

# 2005 FAITH & FORM RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AWARD

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE  
RENOVATION  
B'nai David Judea Congregation  
Los Angeles, California

AWARD  
Merit

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B'nai David Judea, an orthodox Jewish synagogue in Los Angeles, functioned from 1965 until 2002 in what was originally the Art Deco Stadium Theatre built in 1931. A planned renovation was to provide equal access and safety for children in an inspirational ambience. The challenge entailed infusing life and spirituality into the sanctuary while respecting the historic building.

The renovation links the spaces to a new hydraulic elevator. Accessible bathrooms are added to the lobby, which is now extended. Existing bathrooms, offices, banquet hall and lobby are refurbished. The exterior is repainted in a five-color palette, and lined in Jerusalem stone. The exterior doors are retrofitted with

translucent glass, and windows replaced. Original Art Deco details are maintained.

The design of the sanctuary involves three main components: introducing natural light, dividing the space into two equal parts according to orthodox tradition, and adding accessibility for the disabled.

Because of proportional and structural requirements, six vertical slit windows are placed in the rhythm of the column bays: alternating bays included lighting inspired by the 1931 design. The vision of equality is achieved with a divider incorporating an Art Deco motif offering the harmony and scale befitting a sanctuary. This element surrounds the

new ramp system allowing access to the stages. Elements from the divider are reinforced in the custom mechanical grilles lining the walls of the sanctuary. The quality of light enhances the intricacies of the original design and provides a space of spirituality and warmth.

## JURY COMMENTS

*This restoration very carefully preserves all of the building's Art Deco detailing, and honors it. The emphasis on color and light brings the building to life. The original Art Deco design becomes an inspiration for the new woodwork and décor. Re-using the old building and making it new again is a sustainable response.*

