, hospitals and religious institutions, and some private residences. Although best known for Modern architecture, Loewenstein-Atkinson also designed buildings in Ranch and Colonial Revival style as well as hybrids of Modern and more traditional styles. About 500 of the commissions were house and of these only about 50 are strictly Modern in style [12]. Nevertheless, Loewenstein was instrumental in changing the mindset of North Carolina residents toward building in harmony with nature rather than in fixed, time-tested Colonial Revival style. Greensboro residents could notice Loewenstein's own house but also the Dudley High School gymnasium, Bennett College buildings, and the Greensboro Public Library (now occupied by Elon University School of Law).

Loewenstein is the only known practicing Jewish architect in mid-twentieth century North Carolina. Patrick Lee Lucas, an authority on Edward Loewenstein, summarizes two aspects of the role of Jewish architects in modernism. First, the buildings did not contain overtly Jewish features but rather were Modern. Second, as cultural outsiders, Jewish architects had the liberty and acumen to challenge conventional notions about architecture and design, but they avoided the large scale and sterility of International style. [13]

Loewenstein was a committed and quietly active community leader. His firm was the first in Greensboro to hire African-American architects and design professionals. These included William Streat, W. Edward Jenkins, and Clinton E. Gravely. Loewenstein's work on institutions and residences was among the first to be distinctive in its architecture rather than simply blending in. These were a departure from the more conformist and traditional architecture of North Carolina residences. Beyond his own buildings, Loewenstein's major contribution was the training of a generation of architects, through work at the Loewenstein-Atkinson partnership, who followed in his modernistic tradition. At its peak, the firm employed thirty architects. Notably, Loewenstein mentored the architects Frank Harmon and Anne Greene. [14]

Edward Loewenstein in the Context of Modernism

Modernism is a broad characterization of Western architecture from around 1910 through the late twentieth century. With migration of architects from Europe during the Interwar period and after the Second World War, followed by a building boom spurred by suburbanization and returning GIs, modernism was entrenched in American architecture by the 1950s. [15] Edward Loewenstein was one of that new generation. His work contains the earlier influence of the

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

American Arts and Crafts movement and the efficient geometric forms of the Bauhaus movement. Patrick Lee Lucas calls it “second-generation modernism.”

Lucas states that Loewenstein emulated the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, and other prominent designers who manifested conceptually solid buildings of the International style with several key principles: honesty in construction with structural systems exposed, use of new materials and technology, and emphasis on standardization and mass production. [16] Loewenstein’s residential and commercial architecture is broadly of this family albeit on a smaller, less dramatic scale, but with graceful contours and a long sweep. One may note a resemblance to buildings such as Eero Saarinen’s TWA Terminal at John F. Kennedy Airport and the terminal at Dulles Airport. Combining these principles with the sensibilities of Frank Lloyd Wright in harmonious building-site relationships, Loewenstein crafted his own version of mid-century Modern, merging the built environment and the natural world through sophisticated siting of predominantly horizontal buildings, use of indigenous materials, and through sophisticated planning to weave together public and private zones.

Endnotes

[1] Temple Sinai website, “About TS” page, providing background for each resource. (Bibliography: No. 5)

[2] Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities (Bibliography: No. 8)

[3] Directory of Virginia Congregations, Union of Reform Judaism Website (Bibliography: No. 7)

[4] Daily Press: Nachman’s in Newport News (Bibliography, No. 8)

[5] Jewish United Fund News (Bibliography, No. 9)

[6] Soloff (Bibliography, No.14). Also Stahl (No. 15) Jewish Virtual Library (Women in Judaism page) (Bibliography, No. 13d)

[7] Jewish Virtual Library, Conservatism (Bibliography, No. 13b), Stahl, Making the Timeless Timely (Bibliography, No. 16), Stahl (Sermon) (Bibliography, No. 17).

[8] Movements of Judaism (Bibliography, No. 14)

[9] Personal communication, Brenda Henley to author; Lucas (Bibliography, No. 26); Minutes of Building Committee (Bibliography, No. 11)

[10] Program for Dedication Service (Bibliography, No. 12)

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

[11] Lucas (Bibliography, No.19), pp 59-76, Weaver (Bibliography, No. 21), North Carolina Architects (Bibliography, No. 23); for Spangler residence, Triangle Modernist Houses (Bibliography, No. 25), No. 27.

[12] Weaver (Bibliography, No. 21). Note that Weaver claims 50 residential modernistic buildings while Lucas (Bibliography, No. 19) claims only 25.

[13] Tigerman (Bibliography, No. 20), and Rosenfeld (Bibliography, No. 21) quoted in Lucas (Bibliography, No. 19), p.49.

[14] North Carolina Architects (Bibliography, No. 23).

[15] Lucas (Bibliography, No. 19), pp 44-57.

[16] Lucas (Bibliography, No. 19), pp 44-57.

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

8. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Part 1: Materials relating specifically to Temple Sinai

1. US Geological Service. Map: Newport News North, VA. 1965, edited 1986. 37076-A4-TF-024.
2. Topographic map by MyTopo: Temple Sinai vicinity, Newport News, VA.
<http://mapserver.mytopo.com/homepage/index.cfm?lat=37.060469&lo...mytopo.com/homepage/index.cfm&bpid=MAP0060030900&lantiontype=DMS>.
3. Deed for original property at 11620 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA. Transfer from Samuel C. Bayne and Mary B. Bayne to E. E. Falk, Renate Kates, and A. F. Eisenman, Jr., trustees of Temple Sinai, June 1, 1958 with accompanying plat made by J.M. Cochran on Aug. 19, 1943 (from Murray & Dischinger, Engineers, May 13, 1958).
4. Deed for additional adjoining property. Transfer from Angela Ponzo Brown and Briscoe E. Brown, III to Hiram Wolf, Jean B. Falk, and Joanne K. Roos, trustees of Temple Sinai, Apr 29, 1994 with accompanying plat, surveyed by C.K. Tudor, Newport News, VA, Sept 1, 1993.
5. Temple Sinai Website "More about Temple Sinai." <http://www.templestinai-nn.org/more.html>. Information about Biblical Garden, Torahs, etc.
6. Letter, "Organization for Reformed Temple," June 28, 1955. Committee of Sponsors (Emanuel E. Falk, President)
7. Directory of Reform Congregations in Virginia.
<http://congregations.urj.org/display.cfm?state=VA>. Union of Reform Judaism website.
8. Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities: Newport News/Hampton, VA.
http://isjl.org/history/archive/va/newport_news_hampton.htm.
9. Daily Press, Newport News, VA. Nachman's in Newport News was the First Lunch Counter to Integrate in 1960. Joe Lawlor, Feb. 23, 2010.
10. Jewish United Fund (JUF) News. Historic campaign to rescue, resettle Soviet Jews celebrates 20 years. By Jane Charney. <http://www.juf.org/news/local.aspx?id=55446>
11. Minutes of Building Committee, Temple Sinai, (no date).

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

12. Program for Dedication Service, Temple Sinai, December 18, 1960.

Part 2: Materials relating to Jewish Movements (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox)

13. Articles from the Jewish Virtual Library (listing as one reference)

- a. Orthodox Judaism: The State of Orthodox Judaism Today.
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/orthostate.html>.
- b. Conservative Judaism: Background & Overview.
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/conservatives.html>.
- c. Reform Judaism: History & Overview.
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/reform.html>.
- d. Women in Judaism: A History of Women's Ordination as Rabbis.
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/femalerabbi.html>.

14. Movements of Judaism in 20th Century United States from website <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/jewfaq/movement.htm>.

15. Soloff, Mordecai I. How the Jewish People Lives. Cincinnati, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1950 (pr, 1949, 1940), 202-215 (Reform) 216-232; (Conservative); 233-243 (Orthodox).

16. Stahl, Samuel. "What Happened to the Reform Judaism We Knew?" *Making the Timeless Timely*. Austin TX, Nortex Press, 1993. Pp. 312-321

17. Stahl, Samuel, Sermon online at http://www.beth-elsa.org/Worship/Sermons/Rabbi_Stahl_Sermons/Shabbat_Sermons/Will_Reform_and_Conservative_Judaism_Merge_03_30_12

18. Forman, Lawrence, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Ohev Shalom, Norfolk, and Interim Rabbi, Temple Sinai, Newport News (2013-2014), e-mail October 4, 2014, 11:22:12 PM EDT.

Part 3: Materials relating to Edward Loewenstein, architect

19. Lucas, Patrick Lee, "Edward Loewenstein's Midcentury Architectural Innovation in North Carolina." *Southern Jewish History*, 2013, pp. 43-88.

20. Tigerman, Stanley. *The Architecture of Exile*. New York: Rizzoli, 1988.

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

21. Rosenfeld, Gavriel D., *Building After Auschwitz: Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
22. Weaver, Laurie. "Heart and Soul Behind Edward Loewenstein's Home." *Our State* magazine (no date shown), <http://www.ourstate.com/loewenstein/>.
23. Lucas, Patrick Lee. *North Carolina Architects and Builders A Biographical Dictionary*. Entries for Edward Loewenstein and for Loewenstein-Atkinson. North Carolina State Universities and NCSU Libraries Copyright and Digital Scholarship Center. <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000339;>
[http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000341.](http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000341)
23. Lucas, Patrick Lee. Modernistic Architecture in North Carolina: The Loewenstein Legacy. University of North Carolina at Greensboro (leaflet) (exhibition at UNCG).
24. Lucas, Patrick Lee. "Modern Architecture in North Carolina: The Loewenstein Legacy" in *Landmarks*, Autumn 2005, pp 1-6. (photos of houses)
25. Lucas, Patrick Lee. Houses You Love: Edward Loewenstein (photos of selected modernist residences). Triangle Modernist Archive (leaflet). [http://www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/loewenstein.htm;](http://www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/loewenstein.htm)
26. Lucas, Patrick Lee. Modernism at Home: The Loewenstein Legacy Continues. Modernism Tour + Symposium October 10-13, 2013. (leaflet) <http://www.blandwood.org/modernism.html>
27. Lucas, Patrick Lee. Edward Loewenstein's Mid-Century Architectural Innovation in the Civil Rights Era. The Weatherspoon Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2013.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA;
Temple Sinai, Newport News, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR No. 121-5117

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.2784

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.057210 | Longitude: -76.481950 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary of Temple Sinai coincides with Tax Parcels 239000103 and 239000104, as recorded by the City of Newport News. The precise boundaries are shown on the attached Location Map and Tax Parcel Map. The Temple Sinai property is located on Warwick Boulevard (US 60), and the parking lot (northeast of the building) borders on Gatewood Road (formerly Old Warwick Road). Temple Sinai is on the east side of Warwick Boulevard, facing the Mariners' Museum Park across the street. Lake Maury is to the north of Temple Sinai. A residential area is to the south of Temple Sinai, extending from the same side of Warwick Boulevard to Gatewood Road. Past Gatewood Road is a wooded area.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundary was drawn to encompass the entirety of the original setting associated with Temple Sinai since the building was completed in 1960.

10. Form Prepared By

name/title: June A Mellman, Co-Chair, Membership Committee, and John Mellman
organization: Temple Sinai
street & number: 11620 Warwick Blvd
city or town: Newport News state: Virginia zip code: 23601-2345
e-mail: jamellman@verizon.net
telephone: 757-596-2648
date: 1/15/2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Temple Sinai
City or Vicinity: Newport News
County: Independent City State: VA
Photographer: Christina Verderosa
Date Photographed: March 18, 2014 and December 28, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17: Southwest Side of Temple Sinai with Sign, as viewed from Warwick Boulevard
Direction of Camera: Facing northeast
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0001

2 of 17: Southwest Side of Temple Sinai, as viewed from Warwick Boulevard
Direction of Camera: Facing northeast
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0002

3 of 17: Southeast Façade of Temple Sinai
Direction of Camera: Facing west/northwest
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0003

4 of 17: Entrance Detail of Temple Sinai
Direction of Camera: Facing west
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0004

5 of 17: Temple Sinai, Southeast Facade, Ramp and Entrance to Office (note angled wall and roof lines at right)
Direction of Camera: Facing west/northwest
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0005

6 of 17: Northwest (Rear) Elevation of Temple Sinai (note angled roof line at left)
Direction of Camera: Facing east/southeast
VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0006

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

7 of 17: Northeast (Side) Elevation of Temple Sinai

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0007

8 of 17: Interior View: Sanctuary

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0008

9 of 17: Bimah

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0009

10 of 17: Torah Scrolls

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0010

11 of 17: Right Window in Sanctuary

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0011

12 of 17: Left Window in Sanctuary

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0012

13 of 17: Social Hall

Direction of Camera: Facing northeast

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0013

14 of 17: Needlepoint in Social Hall

Direction of Camera: Facing southwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0014

15 of 17: Welcome Sign to Biblical Garden

Direction of Camera: Facing northwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0015

16 of 17: Torah Quotation in Biblical Garden

Direction of Camera: Facing northwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0016

17 of 17: Menorah in Biblical Garden

Direction of Camera: Facing northwest

VA_NewportNews_TempleSinai_0017

Temple Sinai
Name of Property

Newport News, VA
County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Location Map

Temple Sinai

City of Newport News, VA

DHR No. 121-5117

Latitude/Longitude

Coordinates

Latitude: 37.057210

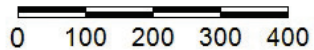
Longitude: -76.481950



Historic Boundary



Feet



1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet

Title: Temple Sinai

Date: 2/7/2015

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

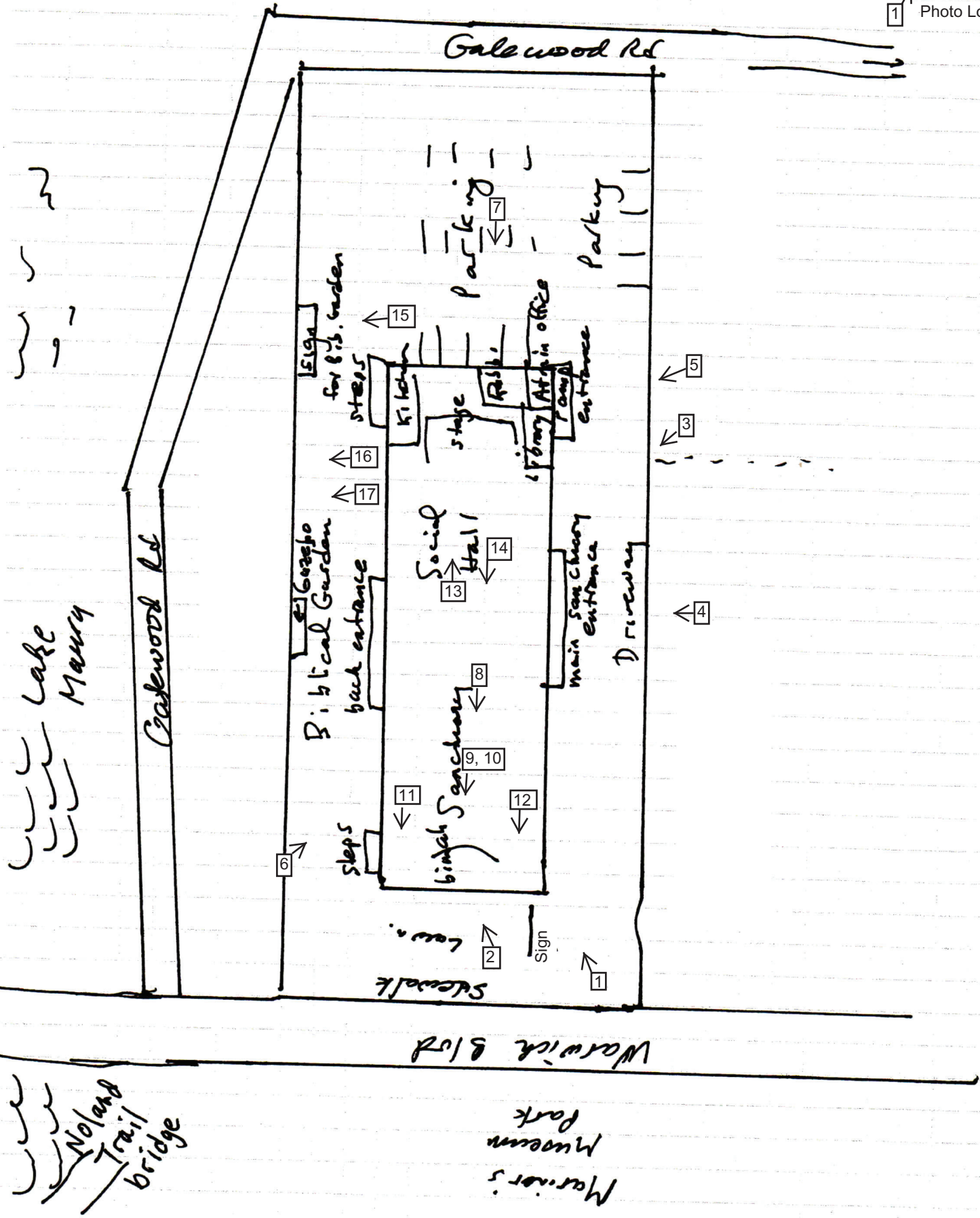
Park
 (Mariner's Museum
 property
 leased by city)
 Lakes

Sketch Map and Photo Key
 Temple Sinai
 City of Newport News, Virginia
 DHR No. 121-5117



List of Resources
 Temple Sinai synagogue -
 Contributing Building
 Biblical Garden - Non-
 contributing Site

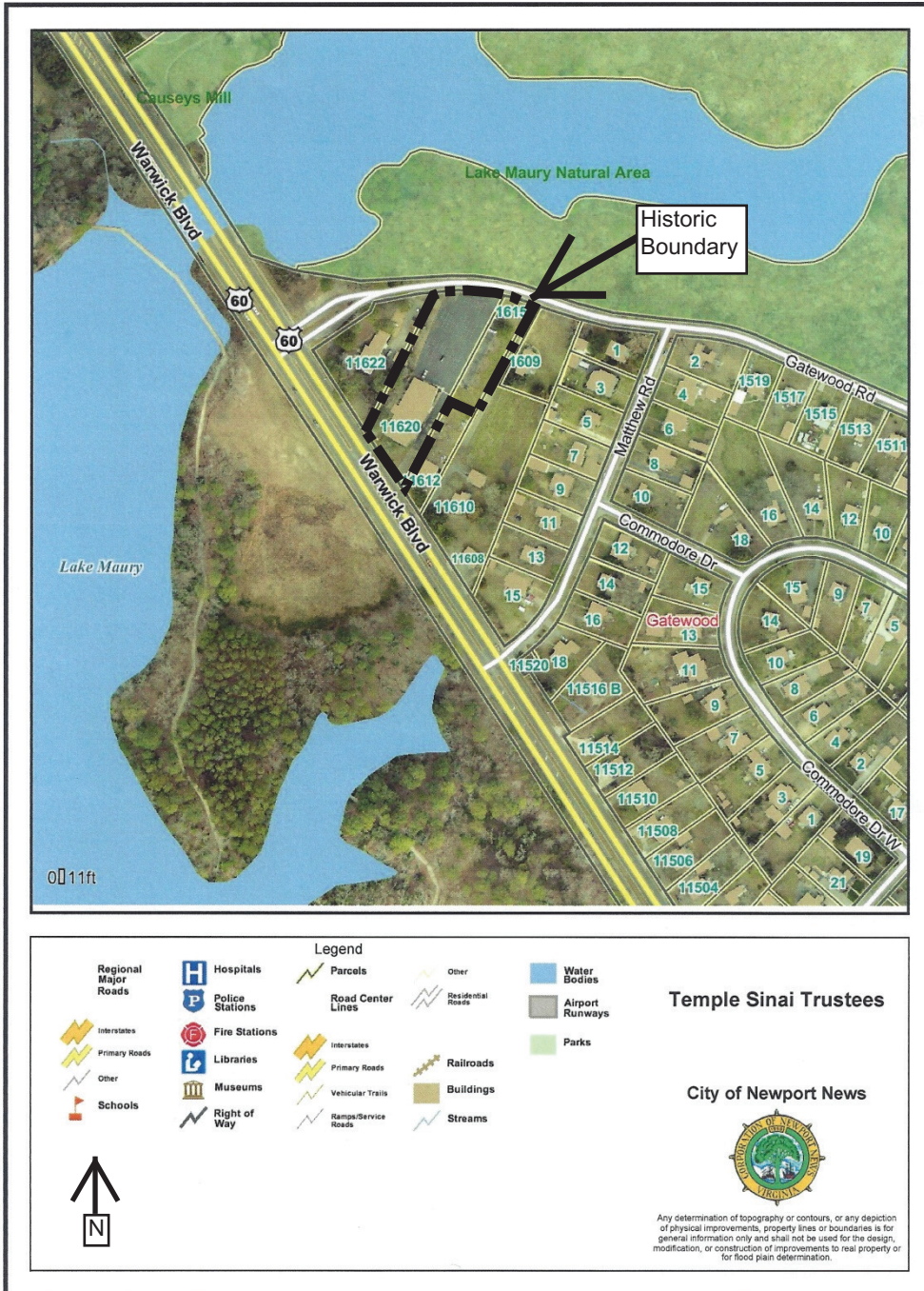
1 Photo Locations



Lake
 Maury

Nolan
 Trail
 bridge

Mariner's
 Museum
 Park



Tax Parcel Map
 Temple Sinai
 11620 Warwick Boulevard
 City of Newport News, VA
 DHR No. 121-5117