

The Birth of Ohr Shalom Synagogue

The historical dedication event on June 5, 2011, marked the official entrance into the newly renovated building at Third and Laurel, home to the congregation of Ohr Shalom Synagogue. But the backstory of this event originated long before, beginning with the merging of several distinct community synagogues that unified our diverse congregation.

An eclectic and multicultural congregation, Ohr Shalom is an amalgamation of members from three different groups:

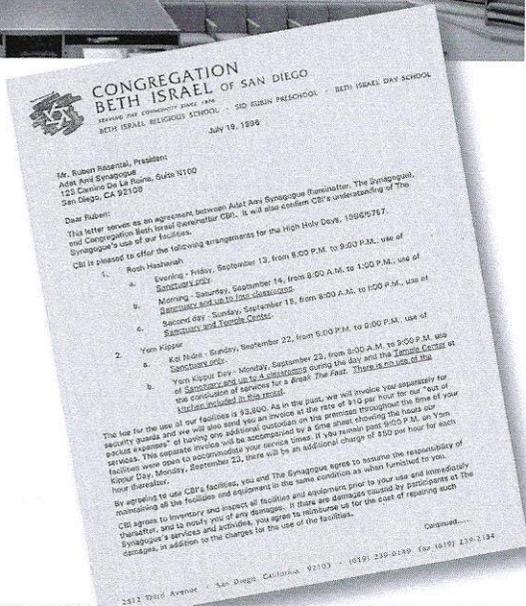
- (1) Or El: Many of our members joined together with a visionary group of Latin families who began a small synagogue (*havurah*) to maintain community in San Diego. Among the original founders of this group was Luis Maizel,

also a major contributor to the renovation committee. This group met every Shabbat at Third and Laurel, beginning years ago. Many of the same families who created Or El contribute the same love of Judaism and community that found its expression at Or El here at Ohr Shalom.

- (2) Adat Ami: In 1989, the families who created Or El – along with other families looking for the same warmth of a small, traditional synagogue – joined together to create Adat Ami. The membership grew, keeping the original intimacy and *ruach*, despite the lack of a permanent residence. Adat Ami kept faith that one day they would find a home. During that time the congregation continued to use the building at Third & Laurel for High Holy Day services.

A PAGE IN HISTORY

September 1996 – A contract is written between Adat Ami and Beth Israel to rent their space for the High Holy Days. The cost: \$3,800.00.



Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

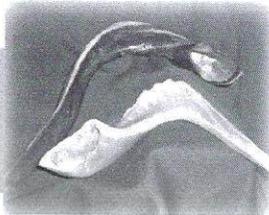
Handicap/stroller access and bimah access needed. – Jennifer Meltzer

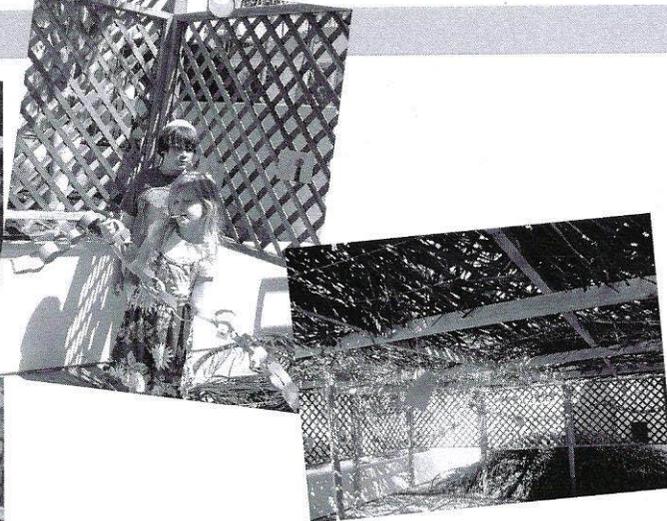
Renovation: A ramp was added to the front of the building with entry through the office entrance. A lift was constructed for wheelchair/disabled access to the bimah.

- (3) Beth Tefilah: For almost 40 years, Beth Tefilah provided a traditional and loving synagogue community in its wonderful 69th Street home in East San Diego. In 1999, Ohr Shalom was born through the *marriage* of Beth Tefilah and Adat Ami. Beth Tefilah families continue to shape Ohr Shalom into the fine tradition of its predecessor.

Shanah Tovah to our Ohr Shalom Family!

Board of Directors





Ohr Shalom comes together

As Ohr Shalom has grown, more and more of our families remember the various congregational histories and experiences as the journey of *our* synagogue, even though these were not necessarily the personal experiences of our current Ohr Shalom members. Our newer members have joined for the same warmth created by the families from Or El, Adat Ami, and Beth Tefilah, and are committed to the same ideals of a nurturing community in a traditional Jewish context. In this way, the *ruach* of those original three communities lives on in our current Ohr Shalom community today, consisting of 352 membership units.

Regardless how each of us became a part of Ohr Shalom, we all recognize the incredible blessing of having San Diego's most historic active Jewish building as our synagogue and our home. This treasured, sacred space is the place where we will celebrate many *simchas*, where we will reaffirm our commitment to acts of *chesed* (loving kindness) and *tzedakah*. And it is a place where our renovation committee has assured us that the new generation will have space to grow and flourish in the ideals of our faith.

A PAGE IN HISTORY

October 2010 was the first Shabbat Kehillatit in our newly renovated building and Social Hall and honored Morris Casuto on his retirement from the ADL. Service was led by dozens of children in tune with Jennifer Meltzer and Zeji Ozeri. Approximately 180 people attended the delicious dinner which included salmon, veggies and chocolate cake. Thank you to our chefs Rachel and Salomon Lipowsky, and the rest of the Kehillatit team Matt Razinsky, Marci Prag, Barbara Haislip, Jim Lewis and Rene Beiza.

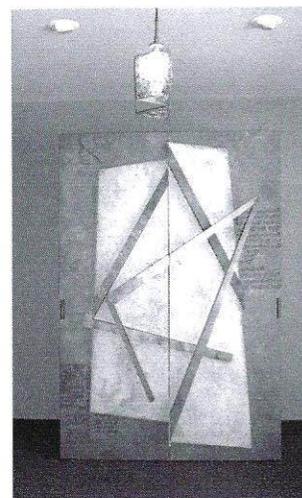


Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

We need permanent chairs for the Beit Midrash. – Pam and Steve Auerbach

- Renovation: Although not a part of the renovation project, 54 chairs were purchased specifically for the renovated Beit Midrash and 30 more were donated.



The Beit Midrash Ark



NATHANIEL PICK - October 22, 2011.
Mazal Tov on your Bar Mitzvah.
With love, Mom and Dad.
Catherine and Daniel Pick

SHOSHANNAH BUNTON - October 29, 2011
Mazal Tov on your Bat Mitzvah.
With all our love,
Roger and Liliane Zouari, and Vanina Bunton



History of the Building at Third and Laurel

Eighty years ago, Beth Israel, San Diego's oldest congregation, decided it was time to move uptown. Having been in the same building for almost forty years, they looked to the growing communities north of downtown, all the way up to Bankers Hill. (Beth Israel's original building is now located in Heritage Park in Old Town.)

They purchased land and set about making their dream a reality. They hired one of San Diego's preeminent architects, William Wheeler, who had just completed

his own design for downtown's Balboa Theater. Wheeler's plan for Third and Laurel incorporated a classic Moorish style dome, suspended high above a majestic sanctuary, with stained glass flanking the sides of the main sanctuary, and seating for over 500 worshippers.

Over the course of the next eight decades the building at Third and Laurel, which was originally built for one congregation, became an architectural symbol for the San Diego's Jewish community. Very few San Diego citizens, Jewish or not, remember

San Diego without the historic building at Third and Laurel. A plaque outside the main building is still inscribed "Beth Israel, erected 1926."

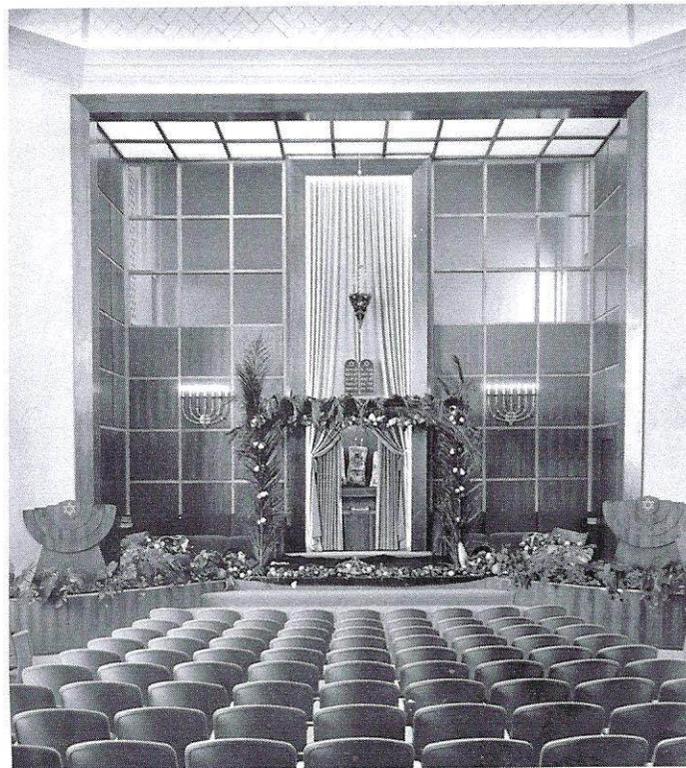
After 75 years, the congregation that built and lived at Third and Laurel decided it was time to sell the property and move north to La Jolla. This presented Ohr Shalom with the opportunity to come home to a historic building that embodied traditional San Diego.

A PAGE IN HISTORY

November 2003 – A community that cares.

At a time that San Diego County was living the hardest fires in its history, Rabbi Meltzer and Raulf Polichar announced that Ohr Shalom would provide help, food and shelter to people in need. Volunteers prepared food bags and brought over 100 meals to local police and firefighters.

Original Beth Israel building in 1926.



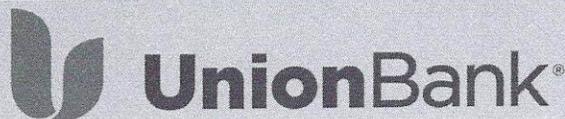
Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

I would like to see new lights and decor for the social hall and upgrade the AC/heating systems. - Ana Grinberg

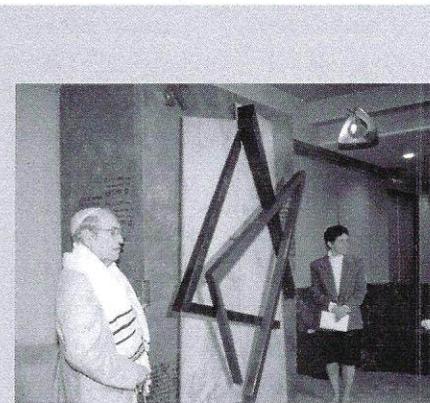
- Renovation: New lights, glass doors, skylight, new paint and color scheme brightened up the social halls. Ceiling "boxes" (from two offices on the second floor) were totally removed which opened up the entire area. New AC/Heating systems were installed throughout building.

Original Beth Israel Sanctuary, Bimah and Choir Loft. Photo courtesy of Stan Schwartz / San Diego Jewish Historical Society



INVEST IN YOU!
Randy Truax, Vice President/Manager

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A PAGE IN HISTORY

December 1993 – Adat Ami moved from Camino del Rio South to Camino de la Reina during the celebration of Chanukah.

Tikkun Olam Committee

In 2000, a group from our congregation, calling themselves the Tikkun Olam Committee, started working with Anthony Block and Peter Janopaul of the JP Block Company, the new owners of the building.

The committee defined itself in these terms by framing their goal to preserve the building for its original intent – a Jewish religious and cultural center and synagogue. In Hebrew, the words *Tikkun Olam* literally mean, “to repair the world.”

The Tikkun Olam Committee members and the principals of JP Block were able to structure an arrangement by which the Sanctuary, Social Hall, and the adjacent school building would ultimately be deeded to the congregation.

Without the generosity and commitment of this group, we would not be in this building today. Our synagogue life was revitalized and re-energized as a result of this transaction. As a congregation, we are proud and grateful for the opportunity to grow as a community and accept the responsibility of maintaining the traditions that have been occurring within the walls of this building since 1925.



Chanukah 2010 at Ohr Shalom



Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

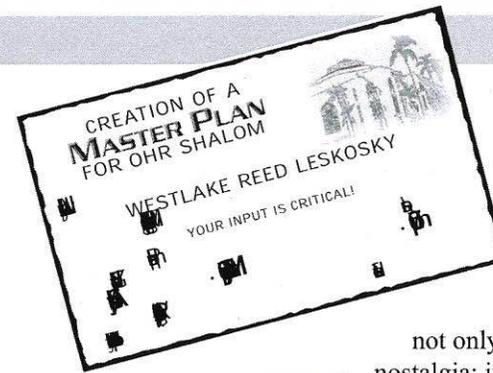
A larger lobby would be nice. Whether coming or going, the lobby becomes a bottleneck. – Flo Semelmaker

- Renovation: A beautiful brand new lobby with glass doors was constructed that would prevent the bottleneck from the sanctuary to the social hall.



Happy Birthday to Michael Golembesky and to all those at Ohr Shalom celebrating a December Birthday.

The Golembesky Family – Leah, Rachael, Sarah and Michael David



The Master Plan

By 2002 the building became the permanent home of Ohr Shalom. But it became increasingly clear that the years had

not only steeped the building in nostalgia; it had also taken a toll on the physical structure and operating systems. Modernization efforts of the 1950s renovation had obscured many of the stained glass windows and other additions, which further hid the building's original architectural beauty. The skeletal framework revealed its fragility, and the need for renovation was imminent.

The building withstood 85 years of use without major structural damage from natural forces such as earthquakes, storms, fires, and floods. The structure was in dire need of repair and infrastructure to ensure stability in case of inclement weather or natural disaster. A modified seismic strengthening of the Sanctuary and Social Hall was necessary for safety and security.

The Board of Directors realized that it would soon be time to take steps to deal with some of the problems that came with occupying an old building. Although efforts to patch a leaky roof and other problems were made, it was obvious that major renovating was needed.

A PAGE IN HISTORY

January 1997 – At the time of the year when the Jewish world celebrates Tu B'Shevat, the ancient holiday of the trees, Adat Ami Synagogue planted 136 trees in Jerusalem.

Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

The stage gets little use and could be removed. – Stella Salzmann

- Renovation: The stage was removed in the Social Hall adding extra space for a variety of uses.



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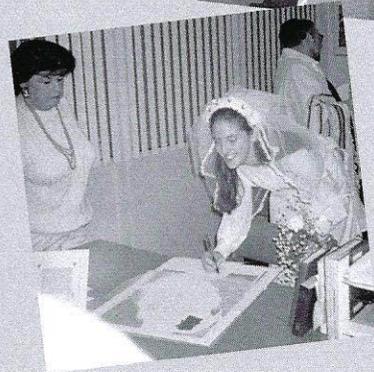


A PAGE IN HISTORY

February 1999 – Historic week for our congregation. Beth Tefilah and Adat Ami merge and become one under their new name: Ohr Shalom.

I sincerely hope that we live up to our new name and become a beacon of peace both externally and internally."

– **George Kaplan,**
Adat Ami President
at Shtetl Wedding
February 1999



Data Gathering and Focus Groups

In 2006, Ohr Shalom commissioned Westlake Reed Leskosky to assess the condition of the Synagogue and make recommendations for spatial needs and systems necessary to make the facility fully functional. Their process consisted of four phases: Data Gathering, Data Analysis and Synthesis, Draft Report and Final Report.

A questionnaire was sent to the entire congregation to find out what was most desired. Focus Group Meetings were held, dividing the membership into several groups, all of which had different needs. The individual groups consisted of young families, cooks and users of the kitchen, adult education, and ritual and minyan attendees. Congregants were encouraged to voice their opinions and share their vision for Ohr Shalom's future.

A team of specialists – which included structural and seismic engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers, and acoustical and cost control experts – conducted a visual assessment of the building and studied existing drawings. They gathered data, talked to our staff and congregants, and drafted a document that outlined Guiding Principles and Renovation Goals for the Master Plan.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. We are renovating for common use of congregation – not necessarily for major events and High Holy Days
2. Renovations should provide flexibility for meeting future needs and growth
3. Facilities should be as accessible as possible, while recognizing that full ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance is unfeasible due to historic design
4. Maintain the historic characters and major design features
5. Improve security

מזל טוב

Congratulations to Daniel on his Bar Mitzvah! Mazal Tov!

February 18, 2012 • 25 Shevat 5772

We are very proud of you and we love you.

– **Mama, Daddy and Alexander**



Social Hall

The Renovation Planning

The efforts to raise funds for the renovation commenced in (2006). To accomplish all that was needed would cost approximately \$4 million. Ohr Shalom began their Capital Campaign to pay for the renovation so the congregation would not carry the entire financial burden.

In 2008, under the leadership of Susie Meltzer, Jaime Brener, Raulf Polichar, and David Shteremberg, a group of members came together to form a Renovation Committee to restore the building and make it more suitable to the congregations' needs. We were aided in this effort by the team at Zagrodnik + Thomas Architects. We were also fortunate to engage Swinerton Builders as our primary contractor. Mark Payne

and his outstanding Swinerton staff performed as exemplary professionals in what was clearly a labor of love for this special building. Their onsite team was managed by Lauren Nunnally and supervised by Greg McFaul with respect for the job, the schedule, and the ongoing needs of our congregation. Pete Cox acted as our project manager, and he worked seamlessly with the Swinerton team to steer the job on a daily basis through all the unexpected problems customary with a major renovation of an 85-year-old building.

Tony Court, who had initially climbed through all the crawl spaces and hidden areas in the building during the original SOHO preservation effort, worked tirelessly as our structural engineer to insure that the renovated building would be safe and sound for at least another 85 years.

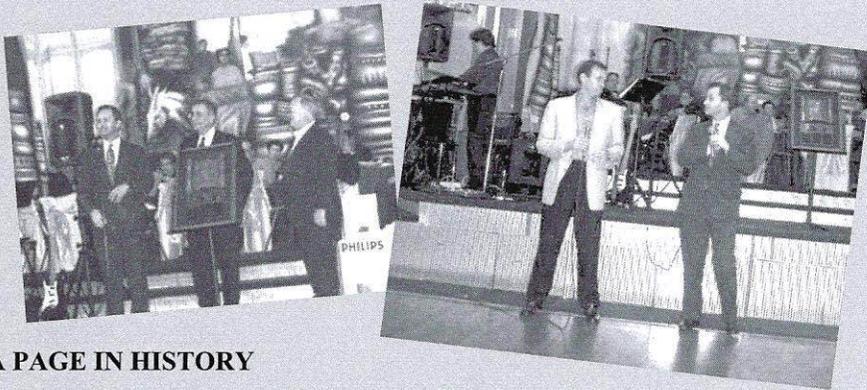
A group of 20 volunteers from our congregation formed the Renovation Committee and took on many of the detailed tasks involved in raising funds, specifying systems, defining, and finishing the critical functions we had wanted to include in our upgrade. Throughout the renovation process, these members held meetings once or twice a week with consultant Pete Cox to get updates on the construction progress.

Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

Acoustics needs much improvement in the Social Hall. Temperature control is also an issue. – Debbie Reid

- Renovation: High-tech AC/heating systems were installed throughout the entire building and beautiful acoustic panels that hang from the ceiling were installed.



A PAGE IN HISTORY

March 2005 – 79 Reasons To Celebrate

Ohr Shalom organizes its First Dinner-Dance-Auction event. Over 200 guests celebrated the 79 years of the building. Ohr Shalom honored Dr. Raulf Polichar for his involvement and leadership in obtaining the building for Ohr Shalom.



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Major Modifications – the Building and Sanctuary



All work was approved by the Historical Resources Board at the City Planning Department and is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The scope of the renovation included a complete repair of the façade, structural seismic upgrades to comply with current codes, and the removal of the wood paneling lining the halls to reveal the original stucco. The ceiling dome was rebuilt and the old watermarks that had once seeped through the ceiling panels are now gone. Swinerton Builders even devised a way to prevent water intrusion while complying with the demand for historical fidelity.

Some of the stained-glass windows were shipped to Iowa for specialized renovation, and replicas of the raised-paneled doors were custom-made by hand.

The Sanctuary has been enhanced with new carpeting, wall finishes, and the beautiful cerulean seats, which were special-ordered from Israel. The floor has been tiered for added comfort during services. The shape of the bimah area was modified so that during readings, the Torah would be closer to the congregation. The wood paneling at the back of the bimah has been restored, and repairs were made to the ark to make it open and close with ease. For disabled congregants, an elevator to the second floor has been installed, along with wheelchair access to the bimah.

Maintaining the temperature in the building had been a major problem during times of extreme weather. New heating and air-conditioning systems were installed throughout the entire building, facilitating temperature control.

Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

It would be nice to have a large screen for movies and presentations. – Libe Marek

- Renovation: That’s still on our wish list.



A PAGE IN HISTORY

April 1999 - A new logo is designed for Ohr Shalom by Anita Szmulowicz, Viviana Lombrozo and Gerry Kahl.



April 2008 – The Congregation gets together for the Blessing of the Mezuzah designed and donated by Karyn Rovner-Sklar for our new Beit Midrash.



Mazal Tov to our girl Sophia Keller on your Bat Mitzvah.

Mom, Dad and Stephan





Major Modifications – Interiors

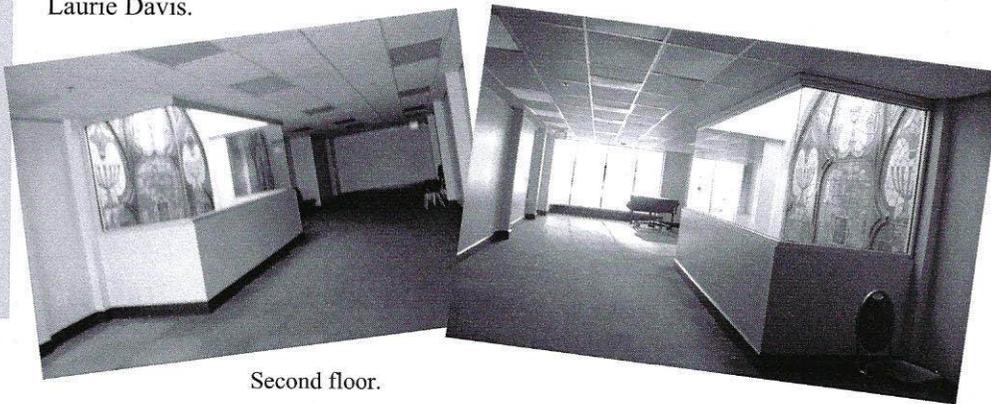
Enlarging the kitchen and opening access to the Social Hall has given us the capacity to host a variety of synagogue events and family *simchas*. The kitchen is strictly kosher and now boasts a brand new large walk-in refrigerator, dishwasher, stainless steel commercial oven, large 2-door freezer, and a new icemaker. The oven was generously donated by Salomon and Rachel Lipowsky, and the stainless steel cabinets, sinks and shelving by Ivry Zachs of San-Son.

The Social Hall had a major facelift, beginning with removing the ceiling “boxes” (second-floor rooms that dropped into the Social Hall), large glass doors that exit to the courtyard, and the removal of the stage area. The room’s acoustics were greatly improved by adding beautiful panels hanging from the ceiling, generously donated by Bob and Laurie Davis.

An additional second floor provides a gathering place for events in a spacious hallway with a glass wall that offers a beautiful view of the surrounding area. The second floor also includes extra office space and classrooms for special events or kid’s rooms. The upstairs addition required a new roof, which eliminated problems with leaks during rains.

The bathrooms were completely remodeled to include all new fixtures, toilets, lighting, baby-changing areas, and water-saving and energy-saving sensors.

Alan Gorinstein, Building and Grounds/ Security Chair, with assistance from Renovation Committee member Gerry Wellman, applied for and received a \$75,000 grant from Homeland Security for Ohr Shalom to install a high-tech alarm and security system that included cameras throughout the building’s exterior and interior.



Second floor.



A PAGE IN HISTORY

May 2007 – Ohr Shalom celebrates Shabbat at Camp Mountain Chai amid the beauty of the San Bernadino mountains. This would be the first of what became a wonderful annual tradition for many Ohr Shalom members.



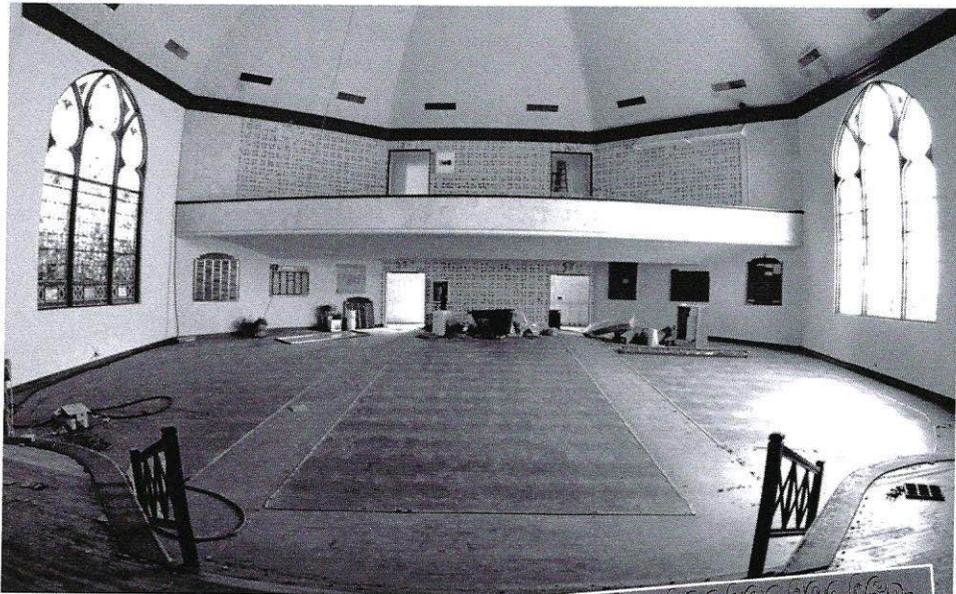
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A PAGE IN HISTORY

June 1991 – The first Davar was published.



Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

Sanctuary is dated and gives poor appearance. The benches need cushions and book holders. - Luis Maizel

• Renovation: The sanctuary was given a makeover beginning with floors that were tiered for greater comfort when standing. it was modernized with the addition of beautiful benches that include book holders that were purchased and imported from Israel. The skylight with the Star of David was replaced for lighting. Some of the stained glass windows were removed, and the wood window frames were refinished. The decision was made that we needed a center walkway aisle in the sanctuary. The bimah area woodwork was all refinished.

Celebrating the Renovation

Our wish to be in the newly renovated sanctuary by the High Holy Days came true in September of 2010. The first opportunity to gather in our newly renovated building came the week before Rosh Hashanah when Ohr Shalom held a Mezuzah Blessing and Selichot Service. As a large group of excited congregants gathered around the outside of the main entrance, Rabbi Scott Meltzer offered a prayer and hung a unique Mezuzah designed and donated by Lisa Slovis Mandel. One by one, everyone entered the building through the new glass doors and headed for the sanctuary.

For most, it was the first time they had been in the building since the renovation had begun. After the service, everyone took the opportunity to walk through the building. With smiles on their faces, congregants expressed their amazement and approval of the major changes they saw. The excitement in the community was palpable.

Then came the High Holy Days: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. With the sanctuary full of congregants, this was an especially meaningful time for everyone. In our newly remodeled sanctuary both comfortable and beautiful, we shared in the joy of this accomplishment.

Ohr Shalom was chosen as the recipient of a 2011 People in Preservation Award for its commitment to the restoration and protection of one of San Diego's most important historic resources.



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Purim shpiels at the synagogue on Morena Blvd.

Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

I would hope the new social hall or all-purpose function rooms would be designed with partitions to accommodate gatherings of various sizes. – Herb Bloom

- Renovation: The Social Hall now has a partition where the stage used to be and can now be utilized as a classroom for adult education, a meeting room, or small screening room. The second floor hallway with the beautiful glass wall is a perfect place for a medium size gathering and can be used for many purposes. There are a variety of rooms throughout the building available for a variety of uses. There is a library on the second floor which also accommodates small classes and is in the process of being organized so it can be a useful resource for members.



A PAGE IN HISTORY

July 1999 – From Reina to Morena. Ohr Shalom moves to a new place, new lease, new Rabbi. With purchase in mind of a building in Pacific Beach, a Building Fund is established.



Building Dedication

The last celebration of the renovation was held on June 5th, 2011. A Building Dedication event honoring the Renovation Committee, which included a presentation of the Donor Wall and Plaques. This event was also an opportunity to meet and thank the members of the Renovation Committee. Local dignitaries, Rabbi Meltzer, Ohr Shalom President Al Shelden, Renovation Committee Co-Chairs Raulf Polichar and David Shteremberg, and others made speeches. Major donor families were also acknowledged for their support and commitment to Ohr Shalom and the San Diego Jewish community.

After all the effort and planning for this major and costly project, we have finally accomplished the mission. With a vision fueled by the love and respect for Ohr Shalom, what it means to our community and what it could become, the Renovation Committee deserves a great deal of gratitude for taking on this difficult task and seeing it through. We thank you, we honor you, and we salute you.



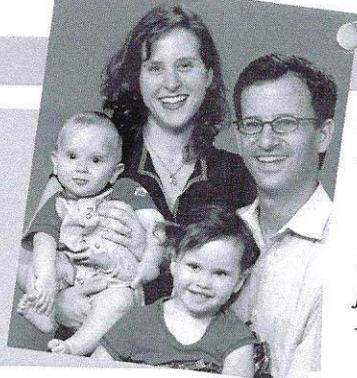
*The Brown/Chorny families celebrate **Lily Marguerite's 1st Birthday**. Lily Marguerite Chorny born July 31, 2011, daughter of Ilya Chorny and Shoshana Brown and sister of Jacob Chorny.*

Love, Sue, Gary, Shoshi, Ilya, Jacob, Ari, Kay, Avi, and Indra

A PAGE IN HISTORY

August 2003 – Here comes... the Rabbi.

Rabbi Scott Meltzer becomes the new Rabbi for Ohr Shalom, joined by his wife Jennifer, and at the time, their only daughter Shayna. Their family has since expanded with the addition of Nativ, Maital and Yael.



Wish List for Renovation

From Master Plan Questionnaire 2006

We need to modernize the kitchen. New floors, cabinets, counters are sorely needed.

– George and Susan Kaplan

• Renovation: The kitchen was totally redone with new walk-in refrigerator, new stoves, work stations, cabinets and sinks under supervision of a very knowledgeable kitchen committee. They took great care to make it more conducive for a kosher kitchen.

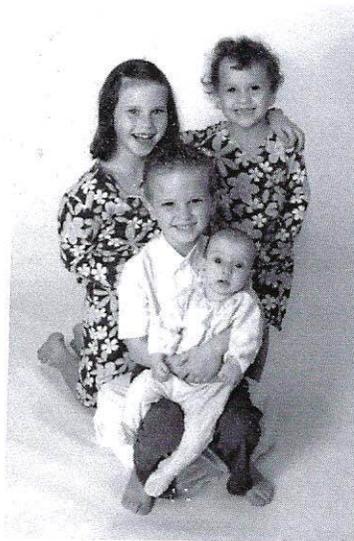
Our Building, Our Home, Our Treasure

Our eighty-five-year-old building holds a prominent place in San Diego Jewish history. Our building represents traditional San Diego – with pride, we consider ourselves to be the only active synagogue in an historic building in the county.

The Judaism we live, learn and celebrate at Third and Laurel is filled with traditions that are millennia old, which we renew each and every day. We celebrate and maintain our sacred connection to the past, while continually bringing our tradition into today.

We are guardians of the past with the responsibility to bridge from yesterday to tomorrow. We now come home to Third and Laurel to invest in the future of our synagogue and the Jewish community of San Diego.

Just as we have accepted the responsibility to bridge the wondrous history of Judaism with the great promise of the bright future, we now accept the responsibility to embrace San Diego's historic synagogue building at Third and Laurel, restored both to the glory of its original design and to its central role in Jewish life in San Diego.



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