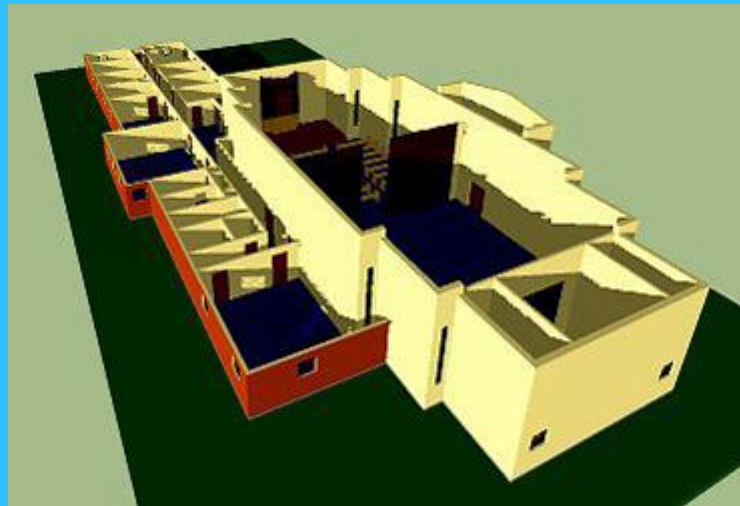


Robert P. Davis, Architect  
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The history of the Longview Jewish community and nearby Kilgore cannot be easily separated. The first synagogue in the immediate area was [Beth Sholem](#), built in 1937 in Kilgore. Temple Emanuel was indeed named "Beth Sholem" till 1958, a year after it was built. Many of the artifacts, such as the Bimah menorahs and memorial plaques, of the Kilgore synagogue are either displayed or stored here.



This building is uniquely unlike other synagogues of its time and place. The low-slung school and utility wing is moored up against a large, opaque masonry block. Light enters the block only through the slit windows which appear as embrasures at the indentation points and through the surprisingly small entry doors. Had the building served some other purpose, a secret password might be required.



Once inside the layout is both functional and attractive. But, because the bottom half of three of the four north slit windows disappear into closets and other utility areas, one wonders if the architect conceived of two buildings, shoved them together at the last minute, and neglected to adjust certain design features.



Sanctuary walls and ark have been decorated by brass cut-out Hebrew words, designed and fabricated by the Rabbi Emeritus. The first shown above was donated as a remembrance for a daughter who died in tragic circumstances.



Mendy Rabicoff, a native of Kilgore, and his wife Natalie own and operate Sobol Welders Supply, and have been congregational mainstays from the beginning. Mendy and Sandi Schindel, president of the Sisterhood, provided much of the information and material for this report.