

Temple Rodef Shalom Port Arthur, TX

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Houston, Texas
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Built in 1951, Temple Rodef Shalom exemplifies the rambling "no-frills" style derived (distantly) from Frank Lloyd Wright's work. The original building included the main sanctuary and assembly hall with kitchen and classroom salients to either side. Later a classroom extension was added to the rear, creating a small court with an unusual memorial in its center.



Jews began moving into Port Arthur in the early 1920's as the oil boom that began at "Splindletop" in nearby Beaumont, TX, settled into big business. Although the congregation is nominally Reform, there was an Orthodox component that in the early days met in the Department Club above. At one point the dispute between the groups regarding Port Arthur's official designation, Orthodox or Reform, almost went to court.

The Rabbi's parsonage is in a neighborhood of like houses adjacent to the Temple. Rabbi Lothar Goldstein and his wife, Justine, came from Peru, where they had fled from Nazi Germany. When he died, she took over his duties and served as the last acting spiritual leader of congregation until her death in 1994.

