United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 13001128 Date Listed: 1/29/2014

Property Name: Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue

County: Rapides State: LA

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper

1-29-2014
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Period of Significance

The Period of Significance is hereby changed to 1953-1961.

This range of dates coincides with the completion of the first and second phases of the building.

The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1124

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.

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DEC 14 2014
NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue
Other names/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 2021 Turner St
City or town: Alexandria State: LA County: Rapides
Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a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:

___A ___B _X_C ___D

Pam Breaux 12-2-13

Signature of certifying official/Title: Pam Breaux, State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

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**

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: 1.29.2014

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Religion: Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Religion: Religious Facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Modern Movement: Wrightian, other, mid-century modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Concrete; Walls: Brick; Roof: Metal, Other, Tar and Gravel; Other: Cast Concrete

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

Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue is a mid-century modern, brick, single story religious facility located in an early to mid-twentieth century residential area about a mile southwest of downtown Alexandria (Rapides Parish). Its mature trees and generous acreage (including roughly an acre side yard) give it something of a park-like setting. The facility was built in two stages: the first from 1952-53 and the second, 1960-1961 (please refer to the sketch map). The synagogue achieved its local architectural significance in the second phase. The architect for both periods was Temple member Max J. Heinberg (of Barron, Heinberg and Brocato). The contractor was Temple member Barnet Brezner. The building has been little altered since its completion and retains its National Register eligibility.

Narrative Description

Architectural Overview:
The 1952-53 construction was of a conventional late International Style with rectilinear openings, brushed aluminum windows and a flat roof. As documented on a July 1953 Sanborn Insurance Co. Map, the building had an overall L-shape footprint, with the inside of the L facing Turner Street. The western end of the L was given over to an auditorium that originally doubled as the worship space and a place for social functions. The other leg of the L provided for classrooms and offices.

The second phase of construction added a second range of classrooms on the north side and the present sanctuary with its foyer. These elements filled in the old L while creating two courtyards (see sketch map).

The 1960-61 sanctuary, a work of abstract sculpture, is a one-of-a-kind expression (as was often seen in mid-twentieth century architect-designed houses of worship). Its design reflects notable trends in mid-century modern architecture, as will be developed in Part 8.

The building is true to its construction materials, an ideal mid-century modernists inherited from English aesthetic moralists of the Victorian Age. It is fashioned of solid brick – pinkish slightly textured brick with finely formed mortar joints. Exposed brick of the same quality forms portions of the interior walls as well. There is no formal finish coat or other ornamental covering. The synagogue, inside and out, proclaims its status as a structure built of brick in an honest, straightforward way.

Turner Street Elevation:
The Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue has a fundamentally horizontal character. Its broad principal elevation faces Turner Street. Here one sees the side of the sanctuary and the long side of the classroom wing – all from the 1960-61 period. The sanctuary is on the left and classroom wing on the right. The classroom wing is screened from the street and visually linked to the sanctuary by a striking screen of redwood-stained vertical boards, approximately one foot apart, suspended from the eaves to a low brick chain wall. In addition to unifying the main elevation, the screen provides an abstract complexity to the composition. Behind much of the screen (marking the classrooms) is a waist-high brick wall with grouped brushed aluminum windows above. An off-center double glass door interrupts the screen to access the sanctuary lobby. At the far right hand end of the screen (on the side of the building opposite the sanctuary) is an entrance porch to the classroom wing with a broad low hip roof and a pronounced overhang (reminiscent of the Prairie Style).

The left hand side of the main elevation culminates dramatically in the side wall of the sanctuary -- a geometrically complex, highly abstract composition in broad angles. The side elevation of the sanctuary is anchored by a broad gabled central mass with a wide overhang. The depth of the overhang increases as the gable height increases, coming to an outward thrusting angle at the top. In effect, the gable roof juts forward dramatically in the manner of a prow. (This quite distinctive angular treatment is repeated

elsewhere in the building.) Clear windows fill the upper portion of the gable; below is an expanse of vertical panels of concrete and colored art glass. (The art glass walls, on both side elevations, will be described more fully in the interior section below.) At the center of the upper clear glass section is a large stylized menorah. To either side of the broad gable is a high brick wall with a band at the top formed of cast concrete blocks. Each block features a bas relief abstract take on the Star of David. The literal Star of David appears occasionally (always at the termination of a band). (While applied ornament was anathema to a modernist architect, one can only surmise that this was acceptable, for it was in the abstract.)

The opposite side of the sanctuary is a mirror image of that facing Turner Street. The broad gable with its art glass panels below faces into an internal courtyard (see sketch map).

At the very end of the sanctuary is the building's most unusual feature – a strongly angular architectural element of complex geometry that rises vertically above the sanctuary main walls. Its purpose is to provide natural light (in a theatrical manner) over the Ark, which houses the Torah scrolls. For ease of identification in this nomination, this feature will be termed a lantern (the closest architectural term available). The lantern culminates in a sharply angled prow (like those of the sanctuary's broad side gables, but notably more acute). Jutting outward below the prow are panels containing rectangles of colored and milk glass. The standing seam metal roofing of the lantern re-enforces the distinctive angle and provides a repeating line that enhances its abstract complexity.

Eastern Elevation:
The eastern elevation is dominated by the rear of the sanctuary, as its massive walls (with no openings) come together at a broad angle to create a stark and strong impression. The roof (the back part of the lantern) registers as a pair of angled planes joined at the same broad angle. The lines of the standing seam metal roof energize the abstract composition. Low masses to either side feature the same wooden screens as on the main elevation. The one to the right houses a small storage area with glass walls. That to the left provides a corridor with glass walls from the sanctuary to the rabbi's office. At the very far left is the end of the original classroom/office/service wing.

Western Elevation:
The western elevation mainly comprises the side elevation of the flat-roofed auditorium/worship space built in 1952-53. At its front corner (toward Turner Street) is the entrance porch with its broad overhang mentioned above. Near the Turner Street side is a three-part band of brushed aluminum windows with multiple horizontal panes. At the right end of the elevation is a lower section that turns the back corner of the building. It has an inset porch, a window with multiple horizontal panes and a low hipped roof sheathed in standing seam metal. One suspects that originally this section had a flat roof, matching that of the auditorium. The present roof may have been added as part of the 1960-61 work.

Rear (Southern) Elevation:
For the most part the rear elevation is strictly utilitarian and not meant to be seen. Its principal features are bands of horizontal pane windows and an inset entrance. A covered connector links to a small rear service building (shown on July 1953 Sanborn Map).

Sanctuary Interior:
Various architectural and artistic devices come together to form the singular space that is the sanctuary interior. Chief among these are the varying ceiling types and heights; the varying textures of the wall surfaces; the art glass panels; and the dramatic effect of the sun trap created by the lantern. Entering the worship space from the lobby one steps into a circulation area running the width of the sanctuary with a glass wall to the right (looking out onto a courtyard). The ceiling is flat and fairly low in comparison to the lofty heights of the great angled roof covering the seating for the congregation (the architectural device of compression and release so beloved and used by Frank Lloyd Wright). A central aisle bisects the fixed auditorium style seating (original). The floor slopes slightly toward the *bimah*, a raised platform where the pulpit is located. The ceiling, as it approaches the *bimah*, is lower than the great angled roof. The

focal point of the *bimah* (and indeed the sanctuary) is the Ark housing the Torah scrolls, in this case a tall wooden cabinet with an angled top.

On each side, the upper gable of the main roof is inscribed with a broad pentagon-shaped window of clear glass. Each window features a large stylized menorah (as previously noted). Below the windows are the previously noted panels of art glass and concrete. The broad sections of art glass panels dominate the side walls of the sanctuary. They are recessed from and set off by contrasting brick walls to each side. Luminous honey-colored wooden wall sections marking the back circulation area and accenting the *bimah* provide additional contrasting color and texture.

The art glass panels provide something of a stained glass effect within the interior, but in a very non-traditional, manifestly abstract way. Each panel consists of strongly irregular glass shards hand-pressed into concrete. The concrete was hand worked and molded (yielding an irregular surface) to show each piece of colored glass to best effect. Colors are basic primary and secondary hues, mainly red, blue, yellow and green. And they are rendered in strong, undiluted hues. The various glass shards and panels were carefully placed so that no one color dominates. Running below each wall of art glass is a terrazzo planter with irregularly placed circles for plants. (The circles are now filled in with a pebble-like substance.)

The effect of diffused sunlight playing on the art glass walls is dazzling and of seemingly endless interest. The analogy of Frank Lloyd Wright's celebrated Beth Sholom Synagogue (1958-59), deemed a "temple of light," comes to mind. Clearly Heinberg's design decisions were based to a notable degree upon making Gemiluth Chassodim a "temple of light" as well.

The sanctuary "temple of light" climax occurs as the rear angled walls ascend above the level of the great gable ceiling, rising to the lantern set well above the main ceiling. As noted in the description of the exterior, this contains a screen of translucent glass divided into rectangles of mainly white with rectangles of various colors and shades intermixed. Here the lantern functions as a veritable sun trap – an unseen element casting a diffuse glow on the rear walls of the sanctuary and the Ark, in a variety of softly radiant tones – a truly celestial effect.

Other noteworthy features of the sanctuary interior include a terrazzo floor in the front circulation area; period "sputnik" hanging light fixtures in the front circulation space; hanging light fixtures in the main worship space with a Star of David motif; great wooden doors with elongated wooden handles topped by a Star of David; tall original wooden screens framing the Ark and short matching wooden screens at the front of the *bimah*; and a hanging light fixture above the Ark representing eternal light.

Sanctuary Lobby:
One enters the sanctuary via a lobby with brick walls and terrazzo floors. Large wooden double doors open into the sanctuary. Like others in the building, the doors feature large vertical pulls topped by a Star of David.

Auditorium Interior:
The 1952-53 auditorium is plain and functional with the exception of its stage. The stage and wooden-faced proscenium project forward of the rear wall, and above and below are recessed strips of light color plaster. The overall effect is that of a free-standing object or piece of furniture. Due to the deep recess below, the stage appears to float over the auditorium's floor. This treatment is related to the International Style's concept of an enclosed mass floating above a landscape.

Miscellaneous Interiors:
The only notable interiors are those of the sanctuary and auditorium (in particular the former). Elsewhere the interiors are functional and plain in character, with hallways accessing simple offices and classrooms.

Alterations:

The 1960-61 construction survives completely intact, including light fixtures, door pulls, etc. There have been a few instances of painted brick walls in the 1952-53 section. Thus, the synagogue has complete integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials.

8. 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.
- [x] 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.)

- [x] 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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1960-61

Significant Dates
1960-61

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Max J. Heinberg; Baroon, Heinberg & Brocato (architect)
Barnet Brezner (contractor)

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.)

The Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue is of local architectural significance (Criterion C) because the 1960-61 portion is a work of great distinction in the City of Alexandria's heritage of mid-century modern 50-plus year old buildings. The sanctuary is exemplary of two major trends in architecture of the period: abstractionism and the veneration of Frank Lloyd Wright. It is Alexandria's most abstract piece of architecture from the period and a particularly notable example of Wrightian influence. The period of significance corresponds to the second period of construction: 1960-61.

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

Alexandria Historical Background:
Located on the Red River in the center of the state, Alexandria was founded in 1807 by Alexander Fulton (originally from Pennsylvania) and his business partner, Thomas Harris Maddox. It was incorporated as a town in 1819. Despite this relatively early date, Alexandria was a small community hugging the banks of the Red River on the eve of the Civil War (population 1,461 in 1860). Set afire by Union troops in May 1864, the town recovered slowly (population 1,800 in 1880). The period of 1890 to 1910 saw the greatest population growth in Alexandria's history. The population increased almost 100% in each of these decades, arriving at 11,213 in 1910. Railroads (and what they made possible) were responsible for this explosive development. With its central location within the state, the town emerged as a railroad hub, which made possible the huge lumber boom of the 1890 to c.1920 period. Located amidst a vast region of virgin pine, Alexandria had some seventy sawmills within a forty mile radius.

The military became the town's economic foundation beginning in August and September of 1941 when massive United States Army training exercises were conducted in the area in preparation for probable involvement in WWII. Some half million soldiers engaged in mock battles in what has come to be known as the Louisiana Maneuvers. Numerous huge military camps sprouted around Alexandria. Multi-lane MacArthur Drive, a bypass, opened in 1942 to facilitate tank movement. But with the end of the war, the

temporary military camps were closed. In the generally booming decade of the 1950s (for America as a whole), the city's population grew by only 15%, reaching 40,279 in 1960. In 1967, the city's mayor lamented that during the past twenty years, his town had been surpassed in size (within the state) by first Monroe and then Lafayette.

While the City of Alexandria did not experience the explosive population growth of other American cities in the post-war boom years, the population nonetheless increased (by about 5,500 in the 1950s). Ranch house subdivisions appeared on the edges of the city, generally to the southwest of the old core, and businesses and institutions began to move to the suburbs.

Alexandria's Mid-Century Modern Architecture:

Like cities across the country, Alexandria experienced significant building activity in the two decades following World War II, and the vast majority of this sizable legacy remains. Some of it was documented by the authors within the last year as they prepared a residential historic district nomination now listed on the National Register. To augment the knowledge gained from this fieldwork, the authors subsequently conducted a windshield tour of the city's post-war architecture with the guidance of local preservationists.

Among the hundreds of buildings that survive from the period, a small but notable number can be termed mid-century modern. (Alexandrians in particular seem to have embraced residential modernism in the post-war years more readily than their counterparts in most other cities in the state.) The overall legacy of mid-century modern, fifty-plus year old buildings includes the following general property types: 15 to 20 contemporary houses in various permutations (classic flat roofed, Eichler style, etc.); ranch houses that feature some modernist elements (for example, windows that turn the corner); dozens of small free-standing commercial and professional buildings; and at least three religious-related facilities. The small free-standing commercial and professional buildings are almost all one story and for the most part undistinguished. All appear to be "builder jobs," with the exception of the architect-designed Guaranty Bank, Park Avenue Branch (National Register, 2013). To complete the picture, it should be noted that there are no steel and glass skyscrapers in the city.

Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue:

The Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue ranks as a superlative work within this legacy. As noted above, it exemplifies significant aspects of American modernism of the era.

Firstly, there is the idea of abstraction (a much cherished credo of the day). Most of the synagogue's character-defining and architecturally significant elements are geometric abstractions. Chief among these are the lantern, with its distinctive sharp angles re-enforced by the seams in the roof; the redwood stained exterior board screens; the bands of abstract takes on the Star of David; and the colored art glass sanctuary walls that rely upon shards of glass intangible in form.

Secondly, the synagogue's design derives significant visual force and identity from architectural forms associated closely with Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly in his significant and quite distinctive post-war output. The design makes frequent use of the broad angle -- a signature of Wright's later period (in contrast to the right angle of most modern architecture). At the synagogue, the broad angle can be seen in the prow-like thrusting forward of the sanctuary roof gables, in the way the sanctuary rear walls come together, in the pointed forward thrust of the *bimah* and in the roof structure of the Ark. Finally, and perhaps most notably, there is the thrusting acute angular roof of the lantern and its glass screen, which bears a striking resemblance to the one-of-a-kind front of Wright's Unitarian Meeting House (1947) in Madison, Wisconsin. (It is quite believable that the synagogue's architect, Max Heinberg, saw the design and was inspired by it. The building was widely publicized.)

The foregoing is of considerable consequence because veneration of Frank Lloyd Wright was a major mid-twentieth century phenomenon in architectural circles. Architectural historians refer to the post-war years as Wright's "Second Golden Age." There were numerous major commissions, books, and exhibitions, culminating with "Sixty Years of Living Architecture." "Sixty Years" was an exhibition

celebrating the American architectural genius that traveled to various European and American cities between 1951 and 1956. Wright died in 1959, two months shy of his ninety-second birthday, precipitating even more retrospectives on his long and remarkable career.

The veneration also took the form of architects working self-consciously in what might be called "the manner of" Frank Lloyd Wright. Some were students at Taliesen West. Even more were architects around the country who admired Wright and were not in the least bit embarrassed to admit that their work was inspired by his many buildings. The most notable of Wright's commissions in the post-war years were widely publicized – from trade publications such as *The Architectural Record* to mainstream magazines such as *Time.*

Of the handful of Wrightian-influenced designs from among Alexandria's post-war architectural legacy, the Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue is arguably the largest and most distinctive. Other Wrightian-influenced fifty plus year old buildings in the city include several residences and the Guaranty Bank, Park Avenue Branch (National Register, 2013). The residences in question are for the most part not architect-designed and generally exhibit the low slung, broad overhang of Wright's Prairie School work. In the most notable of them, 711 Kimball, the architect, Philip Roach, was a self-avowed devotee of Wright's. This building and Guaranty Bank are the only known fifty plus year old buildings in the city that exhibit influences of Wright's highly distinctive post-war work. While the bank (a rather small one story building) is quite notable, it pales in comparison to the geometric complexity of the synagogue.

The Wrightian broad angle, in the various applications seen at Gemiluth Chassodim, gives the building a more varied and interesting visual character than could have been achieved with a purely rectilinear design. This, in combination with the non-representational colored glass windows, the exterior wood screens, the repeating Star of David abstraction and the build-up of angled forms crowned by the lantern, make for a *tour-de-force* in geometric abstractionism. Within the context of Alexandria's historic post-war modernism, Gemiluth Chassodim is a one-of-a-kind architectural statement.

Max J. Heinberg:

Regrettably, beyond basic biographical facts, little is known of the architect for the synagogue, Max J. Heinberg of Barron, Heinberg & Brocato. He and his partners are deceased, and there are no known written records explaining the inspiration for the design. Heinberg was born in 1906 and graduated with a bachelor of architecture degree from Tulane University in 1928. In 1943, he and Errol Barron organized the firm that came to be known as Barron, Heinberg & Brocato. The firm's post-war work has not been systematically surveyed, nor have there been any scholarly studies of it. The authors of this document, having seen several examples from the 1950s and '60s, would categorize the output as wide-ranging in its interpretation of modernism. The firm was definitely prominent within central Louisiana, receiving numerous commissions for major institutional buildings (for example, the 1964 Alexandria City Hall). The firm still exists today under the same name.

The New American Synagogue:

The Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue embodies the revolutionary new approach to the design of synagogues that took hold across the Jewish community after World War II. Traditionally, American synagogues followed the popular styles of the day. During the early twentieth century they very much tended to follow the historic revival styles then in vogue – for instance, Colonial in the east, Mission Style in California. The only major variant was a low-key Byzantine Style meant to evoke the general Middle Eastern origins of Judaism. All of that changed in the post-war era.

The explosive growth of cities and suburbs in those years created a pressing need to construct new synagogues to serve expanding and new congregations. In June 1947 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations sponsored a symposium in New York titled "An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow." This provided an ideal forum for architects, artists, and rabbis to share their views on what the new generation of synagogues should look like. The dialogue became a movement with Percival Goodman (an American Jew) and ex-patriot German Jewish architect Eric Mendelsohn as its leading

lights. Both architects did much to purvey and publicize the cause of modernism for synagogue complexes. Goodman was particularly prolific, being responsible for scores of modern synagogues, mainly in the Northeast.

Mendelsohn had been a successful cutting edge architect in Europe prior to World War II. Best remembered for his 1919 design for the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, Germany, he was a visionary designer and an evangelical modernist. He brought a powerful vision to the question of the American synagogue. He wrote, "Our temples should reject the anachronistic representation of God as a feudal lord, should apply contemporary building styles and architectural conceptions to make God's house part of the democratic community in which he[sic.] dwells. Temples should reject in their interiors the mystifying darkness of an illiterate time and should place their faith in the light of day."

The "temple of light" and of modernist abstraction crystallized, and carried the day, as the ideal image of a modern American synagogue. And it created a new generation of synagogues in which modernism was embraced perhaps more pervasively than in any other American religious denomination.

Jewish scholar Samuel D. Gruber profiles numerous notable post-war synagogues in his book *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community* (2003), accompanied by stunning photographs by Paul Rocheleau. The photos in particular depict geometric abstraction, the widespread use of colored art glass in bold contrasts, and in particular, the dramatic use of light. All of these elements are present at the supremely modern Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue.

Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim History:
Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim traces its history to the establishment in 1852 of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Rapides Parish, formed to provide for a Jewish cemetery. The first synagogue was completed in 1871, the second in 1908. Both were located in downtown Alexandria. The congregation purchased the land upon which the present synagogue is located in 1946. Gemiluth Chassodim means "acts of loving kindness."

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Barron, Heinberg and Brocato (Max Heinberg, designer). Blueprints in possession of Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, one set dated June 24, 1952/revised October 14, 1952, the other dated February 1960.

Biebel, Anne E., *et.al.* First Uniterian Society Meeting House National Historic Landmark Nomination 2002.

Cooperman, Emily T. Beth Sholom Synagogue National Historic Landmark Nomination, 2006.

Gruber, Samuel D. *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community.* New York: Rizzoli, 2003.

Hess, Alan. *Frank Lloyd Wright Mid-Century Modern.* New York: Rizzoli, 2007.

Pfeiffer, Bruce Brooks and Gossel, Peter. *Frank Lloyd Wright Complete Works: Volume 3, 1943-1959.* Koln, Germany: Taschen, 2009.

Sanborn Insurance Co. Map, Alexandria. July 1953.

Silver, Harry. Phone interview with Donna Fricker April 16, 2013. Mr. Silver was on the building committee for the 1960-61 construction.

Windshield Survey. Alexandria, Louisiana Mid-Twentieth Century Modern Architecture. March 2013.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a

____ 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:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____N/A_____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ____approximately 2.5 acres_____

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: 31.298056	Longitude: -92.454958
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:

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

Legal boundary description: "A certain parcel or tract of land, together with all rights, ways and privileges thereunto belonging, being, lying and situated in the City of Alexandria, Parish of Rapides, State of Louisiana, and being more particularly described thus: (1) Lots Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Square Number 4. (2) Lots Numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Square Number 5. (3) Portions of Lots 9 and 10 of Square 5 lying immediately in rear of Lot 3 of Square 5, and fronting 50.20 feet on the rear boundary of Lot 3 of Square 5; bounded on side nearer Turner Street by Lot 3 of Square 5, on side away from Turner Street by part of Thornton Place, and on side nearer to Lee Street by portions of Lots 9 and 10 of Square 5, sold by Guaranty Realty Corporation and Arnold LeBlanc to John W. Hickman by deed dated Oct. 5, 1939, recorded Oct. 20, 1939 in Con. Bk. 240 page 549, and by deed dated Oct. 5, 1939, recorded Oct. 20, 1939 in Con. Bk. 238 page 643, records of Rapides Parish, Louisiana."

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries follow the property lines of the parcel of land historically associated with the nominated building. Note: The above are contiguous pieces of land. Thornton Street originally separated the 2 city blocks in question (Squares 4 & 5). Its location corresponds to the present synagogue driveway on the eastern side of the facility.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jonathan and Donna Fricker
organization: Fricker Historic Preservation Services, LLC
street & number: 998 Stanford Ave, #203
city or town: Baton Rouge state: LA zip code: 70808
e-mail jonathanfricker@gmail.com
telephone: 225-246-7901
date: May 2013

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.)

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: Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: Rapides **State:** LA

Photographer: Donna Fricker

Date Photographed: March 27, 2013

Location of Digital Images: LA SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 21
Camera facing southwest
Turner Street (main) façade

Photo 2 of 21
Camera facing west/southwest
Rear of sanctuary

Photo 3 of 21
Camera facing south/southeast
Lantern

Photo 4 of 21
Camera facing south/southeast
Lantern

Photo 5 of 21
Camera facing southeast
Side (Turner St.) elevation of sanctuary

Photo 6 of 21
Camera facing southwest
Entrance and classroom wing facing Turner St.

Photo 7 of 21
Camera facing west
Suspended screen facing Turner St.

Photo 8 of 21
Camera facing northeast
Western (side) elevation

Photo 9 of 21
Camera facing northeast
Western (side) elevation

Photo 10 of 21
Camera facing east
Rear elevation

Photo 11 of 21
Camera facing northeast
Rear elevation

Photo 12 of 21
Camera facing northeast
Side of sanctuary as seen from interior courtyard

Photo 13 of 21
Camer facing south
Interior -- front of sanctuary

Photo 14 of 21
Camera facing east
Sanctuary interior

Photo 15 of 21
Camera facing east
Sanctuary interior (looking toward *bimah*)

Photo 16 of 21
Camera facing north
Sanctuary interior (lantern)

Photo 17 of 21
Camera facing northwest
Sanctuary interior

Photo 18 of 21
Camera facing north
Abstract art glass detail

Photo 19 of 21
Camera facing north
Abstract art glass detail

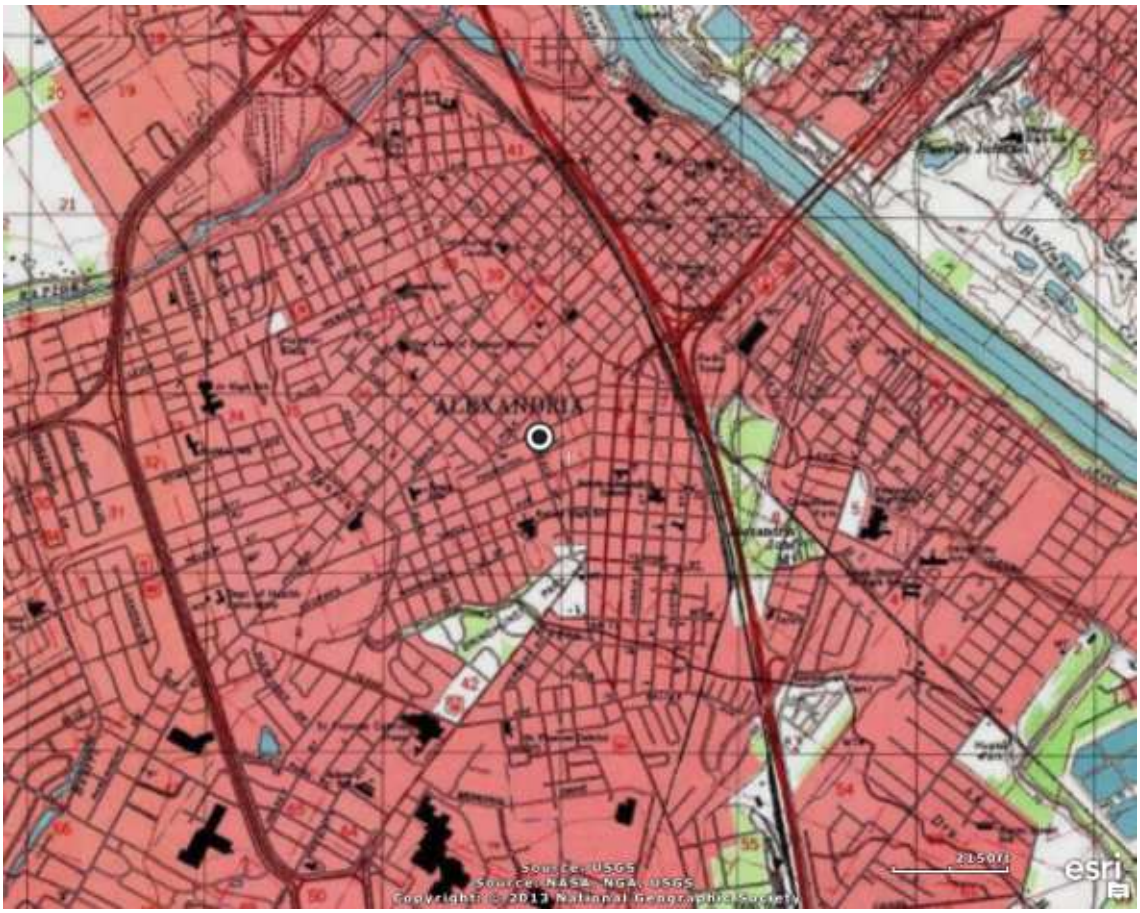
Photo 20 of 21
Camera facing northeast
Planter ledge below art glass windows

Photo 21 of 21
Camera facing south/southeast
Auditorium (1952-1953 construction)

Figure 1. Black and White historic photo of the synagogue taken c. 1962.

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.

Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue, Rapides Parish, LA



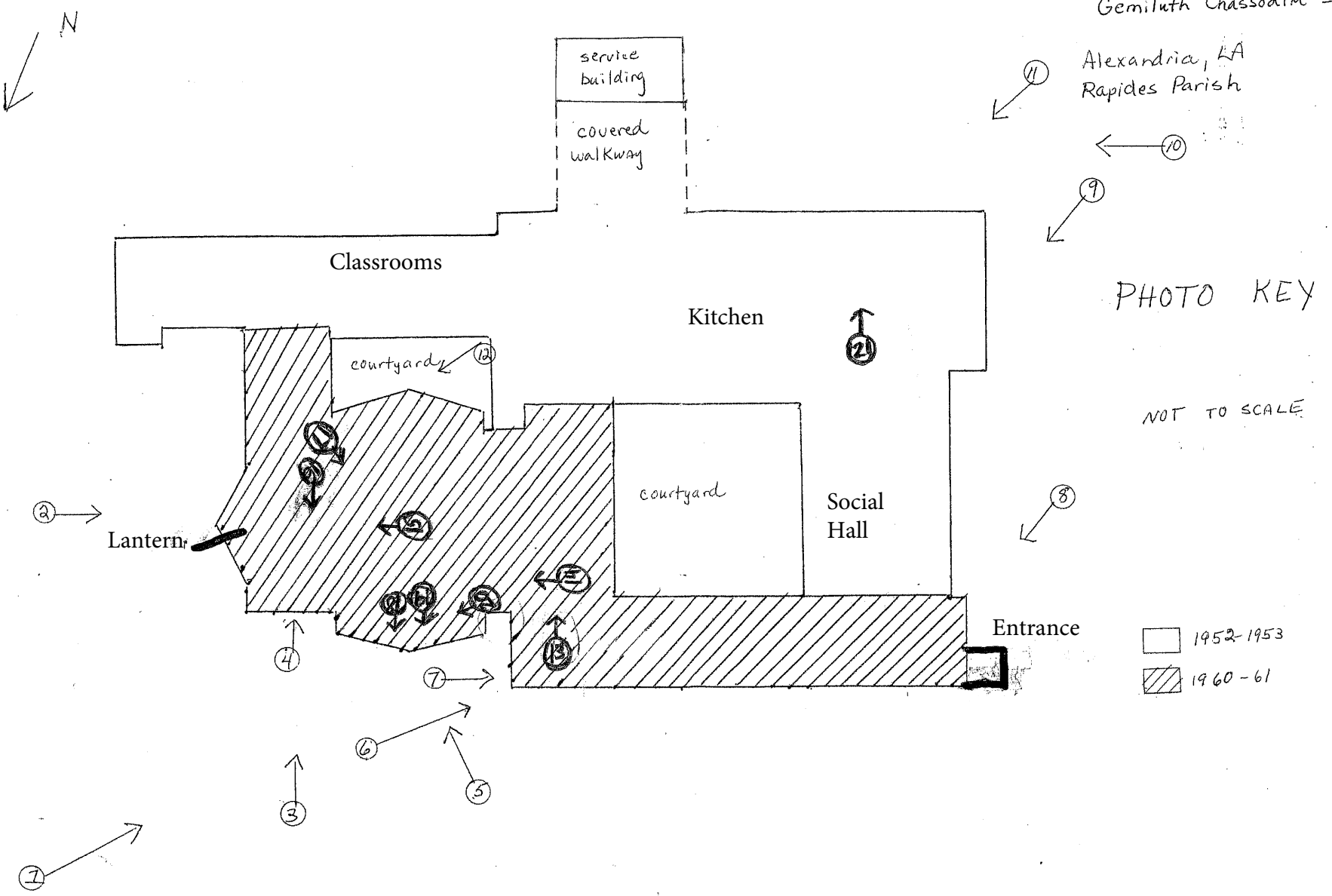
Latitude: 31.298056 Longitude: -92.454958

Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue, Rapides Parish, LA

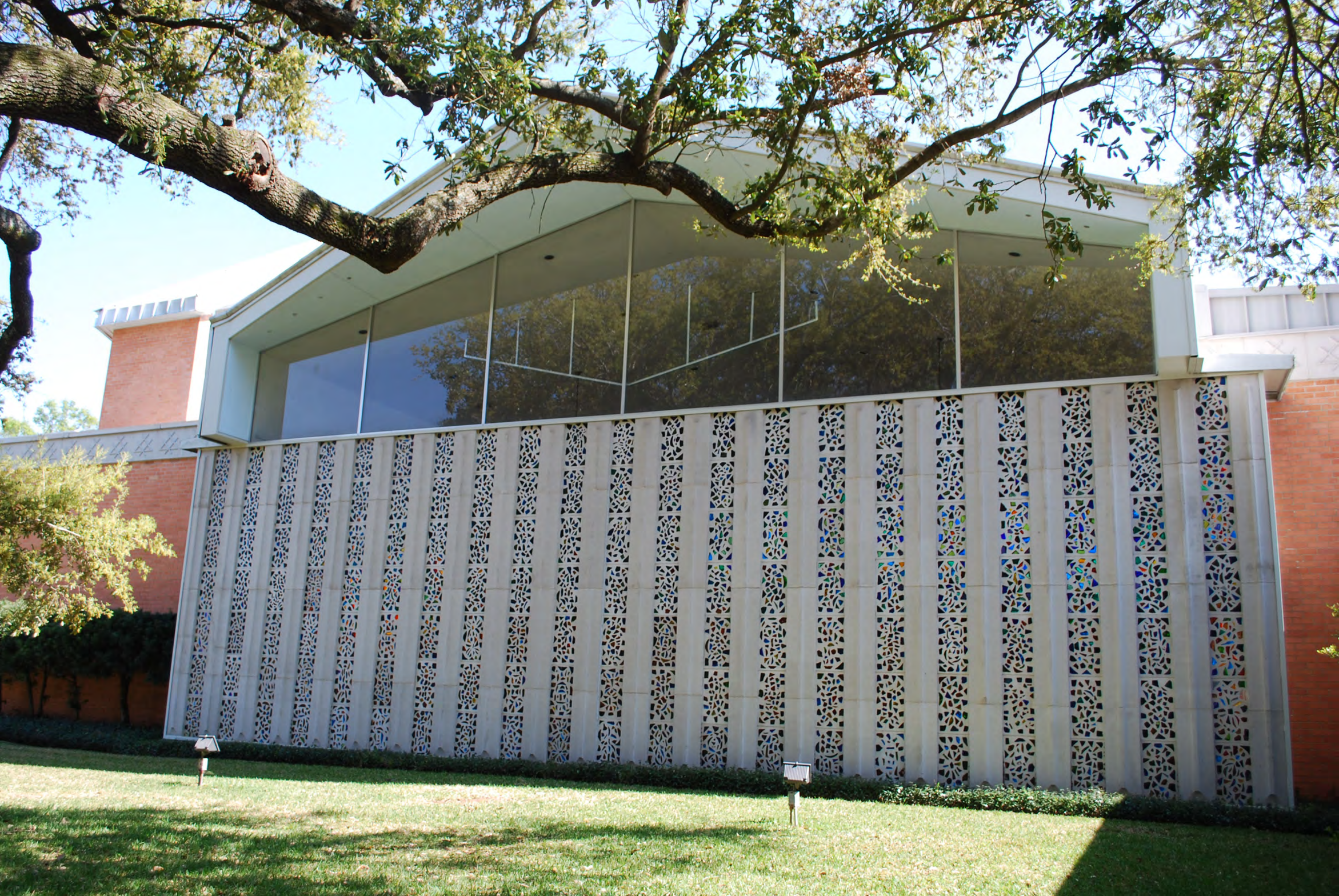
Latitude: 31.298056 Longitude: -92.454958

Gemiluth Chassodim Synagogue

Alexandria, LA
Rapides Parish



RABBI



EXIT

EXIT