
HUMANITIES ESSAY

Exilic Landscapes: Synagogues and Jewish Architectural Identity in 1870s Britain

Leon Fenster

When Jews in Florence, Italy submitted plans for a new Great Synagogue in 1872, the designs were rejected not on the usual religious or political grounds, but for stylistic reasons. The local municipality had decided that the Jewish community was not building in a 'Jewish enough' style, although it was not at all clear what this style ought to be. This debate over how Jews ought to build raged across Europe throughout that decade, and beyond. This essay revisits that particular historical problem, by looking at a sample of five new synagogues that were erected in England during the 1870s and 1880s: St John's Wood Synagogue (1880–82) in London; Bradford Synagogue (1880–81) in Yorkshire; West London Synagogue (1867–70); Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool (1872–74); and New West End Synagogue in London (1877–79). Each offered its own different way to think about the appropriate design style for a contemporary Jewish place of worship, and how this coincided, or not, with the rituals of worship and with the requirements of the various congregations involved. The essay concludes by asking what relevance such debates might have today.

Keywords: Architecture; Synagogues; Jewish; Style; Eclecticism

Introduction

When Jews in Florence, Italy submitted plans for a new Great Synagogue in 1872, the designs were rejected not on the usual religious or political grounds, but for stylistic reasons. The local municipality had decided that the Jewish community was not building in a 'Jewish enough' style. In a letter addressed to community leaders, the Accademia del Arti Delle Disegno, the body tasked with regulating Florentine artistic endeavours, explained that the proposed Neoclassical design would not evoke 'the dates and places that are of most interest for this religion'. They demanded that the community ought to design in such a way as to '[stamp] its own history on [its] monuments'. The Jews of Florence were however at a loss as to what constitutes 'Jewish Style'. Ultimately, the synagogue was adorned in brash Moorish Revival motifs, satisfying the Accademia [1]. But the debate over how Jews ought to build raged across Europe throughout that decade, and beyond. This essay revisits that particular historical problem, asking what relevance such debates might have today.

The conceptual difficulty that Jewish communities have long had in responding to the periodic need for grand buildings reveals an atypical and indeed peculiar historical attitude to architecture. The latter simply hasn't ever featured as an important facet of Jewish history or tradition. The creation of architecture has been seen as entirely subservient to the creation of community and rich communal experiences have rarely been considered dependent on physical architecture. The most acute call for monumental Jewish architecture in Europe came following the emancipation of the mid-nineteenth century, following Napoleon's real and metaphorical toppling of the ghetto walls, and the lifting of restrictions on Jews throughout much of the European continent. Architecture now seemed to take on newfound importance as a means of giving public expression to Jewish culture.

But what types of buildings were needed? A prayer service can, according to Jewish law, take place wherever a quorum of ten Jews are gathered. The earliest took place in homes, or other 'found' spaces,

and many still do. However, since at least the first century AD, synagogue buildings have been constructed to provide a more convenient place to gather [2, pp. 26–31]. The basic internal layout of the prayer space has remained largely unchanged since then, consisting of a set of specific furnishings – which I will term ‘ritual objects’ – around which the service is choreographed (**Figs. 1, 2**). These ritual objects are oriented to the east, or at least towards Jerusalem, thereby causing the synagogue to be symbolically detached from its surroundings. Almost every other aspect of a synagogue, however, remains unfixed. Historically, most synagogues have consisted of little more than a room for prayer services – recently termed a ‘sanctuary’ – and perhaps a room for study or eating.

With the notable exception of the wooden synagogues of Poland and Lithuania, no distinctive Jewish architectural tradition has ever developed. The most common approach to building synagogues was instead to borrow from surrounding architectural styles in whichever culture they are located. Hence, Djerbe’s Al Ghriba Synagogue (late nineteenth century) resembles a Tunisian mosque, while the Kahal Kadosh Synagogue (1840) in Charleston, South Carolina resembles the nearby Greek Revival churches. Indeed, more often than not, church architects designed the synagogues in Christian lands, while in Muslim lands by mosque architects. Where synagogues do stand out from the surrounding buildings, they have sometimes been designed according to memories of synagogues in previous places in which that particular community once dwelled. Frequently this occurred when a community’s expulsion from that previous place lingered as a powerful collective trauma. The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue (1868) in Prague, for example, emulates the synagogues of Spain and Portugal, from where Jews were expelled in 1492. Bevis Marks (1701), the oldest remaining synagogue established after Jews were readmitted to England, contains both traits. Built by a Quaker architect for Jews who arrived, primarily, from The Netherlands, the building externally resembles

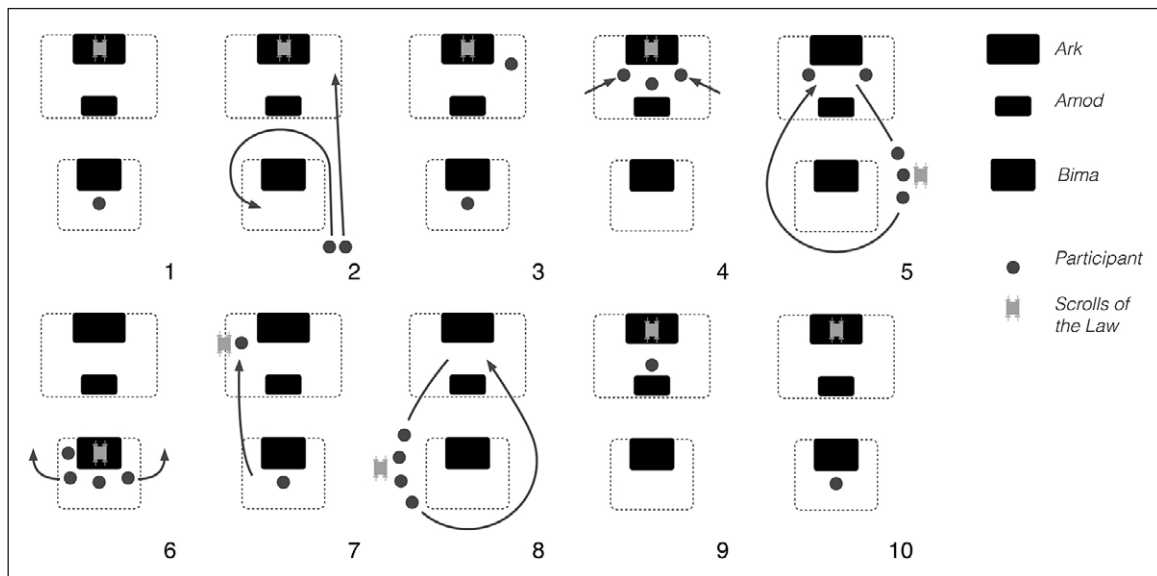


Figure 1: The choreography of a Saturday morning synagogue service (Ashkenazi).

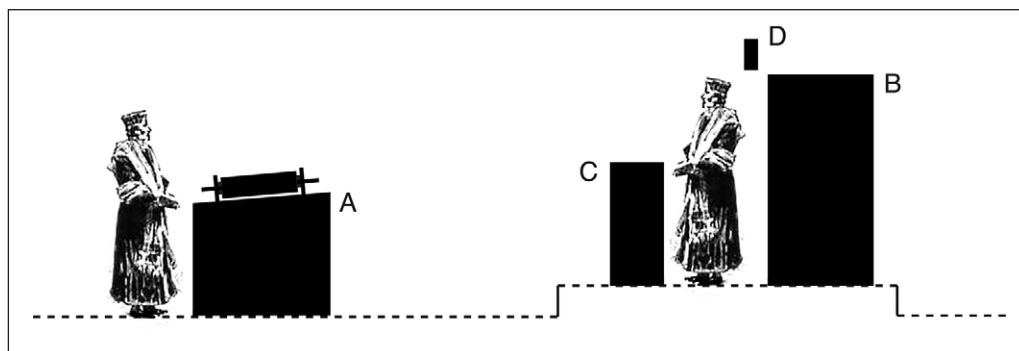


Figure 2: The typical layout of the ritual objects in a synagogue including the Bima (A) The Ark (B) The Amod (C) and, (D) The Eternal Light.

a typical Georgian church while the interior is modelled after Amsterdam's Great Portuguese Synagogue (1675) [3].

It follows, therefore, that synagogues have hitherto remained on the fringes of architectural discourse. Surveys of architecture prior to the mid-20th century largely omitted synagogues as a type. In the seminal categorisation of world architecture, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, by Banister Flight Fletcher and his father, the only references to synagogues were to the Jews House in Lincoln (late twelfth century) and the Sinagoga del Transisto (around 1356) in Toledo. Both are mentioned in passing in terms of prevailing architectural styles, the former as a 'splendid relic' of a Norman house, the second as an example of 'Spanish Gothic' [4, p. 386, 527]. Fletcher's only reference to there being a canon of 'Jewish Architecture' is as part of an analysis of ancient architecture. Even then, he describes it as merely the intersection of the architectures of the great powers in whose circle of influence the Hebrews found themselves, variously the Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman empires [4, p. 59]. This Jewish chameleon approach to building is perhaps best summed up by its ostensible absence from Fletcher's famous 'Tree of Architecture' [5, p. 2]. In fact, one should perhaps say that synagogues are very much present, having been built in every one of the styles depicted by Fletcher (**Fig. 3**). The difficulty that Fletcher encounters in trying to categorise synagogues reflects an essential contradiction at the heart of Jewish identity, namely that Judaism bears the hallmarks of being both a national and a religious identity with its members being variously defined by either birth, practice, beliefs or cultural affiliation. Indeed, the eclectic nature of synagogue designs may have itself contributed to this difficulty.

James Fergusson's classic text on *A History of Architecture in All Countries From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, dating from 1874 and one of the earliest attempts at a sweeping survey of world architecture, similarly made little mention of Jewish architecture after the period of the 'Temple at Jerusalem' – aside from an ethnographic sketch of the Semitic people as a whole, in which he dubiously concludes that they have never built a great building 'worthy of its name' [6]. In Fergusson's view, Jewish architecture was synonymous only with the buildings of this ancient period. He briefly praised the 'affectations of Orientalism' in Ludwig Förster's 1859 Pest Synagogue, while deriding the Sinagoga del Transisto as being 'so essentially merely a gorgeously ornamented room that it hardly deserves to be classed among monumental buildings'. He mentioned those two Jewish buildings, each as part of a wider discussion about Viennese and Spanish architecture respectively, yet not as Jewish architecture per se. On this subject, Fergusson's views are best encapsulated by his accurate assertion that the Jews 'are not a building people and never aspired to monumental magnificence as a mode of perpetuating the memory of their greatness' [6, p. 219].

Given such uncertainties, the inclusion of Jewish architecture in mainstream architectural study has only been a very recent phenomenon. Pevsner's otherwise comprehensive *Buildings of England* series 'succeeded in missing many synagogues', including 'those of outstanding quality' even though the author himself was Jewish [7]. English Heritage signalled a slight change of attitude from 1973 when the most significant synagogues began to acquire listed-building status, although as Edward Jamilly points out, when the New West End Synagogue (1879) – one of the most outstanding architecturally – was first added onto the list, the 'inspector never went inside' [8].

But although all this shows that synagogues have rarely been seen as central to wider architectural discourse, there have been certain moments in history when Jews have addressed, through need or desire, the question of how best to build their temples. One of these key moments, in the 1870s, came in a decade in which a confluence of two historical trends in Britain brought this question to the fore, since that decade was the heyday of both Anglo-Jewish emancipation and of the concept of nationalism generally in architecture.

At that point, in many places across Europe, Jews were being given rights previously denied to them, and were thus allowed to take part more completely in civic life – nowhere more so than in Britain [9, p. 386]. By 1870, just a decade after the first openly Jewish MP was elected, a handful of prominent Jews sat in the House of Commons, and Benjamin Disraeli, Jewish by birth, led the Conservative opposition [10, p. 19]. At its most basic level, Britain's welcoming political climate encouraged an influx of Jewish immigrants from places in which emancipation remained only a distant possibility. A flurry of small synagogues was initiated to meet the needs of these new arrivals. But even more significant was the newfound confidence of the established Anglo-Jewish community, which was eager to Anglicise, and thus contribute to British society as Jews. A new demand therefore arose for so-called 'cathedral' synagogues that would be prominent and confident Jewish buildings.

Among architects, meanwhile, a broader debate about architectural style, which began during the upheavals of Confederation Germany, was raging across Europe. Hübsch's celebrated 1828 pamphlet, *In*

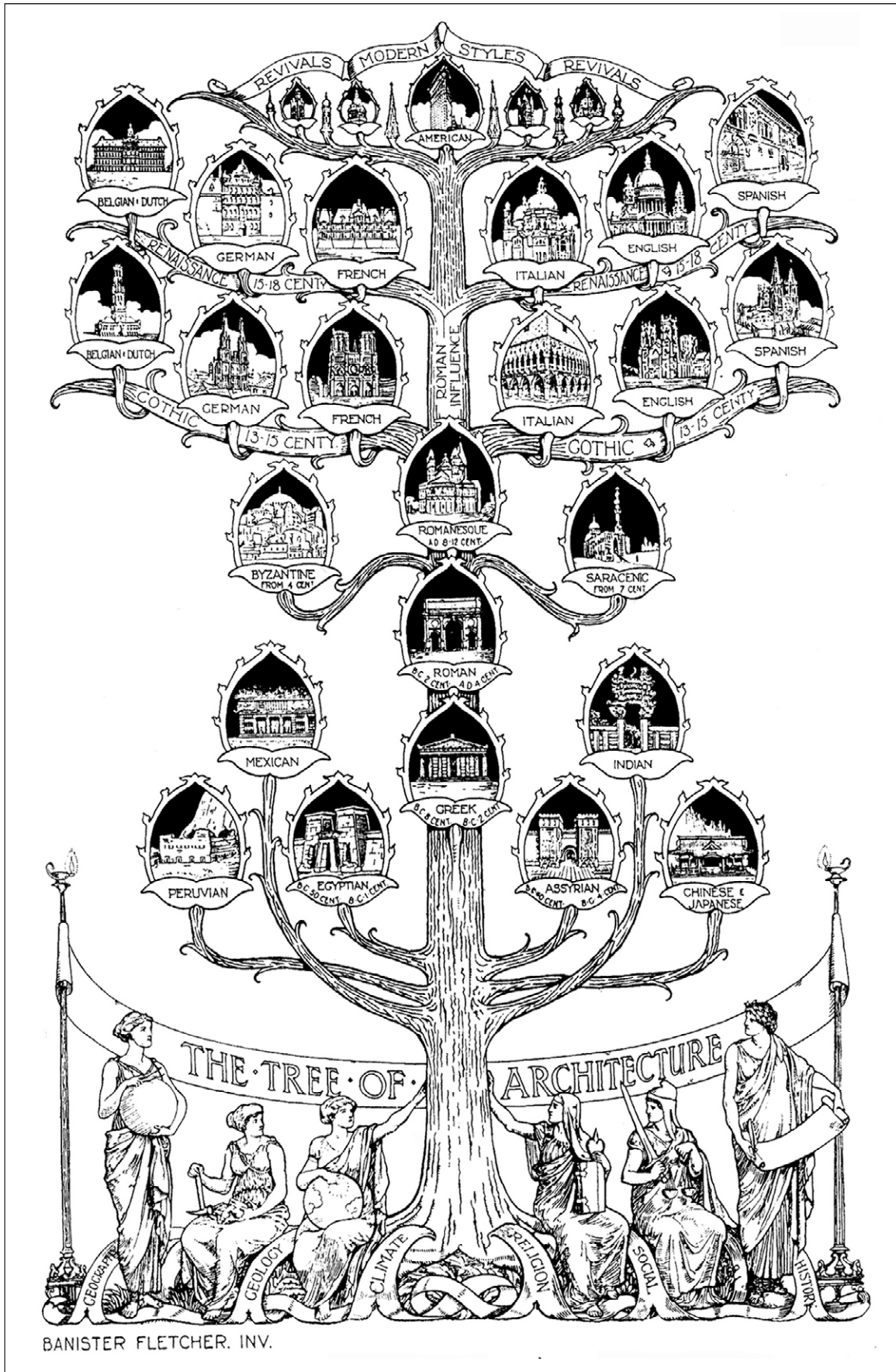


Figure 3: Banister Fletcher, 'Tree of Architecture'.

Welchem Style Sollen Wir Bauen? (In Which Style Shall We Build), argued that architecture needed to 'come of age', and cease its slavish imitation of 'the antique style' of neo-Classicism. Instead, Hübsch called for the development of a '*neue styl*' that was capable of embodying the German national character and treating scientifically the 'unnecessary adjuncts' of architecture [11]. Simultaneously, the rise of nascent capitalist globalisation brought the diversity of the world's cultures into clearer focus. International trade, travel and empire brought exotic products and new ideas into circulation. This, along with the cataloging of the global architectural diversity by the likes of Fergusson and Owen Jones, gave rise to a wave of Orientalist fascination with the unfamiliar and also sharpened the desire to assert some kind of intrinsic national identity through architecture. The idea of a 'national style' became a kind of 'holy grail' in many countries [12, p. 9], as has been pointed out. For Jews, the solution lay in the building of new 'cathedral' synagogues in which the possibility of there being a Jewish 'national style' could be tested out.

However, compared to other religious groups in Britain in the 1870s, Judaism had virtually no established framework through which to seek a cohesive style. As a consequence, the new British synagogues were built in styles ranging from Neoclassical to Egyptian Revival to Neo-Romanesque [7; 13]. This was in sharp contrast to the Anglican Church, in which a hierarchy existed for determining how architectural dogma should be applied. This was encapsulated by the puritanical Ecclesiological Society, a Protestant group whose remit was to promote the very highest architectural standards for new Church of England structures. For a crucial two decades after it was consolidated in London in 1845, the society shaped the norm of Victorian church design through zealous critiques of churches in the pages of its journal, *The Ecclesiologist*. Since then, the conservation of churches has been largely coordinated by the Church of England through the Churches Conservation Trust, among others. Judaism never had an equivalent of the Ecclesiologists and rarely a counterpart to the Conservation Trust. Each Jewish community instead built their synagogue as they saw fit. During the 1870s, the United Synagogue, a governing body for Orthodox Judaism created by Act of Parliament, did try to coordinate synagogue building by offering financial assistance [14, p. 28], but that only made its influence felt in regard to practical matters such as the overall size and spacing of buildings, never the details.

Whenever representatives of Anglicanism and Judaism did examine each other's practices in the 1870s, the conversation was often at cross-purposes. One of the few mentions that I could find in *The Ecclesiologist* to synagogue design was by a correspondent in Manchester who revealed displeasure about a new synagogue with its 'crude' colouring and stylistic muddle which he disapprovingly called 'Arabico-Teutonic-Romanesque' [15, p. 308] (although it should be pointed out that such criticism was muted in comparison with attacks by the Ecclesiological Society on wayward design for churches). Meanwhile, when the *Jewish Chronicle* reported on a long-running debate in the Anglican Church about whether the use of a baldacchino (canopy) was acceptable as an architectural feature inside a church, the editor couldn't help but express exasperation that such an 'ecclesiastical trifle' should be a topic of contestation [16]. The *Jewish Chronicle* rightly found it hard to imagine ever a Jewish debate erupting over anything but the most 'essential particulars' of a synagogue.

In general, most existing literature about British synagogues tends to deal with issues of conservation, stylistic influences, and social history. Given the absence for so long of any real interest in Jewish architecture in any country, whether from within or without the Jewish community, those who have emerged as its champions have laudably attempted to protect the scarce Jewish cultural heritage. Meanwhile, any efforts to treat synagogues with the seriousness that other significant religious buildings usually receive has conflicted with the historically indifferent Jewish attitude to architecture, causing considerable friction between the owners of synagogues and those seeking to preserve them. A parallel can be drawn with that of reconciling Western conservation practices with Japanese temple shrines which are traditionally demolished and rebuilt afresh after a given period of time, sometimes as short as twenty years. Here again there exists a tension between whether the building's sacredness resides in the physical mass of the structure itself or in a more abstract and immaterial set of relationships. Conceptions of identity and authenticity in buildings therefore reflect diverse paradigms of conservation and of looking at history. It is certainly notable that literature to date has not adequately addressed how Jewish attitudes to space and place are refracted through synagogues. Hence this essay will tackle this question by considering how the architecture of synagogues in Britain, in the key decade of the 1870s, contributed to the dramatisation of the Jewish worldview that took place within them – thereby revealing the inherent beauty and significance of synagogues. The essay will seek out what the architects of such synagogues and the communities that commissioned them were attempting to articulate. These case studies will be used to explore how built form might be used to evoke both contemporary communal identity and the Jewish tradition's deep-rooted, but less material, notions of

architecture as expressed by Talmudic concepts such as the *sukkah* or *eruv* and Biblical constructs such as the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle).

To make its case, this essay focuses on five important 'cathedral' synagogues (the latter two are in fact a pairing). Three were built for Reform congregations and two for Orthodox congregations, between them representing the main streams of Judaism in the nineteenth century. The former group, then still an emerging movement at the time, tended to be decentralised in its practices, whereas on the Orthodox Jewish front, the United Synagogue dominated thinking. There was also a third notable group in Britain, which were the small independent congregations usually of Eastern European immigrants, but their detailed examination lies beyond the scope of this essay [17; 18]. Having selected the five key synagogues to be used as case studies, I then scoured the archives that hold the surviving records for each one of them, along with relevant magazines and journals from the late nineteenth century. I sought out both technical documentation and records of how the particular synagogues were discussed contemporaneously. Most notably I examined the *Jewish Chronicle*, a Jewish newspaper which is the most widely read British publication of its kind and which very occasionally deals with Jewish views about synagogue design.

But before looking at the first case study, and in order to gain a broader understanding of British synagogues, one needs to place them in the context of Judaism's historical approach to architecture. It is important to remember that the religion practiced by the Israelites back in the so-called 'Temple period', before the birth of Jesus Christ, and from which Fergusson and Fletcher sought an absolute model of Jewish architecture, was very different to that of Jews who came after. By the nineteenth century the Jewish religion had changed even further. There is much debate over the exact size and prominence of the ancient Israelite nation, but their spatial practices were certainly very different to those of late nineteenth century Jews. Ancient religious and political life revolved around worshipping in the Jerusalem Temple, within whose walls the divine was described as having chosen a dwelling place. The language of religion was therefore very much intertwined with everyday language about architecture and place.

The form of Judaism practiced in the nineteenth century and today, emerged in the aftermath of the storied destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the subsequent exile of the Israelites following the Jewish-Roman war of 70 AD. In that line, the idea of exile from Jerusalem is long ingrained within Jewish thought as the moment when a once centralised tribe, run by hereditary priests with political power, was transformed into a decentralised religion led by meritocratic rabbis and needing a more portable image for its identity. The refashioning of temple life into this mobile form has also come over the centuries to inform the whole Jewish approach to architecture. The physical edifice of the temple, and the ritual of the animal sacrifices that had once taken place within it, were replaced by prayer, texts, and processes of education. The concept of exile was embraced as the enabler of a new liquid culture.

It has also been pointed out that the architectural model hailed by the early rabbis was not even that of the Temple, but rather of its predecessor, the *Mishkan*. This portable proto-temple, assembled from poles and fabrics, was reputed to have been created by the Israelites during a semi-mythological period of wandering in the Middle-Eastern desert [19; 20]. It would have been assembled at every new encampment along the way, creating a momentarily sacred space among the sand dunes, and providing the basic model for portable exilic architecture (Fig. 4). Intriguingly, although the key text in which we find a description of the *Mishkan* lists its parts and method of assembly, almost with painstaking precision, there is never given an overall description of its assembled appearance. This is taken within the Jewish tradition as an indication that portability and the act of assembly are to be more valued than any edifice itself. At its most essential level, synagogue layout was based on the arrangement of the *Mishkan*, but, as will be seen, the deeper resonance of its message of portability was strongly retained.

The state of exile at the heart of Judaism can be broken down into two elements: a real circumstantial exile, and a more abstract exilic consciousness. With the exception of the modern state of Israel, Rabbinic Judaism has been an exclusively diasporic religion insofar that it was never invested with political power. Instead, its members have had a transnational sense of identity and community that is not bound to a single place. The fact that Jewish history is characterised by persecutions, expulsions and migrations might alone explain the apparent absence of any fixed architectural tradition. But more insight can be found in the manner in which Judaism formalised a response to displacement and through its legal system and traditions even came to embrace exile.

When Joshua Abraham Heschel declared that 'the Sabbaths are our great cathedrals' [21, p. 8], he captured the exilic essence of Jewish thought in which time rather than place is sanctified. The Sabbath, a weekly transient occurrence defined by specific restrictions and obligations, is a legal construct that carves in time

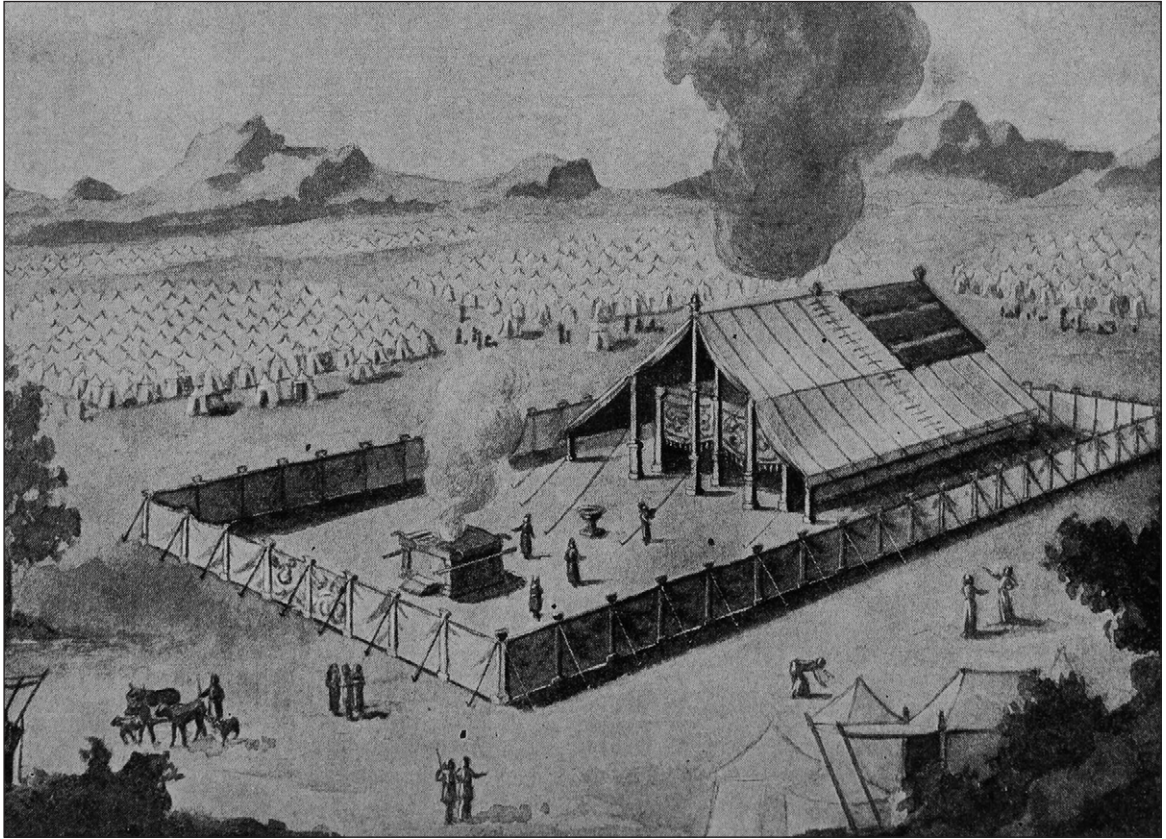


Figure 4: An impression of the Tabernacle found in Cynthia Pearl Maus, *The Old Testament and the Fine Arts*.

a sacred space of beauty that is both very real to its adherents, and also perfectly portable. It is in effect the cathedral of exile. By contrast, synagogues themselves are not imbued with any particular sanctity, even if the actions taking place within them seem to possess it. This is evidenced by the absence of all but the barest guidance on how to construct synagogues in the *Talmud*, Judaism's main legal code. Most of the discussions found there in relation to synagogues seek to minimise the sacredness of fixed places, concluding, for example, that the purchaser of a synagogue building can 'do whatever he pleases' with it: after all, as one writer argues, if the places in which people have prayed are to be considered sacred, then 'all the streets' will become sacred, since there is no place in which, previously, 'men have not prayed' [22]. In light of Heschel's celebrated observation, perhaps this attitude is not at all surprising.

The example of the *Eruv*, an architectural typology that the *Talmud* does discuss in minute detail, is hence instructive in revealing the ideal form of exilic architecture. An *Eruv* is a symbolic boundary that determines behaviour relating to restrictions observed on the Sabbath by practicing Jews. It notionally creates an extended area of private domain within and without which such behaviour differs. The boundary might well only be constructed of posts, string, existing structures, or other objects to create the abstract, minimal spatial conditions as described in Jewish law. Certain formations of the *Eruv* are derived from proportions of the *Mishkan*, others from the walls of a walled city, and some from basic building elements such as gates and lintels. As such this is a truly complex piece of architecture, the specific permutations being detailed in an entire tractate (volume) of the *Talmud*, yet one that remains largely immaterial. The *Eruv* can thus be overlaid onto any existing city, imbuing new meanings and spatial relationships but notably without needing to claim exclusively ownership of any part of the city. In this sense, it forms the most perfectly portable architecture imaginable in that the various physical pieces of which it consists have no inherent value, except in the sense that as symbols they point to an alternative spatiality described within traditional texts. All meaning departs as soon as the *Eruv* stops being used as such. Indeed, it is such a minimal construction that it would probably go unnoticed when it is disused. The pieces of string return to a state of just being lengths of string like any others [23].

Anglican Jews: St John's Wood Synagogue, Abbey Road, Westminster, London (1880–82)

The St John's Wood Synagogue in London is a quintessential example of a design by a stalwart of the Anglo-Jewish establishment in the 1870s. The architect, Henry Hyman Collins, heeded a call from the United Synagogue to build practical, economic synagogues and combined this with the Anglicising impulse of his peers. Nonetheless, the building still embodied the intrinsic tensions within Jewish dual identity, ultimately embracing this dilemma. The synagogue was built under United Synagogue auspices for an Orthodox community that had quickly outgrown the temporary iron structure used since the congregation was formed only a few years earlier. The new building was intended to cater for the growing Jewish population in London's West End, at a point when the focus of Jewish life was gradually shifting away from the East End.

Collins, when he is remembered, is regarded as a competent but unremarkable designer [24, p. 16–17; 25, p.18]. Like the other handful of Jewish architects practicing in London at the time, he worked on a few working-class housing schemes and commercial structures. However, he was most prolific in designing synagogues and other Jewish buildings. Collins' synagogue designs tended to dabble in a 'pot-pourri' of styles, not unlike other mid-nineteenth century eclectic architects although to different ends, including Moorish, Byzantine and Saracenic – perhaps inspired by the great Moorish synagogues in Germany, which he frequently visited [24, p. 6–7]. However, Collins was most comfortable designing in the simpler Italianate style of which the St John's Wood Synagogue is a perfect example (**Fig. 5**); not surprisingly, he was a forthright advocate of the propriety of Italian Renaissance as the inspiration for synagogues [7, p. 75]. This might also explain why his most exotic designs submitted to competitions were never selected. His strengths lay, as Jamilly put it, in his 'structural prowess', rather than his artistic skills [24, p. 44]. Collins' views on Anglo-Jewry were establishment minded, as evidenced by his incessant letters to magazines asserting with 'authority' his views on how a given synagogue should or should not have been designed by its architect [26]. In other words, Collins was a safe pair of hands, which suited well the preference of the dominant Orthodox Jewish groups in the United Synagogue for a solid, unadventurous approach to building.

This attitude to architecture is also shown by the subsequent history of the St John's Wood Synagogue. That the building even remains today is less the result of any preservation impulse on the part of its original



Figure 5: The New London Synagogue.

community, and more about timing and pragmatism. By 1964, the community had outgrown its Abbey Road premises and so purchased a nearby plot of land to erect a new synagogue, with the intention of demolishing the existing one so that the land could be easily sold. The old synagogue would most likely have been lost without major objection had it not been for a fortunate concurrence of events. In the early-1960s, a new independent congregation had been founded as a result of a deep ideological split within the Orthodox Jewish world. At the 'eleventh hour' this new community purchased the building and continues to use it to this day, having embarked on a careful and sensitive programme of renovation [24, p. 44]. The story is told that the wrecking ball was on route while the cheque was still being written by members of the incoming community. Nonetheless, their inaugural sermon in the synagogue contained no reference to the building [27], suggesting that its preservation was not perceived as central to the congregation's identity. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, the gravity of the intellectual endeavour of setting up a brand new Jewish community was such that there was no time now to consider erecting a modern synagogue, meaning that Collins' design was relieved.

Looking at the architectural form at which Collins arrived, it certainly communicates much about Anglo-Jewish identity in its day. Externally the synagogue exhibits a tension between wanting to make a confident statement about Jewish emancipation and also continuing a history of seeking architectural anonymity. The building is set back from the street and is detached from its neighbours, with an entrance highlighted by an arcaded portico (**Fig. 6**). Compared to earlier synagogues that were nestled apologetically amongst their surrounding buildings, and generally had discreet entrances, this portico already marks out the St John's Wood Synagogue as being a more confident building. However, Collins simultaneously subverted whatever grand statement the building might have wished to make. Where one might expect dramatic double-height windows on the upper floors, for example, he fussily divided them. And by shrinking the triangular 'pediment' atop the portico, he similarly played down the visual power of the synagogue's entrance.

Inside can be found one of the clearest examples of Jewish ritual being dressed in a pointedly Anglicised style. In the architectural milieu of the 19th century, the Italianate style, as adapted by British architects, was used to imply uncomplicated refinement without the more challenging proportions and greater expense required for grander Neoclassical buildings. It was therefore hugely popular in Victorian London, although



Figure 6: The exterior of the New London Synagogue.



Figure 7: The ceiling of the New London Synagogue.

sometimes derided for its simplicity [28, p. 99]. In the case of the St John's Wood Synagogue, its slender white columns and cornices, its elegant reliefs in muted colours, and its fashionably restrained Egyptian palmates on the ceiling made it perfect for fulfilling the United Synagogue priority of seeking restraint in synagogue construction (**Fig. 7**).

The building hence fitted into a broader attempt by the Jewish establishment, partly led by Chief Rabbi Adler, to 'Anglicise' the community. They sought to align Jewish synagogue life, ritual garb and the language of prayer more closely with the decorum and appearance of broader British religious practice. Anglo-Jewry was, as continues to be, far more divided than official histories often portray [14, p. 233]. In the late nineteenth century the most significant division was between the existing 'native' Jews of England and more recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia. To many of these new arrivals, the necessary preservation of their culture was to be achieved by having relatively introverted communities and by the continued use of Yiddish as the daily language. To the 'native' Jews this threatened their hard-won integration into British society. Thus it was hoped that architecture could be used as a 'weapon of change' [25, p. 18] that might expedite the integration of the newcomers. Sharman Kadish describes this as the architectural 'colonisation of the East End' – an area still heavily populated by Jews, but also one that settled, wealthier Jews had previously moved out of to integrate themselves into more affluent parts of the city [7, p. 145]. This kind of combative language echoes that was used contemporaneously, as can be seen in a *Jewish Chronicle* article that described another 'cathedral' synagogue as a 'fortress of moderate traditional Judaism' [29, p. 7]. The St John's Wood Synagogue is certainly one such fortress in which didactic lessons on the value of emancipation abound, even in small details such as the traditional two tablets of the law, displayed above the *Ark*, but integrated into a row of mock arched windows that form part of the Italianate internal facade.

Upon entering the synagogue one is reminded that for many in the community at the time, the 'Englishness' of synagogues was arguably a more important value than 'Jewishness'. Given the ingrained Jewish aversion to overly pretentious buildings, this 'Englishness' was not to be expressed in, as the *Jewish Chronicle* put it, 'brightly gilded cornices' or 'fluted columns in a rainbow of colours', but rather a 'well ventilated and well lit place of worship' [29, p. 56]. The St John's Wood Synagogue possesses both ventilation and light in

abundance, the sunlight being exaggerated by the white walls and ceiling. In fact, the sanctuary area not only feels generously airy, but is also served by a surprisingly large number of air-vents, reflecting a certain Victorian obsession with health. This attitude was born not just out of a belief by the Jewish establishment in the benefits of Victorian advances in building science, but also as a means of making new Anglicised synagogues noticeably more attractive than the small, crowded and poorly ventilated synagogues of the East End [18, p. 25]. A notable feature absent in the St John's Wood Synagogue, as well as in almost every other 'city synagogue' built during this period, was a ritual bath known as a *Mikvah*, despite its centrality to traditional Jewish life. These distinctively Jewish features were given lower priority than Anglicised advancements.

But even then there were inconsistencies. One might also have expected that the layout of the seating and the ritual objects within the synagogue would have been altered to reflect the emphasis on 'Anglicisation'. The more traditional synagogue layout, which was focused inward, was associated with the more informal East End synagogues from which the Jewish establishment was attempting to distance itself. The strictly directional layout of Anglican churches, in contrast, lent itself more easily to orderly prayer. However, the St John's Wood Synagogue was built with the familiar combination of *Ark*, *Amod* and centrally located *Bima* being surrounded by seats in the round [24, p. 42]. This reluctance to change the plan arrangement points to the unifying role of the ritual objects as the element of continuity within synagogue design.

Just as the leading rabbis in London of the period would lead their congregation in traditional worship while dressed in newly adopted Anglican dog-collars and high hats, so too the traditional layout of the St John's Wood Synagogue was dressed in English Italianate by Collins. In fact, only rarely was the basic layout of synagogues ever dramatically changed. This juxtaposition of tradition and adopted culture is an apt expression of the tensions of dual identity. In fact, the plans in Collins' synagogues are even more consistent than most. He seems to make a point of refusing to alter the proportions of the overall space or of the individual elements such as the *Ark* or gallery arcade – with perhaps an exception to this rule in his attempt at Moorish Eclecticism in the Chatham Memorial Synagogue (1861) [30, p. 301], where the sanctuary is forcefully oriented eastwards. It might help to explain Collins' preference for the Italianate, with which he could more easily maintain the traditional synagogue layout. As we shall see, however, other architects were able to successfully combine exotic styles with the traditional layout, accentuating the sense of juxtaposition.

A Theatre of the Orient: Bradford Synagogue, Bowland Street, Bradford, Yorkshire (1880–81)

Compared to the St John's Wood Synagogue, the Bradford Synagogue represents a very different answer to Hübsch's question of what style to build in. Far from creating an Anglicised setting for Jewish prayer, this synagogue creates a setting lifted directly from an Orientalised fantasy. Both internally, and on its single external street facade, the building is an unusually thorough example of Moorish Revival architecture, with the Islamic and Saracenic parts perhaps derived from the pages of an Owen Jones-style pattern book (Fig. 8). The facade's banded red-and-yellow ashlar stone is reminiscent of the Alhambra in Granada, while the four exaggerated ogee-shaped windows call to mind Persian palaces. Inside, Arabesque pattern-work abounds, while the *Ark* has been compared to both the gleaming white Taj Mahal and an Egyptian mosque (Fig. 9). The decision to use a form of Islamic Revivalism for the Bradford Synagogue is worth examining because it was certainly a very intentional choice. The previous work of the architect, Thomas Healey, primarily consisted of unsurprising churches in West Yorkshire [31, p. 90, 122, 127, 165, 187, 262, 325, 386] and gave no hint that the same firm might come up with this paragon of Moorish, or Moresque, design.

The Moorish and Orientalist architecture that became prevalent in synagogues across continental Europe during the late nineteenth century is often taken to be a straightforward part of the wider imperial fascination with the exotic. With the expansion of empire came a broadening of Europe's horizons and an age of great excitement for all things distant and unfamiliar, loudly heralded by the Great Exhibition of 1851. A romanticised and often eroticised curiosity was combined with a perennial religious interest in Jerusalem as the crucible of the Judeo-Christian faith, and this in turn gave so-called 'Moorish' culture, especially that from the Middle East, a particular fascination. In painting, Moorish depictions gave for example a pretext for the exploration of the female form that European religious mores otherwise precluded. Similarly, Moorish architecture appeared to offer an opportunity for playful escapism.

If interpreted solely within this trend, the Moorish Revival synagogues in Britain might be regarded as part of the same Anglicising approach as the St John's Wood Synagogue. The Islamic and Egyptian patterns seen in the latter, such as the palmates in the coffered ceiling, or the Saracenic mouldings of the suspended



Figure 8: The exterior of the Bradford Synagogue.



Figure 9: The Ark of the Bradford Synagogue.

lighting, could be cited as evidence of an attempt by Collins to embellish the dominant Italianate decorative strategy with more exotic flourishes. But in the case of the Bradford Synagogue, the Moorish elements play a very different role, and are very much unlike the prevailing British use of Orientalism. The Islamic influence is taken by Healey as the starting point and followed through entirely; indeed, the synagogue barely contains a single element of ornamentation not based on some variant of Middle Eastern design. This is not to claim that the building is true to any particular strand of Islamic architecture, since it too is of the pattern-book approach that typified Orientalist design in the period. But as an example of Islamic motifs being applied to a building of serious intent, it has few counterparts. Motifs in this vein were certainly a staple of the eclectic style of architecture that was popular at the time, but they were rarely used with the intensity found in this and other synagogues. This approach can be found in synagogues across Europe, the most famous perhaps being the Neue Synagogue (1866) in Berlin and the Budapest Great Synagogue (1859), but these are undoubtedly exceptions to the European norm.

In contrast, most elaborate examples of Moorish Revival, or even just of exotic architecture, were designed for purposes of entertainment, and always came with a hint of irony. Arab Hall (1879) in Leighton House was a gallery for a collection of Arabic tiles, Brighton Pavilion (1823) was built as a royal pleasure palace, while the Alhambra (1758) at Kew Gardens was erected as an amusement to be experienced on a Sunday afternoon stroll. Instead of being a straightforward part of European playfulness with new architectural styles, synagogues such as Bradford were a serious response to the call by Fergusson, among others, that each culture must choose its own architectural style [6, p. iii–xiv; 32]. As such the adoption of Moorish architecture becomes a statement of ‘otherness’ rather than of the Anglicising impulse in St John’s Wood.

It is therefore not surprising that the notion of Moorish Revival as a suitably ‘Jewish’ style first emerged due to external pressures. Indeed, the Kassel Jewish community famously had to actively fight off a desire on the part of the city for their synagogue to be in the Moorish style, pleading not to be marginalised by an architectural mark of ‘otherness’ [33, p. 505; 34, p. 80]. In the case of Bradford Synagogue, although it is difficult to be certain whose decision it was to build in the chosen style, as no early records survive, according to the synagogue’s historian it was probably the architect, Thomas Healey, himself Christian. His

contemporaneous work suggests that he was interested in seeking the appropriate style for each culture and typology. His Leeds Exchange (1873) adopted a modified Gothic suitable for a hub of financial trading, while his church at Manningham (1860) used Yorkshire vernacular [35, p. 127, 318]. None contains any trace of Moorish Revival. When presented with a Jewish commission, he seems to have deemed such a style to be the most appropriate for the Jewish narrative. This of course exposes one of the difficulties of reading from architecture when other records have been lost. Although no community would have accepted a design for their building with which they disagreed, it is impossible to be fully certain where it was an expression by the architect of his perception of the community, or an expression by the community itself.

Regardless of where it originated, many in the Anglo-Jewish community – as with their European counterparts – eventually embraced the architectural product of this Orientalising gaze. Primarily this was due to, on the one hand, the elevating connotations of being perceived as coming from the Orient, and on the other hand the centrality of the exilic landscape within Jewish communal identity.

Ever since Said's recasting of the term 'Orientalism' in 1978, it has been difficult to treat the process as anything but a pejorative one. The frequent depictions in *Punch* of Benjamin Disraeli as Aladdin [36] seem to suggest as much. However, during the late-19th century, for a group to be associated with the Orient could be both liberating and ennobling. It also played an essential role in the dramatising of Jewish exile. When Disraeli himself referred to the Jews as 'Arabs without horses', he was associating his ethnic group with a vague notion of Oriental nobility and wisdom [37]. Within the dominant Christian religious narrative, the concept of the Jews as a relic from Western civilisation took on a positive meaning of the Jews being the bearers of a 'lost' knowledge. The countless studies of the original 'Temple of the Jews' in Jerusalem as a foundational piece of architecture attested to this [38, 39]. Viollet Le Duc even went as far as to argue fancifully that the Byzantine style was derived from Jewish temple carvings that had only recently been excavated [40, pp. 171–246].

A closer examination of the composition of Moorish elements in the Bradford Synagogue's interior reveals the curiously theatric manner in which the Orientalising gaze was reflected. The gleaming white *Ark*, set within a darkened star-studded apse to emphasise its exotic beauty, is presented as if a stage-set. In a stylistic manner, the synagogue seems to be presenting a vignette of a fantasy city from the East, the domed *Ark* glowing by the light of the stars, and the sky (ceiling) lit brilliant red as though caught in a perpetual sunset (**Fig. 10**). The Arabian Night fantasy is completed by the reddish glow which emanates from behind the *Ark*'s mashrabiya-type latticed windows, reflected in turn on the rim of the apse.

The striking use of red for the ceiling and *Ark* interior has strong parallels with nineteenth-century Orientalist painting. Sumptuous reds are often used to convey the veiled inaccessibility of the romantic fantasy of the depicted Orient. In Delacroix's *La Mort de Sardanapale* (**Fig. 11**) or Frank Dicksee's *Leila*, for example, the flowing red fabrics enigmatically suggest an erotic opulence. The Bradford Synagogue, as with these paintings, is theatricising a space defined by a distant 'otherness'. The synagogue thus creates a detachment between the Moorish architecture and its occupants, between the exilic landscape and the performance that is taking place within it.

It is this detachment that dispels the notion that, through the choice of ornamentation, the Anglo-Jewish community was connecting with and expressing ownership over an 'Eastern' identity. If there was any acknowledgment of 'Eastern' roots, then this was only in an abstract, distant and mythological sense. This attitude can be seen in the manner in which the Jewish establishment at the time attempted to distance itself from so-called 'Oriental Jews'. An unexpectedly forceful account from 1882 in the *Jewish Chronicle* described the educational work 'from China to Peru, as one might say' of the Anglo-Jewish Association, a charitable body. Its task was reported to be 'no less than civilising the Jews of the East', thus lifting them from their 'state of barbarism'. The view felt towards the 'Orient' by that particular author clearly lay somewhere between patronising concern and abstract detachment [41].

This theatricising of an abstracted Orientalist approach in the Bradford Synagogue in the 1870s captured the Jewish exilic attitude to history. Put into the analogous terms of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), when the Bradford congregation performed their prayer service, they were symbolically assembling their portable temple amidst the tumultuous sand dunes of history. The surrounding architecture which embodies this tumult interacted with the community's rituals in the manner of a stage set, providing a contrasting backdrop against which the act of calling into being a sacred space where there was previously none could be repeatedly performed. It was a view of history which is enigmatic and chaotic but in which the continuity of the assembled ritual objects, as well as the ritual itself, carves out a space of order that recalls previous similar moments of sacredness stretching back through past generations.



Figure 10: The ceiling of the Bradford Synagogue.



Figure 11: Delacroix's *La Mort de Sardanapale*.

In the next cathedral synagogue to be considered, the West London Synagogue, this particular dramatisation of history is even more pronounced and assumes yet greater heights of grandeur.

Embracing Contradiction: West London Synagogue, Seymour Place, Marylebone, London (1867–70)

As the largest Jewish Reform synagogue in Britain, with around 1,000 seats and costing £20,000 to construct [42, p. 139], the third building erected by the West London Synagogue of British Jews was intended as a grand statement of the success of that version of Judaism in the country. When the Reform community was first established in Britain in 1840, it was seen as far more than just the importation of the modernising ideology that had originated in Germany. It was intended to unite Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews within a shared community and common religious practice, as emphasised by the congregation's name. The community was therefore very much concerned with fashioning a distinctly Anglo-Jewish identity and wanted their building to project this.

Henry David Davis and Barrow Emmanuel, appointed as the architects by way of a competition of invited firms, were both members of the Reform movement, the latter even belonging to the West London Synagogue. They would therefore have had a close relationship with those commissioning the building, and been well placed to achieve the architectural expression desired by the community. In a heated exchange of letters in the pages of *The Builder*, Henry Collins, the architect of the St John's Wood Synagogue, hinted that Davis and Emmanuel had only been selected on the basis of their Reform affiliation. Collins, himself one of the unsuccessful entrants, accused the synagogue of ignoring the views of the appointed assessor for the competition [43, p. 577]. However, given the large number of protests that Collins regularly aired in magazines, it was simply his usual behaviour and so needs to be taken with a dose of salt. Davis and Emmanuel's earlier work had been mainly commercial projects for offices, banks and warehouses [7, p. 119], and the West London Synagogue largely established their reputation. They would go on to become possibly the most respected Jewish architects in late nineteenth century Britain, designing synagogues, schools and colleges as well as public buildings and working-class housing.

As with the two previous case studies, the architecture of the West London Synagogue played a relatively minor role in the congregation's perception of itself, despite the relative grandeur and expense in this instance. An examination of the community's written correspondences from the period in which the synagogue was commissioned reveals scant discussion of the architecture, except for the most practical of concerns [44]. Correspondence between the building committee, architect and competition assessor do clarify in detail aspects of the design, such as the building cost or seating capacity, but on the subject of aesthetic preferences or decoration, tellingly nothing is put into writing. Indeed, retrospective histories of the West London Synagogue congregation, such as a recent authoritative book written by the biographer, Philippa Bernard, offer little discussion of the architecture in which the community has dwelt since the 1870s. It seems out of place for the community's social history to do anything but eclipse the architectural history [45].

This attitude of concern for people above monuments was demonstrated following Second World War damage suffered by the building during the Blitz. The majority of the intricate Arabesque tiling that decorated the synagogue's domed ceiling was shaken loose by a nearby explosion. The community received War Damage Compensation from the British government to restore the lost decoration; however, it was felt that the money would be better spent on the welfare and education of a group of children who had 'come out of the concentration camps' [46, p. 137; 47]. Hence the ceiling was simply painted white, and it remains so today, perhaps as a poignant reminder that the most enduring Jewish monuments are to be found in education rather than any decorated edifices of stone or steel.

In the design of the West London Synagogue we can also see clear indications of the Jewish historical tendency to build restrained, enigmatic exteriors. The site chosen for the building was almost 'entirely buried behind houses', with the entrance facade being restricted to 'about 20 ft wide' [47, p. 499] between two other buildings (**Fig. 12**). This eastern facade, which alone faces a main street, is of an unassuming design. Indeed, what might have been the building's most outspoken feature has been carefully hidden. The substantial dome that dominates the interior of the sanctuary is, externally, enclosed by a modest pitched roof. Exposed domes on synagogues such as the one at the Lauderdale Road Synagogue are historical exceptions. Even during this decade of integration and prosperity for Anglo-Jewry the trend towards modestly displayed synagogues persisted. Unsurprisingly, it is in the interior of the synagogue in which the strongest architectural expression can be found.

The desire to Anglicise, and thus innovate Jewish practice, was manifested in changes made in the Reform synagogue layout to accommodate alterations in the prayer service and liturgy. It was this Reform ideology to which the West London Synagogue aligned itself, enabling a more complete embrace of modernity and leading to a bolder layout than, say, the St John's Wood Synagogue. The brief given to Davis and Emmanuel requested, for example, a pulpit 'for the minister to be seen and heard' [48]. This was a feature lifted directly from Anglican churches, where the minister's sermons featured far more prominently in the Sunday service than a rabbi's sermon previously had in the synagogue. Similarly, the floor plan drawn by the architects included a 'minister's robing room' and a 'retiring room for male choristers', both of these borrowed from church layouts [49]. However, despite such changes, as we shall see, the layout of the ritual objects and seating remained an element of continuity within an 'alien' building.

However central or otherwise the building might have been to the identity of its community, the West London Synagogue is a stunningly confident architectural statement. Seen from an aesthetic and structural point of view, it is neither a pure Oriental imitation as in the Bradford Synagogue nor a determinedly Anglicising exercise of Victorian taste as in the St John's Wood Synagogue. Instead it expresses the essential contradictions at the heart of both nineteenth century Anglo-Jewry and Jewish tradition more broadly. The notion of the exilic landscape is here dramatised as a joyous space of contradiction in preference to a serene space of order.

One such contradiction is, of course, the sharp contrast between the innovations that the community was enacting in its ritual and the choice of enclosing architecture. The Anglicised [50] innovations included large parts of the prayer services being recited in English rather than the more traditional Hebrew, and the introduction of Protestant decorum. As discussed earlier, the layout of the synagogue was slightly altered accordingly. Even the overall orientation of the synagogue service shifted further eastwards, indicated by the prominent pulpit. Jamilly points out that whereas previously the focus of a service was the *Chazan* leading the community in prayers from *within* the congregation, now increasingly the focus shifted to the rabbi who would preach to and pray for the congregation [50, p. 83]. But for all this Anglicisation of the service and plan layout, the enclosing structure seemed to move in the opposite direction.



Figure 12: The exterior of the West London Synagogue.

An overpowering Byzantine dome inspired by, according to *The Building News*, 'the Santa Sofia in Constantinople' dominated the sanctuary [51, p. 258], while rich Byzantine and Arabesque motifs covered almost every surface of the ceiling. Hebrew lettering around the base of the central dome and along the arch of the vestibule are reminiscent of Arabic calligraphic decoration, while the Ark, with its Ottoman-style dome and intricately carved marble mashrabiya latticework would not look out of place as an Islamic Revival addition to somewhere like Kew Gardens (**Fig. 13**).

These design features might have partly been a nod to the Spanish roots of many of the community's founding members, whose families came from a Sephardi background. Or perhaps it is part of an assertion of the more vaguely defined 'Eastern' roots that even many Ashkenazi Jews came to associate with in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. Indeed, many British Jews who considered themselves comfortably integrated into society now associated the German and Polish roots of Ashkenazi Judaism with newly arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe, and so would rather emphasise more distant Oriental origins – however mythological they might sometimes be. But when seen together with the marked Anglicisation of the service and layout, a set of contradictions emerges which suggests an alternative explanation.

Etchings of the building published at the time of its completion seem to revel in these contradictions. An image presented in *The Graphic*, a new illustrated newspaper, of a minister looking out from the steps of the



Figure 13: The interior of the West London Synagogue.

Ark would have called to mind a priest stepping out of a Saracenic temple, if not for traditional tassels on the edges of his prayer shawl or the top-hatted gentlemen behind him [52] (**Fig. 14**). Even more remarkable is an image produced for the synagogue's jubilee depicting rows of men in top hats and long jackets, holding prayer books but without the customary prayer shawl, again gathered in front of the *Ark* (**Fig. 15**). If one was unaware of the seriousness of the image it could easily be assumed to be a delegation of visitors marvelling at an Orientalist exhibit at the Great Exhibition, pamphlets in hand. Evidently this building is a celebration of the drama of the multiple layers of Jewish identity. The 'Oriental' prayer service is dressed in Anglicised guise which is enacted within an Orientalist architectural landscape, which in turn sits in a Protestant city, London. Embracing such contradictions is after all an essential part of an exilic consciousness.

The architecture of the West London Synagogue also contained explicit stylistic contradictions, revealing another product of the dramatisation of exile, namely the 'free space' that could be given to the architects. Because there existed a certain detachment from the synagogue's design on the part of the community, the role of the architect became far less rigid and proscribed than in many other building types. Indeed, from the start of the competition to select an architect there does not seem to have been any proscribed architectural approach. The four architects who accepted the building committee's invitation to participate submitted their designs in a range of styles, including 'Italian', 'Classic' and 'Byzantine'. Eventually, after selecting Davis and Emmanuel as the winner, the building committee wrote to the firm to request that they merge two quite different proposals that had been submitted [53], one that was 'after the model of a basilica' and the other with a central dome. The result is a building freed from concern for architectural purity in favour of a liberal eclecticism.

In their write up of the synagogue, the editors of *The Building News* commented favourably on the refreshingly open treatment of historical precedent by the architects. In fact, they suggest that in synagogue commissions an architect is 'obliged' to indulge their fancy, lamenting also that in other public competitions architects cannot 'divest themselves of their strict adherence to ancient precedent as freely' [47]. Anglican church designers certainly were far more restricted by precedent, being required to conform to certain architectural norms to ensure the building's compliance with dogma. By the 1870s, church architecture was only just emerging from the rigid grip of the Ecclesiologists. There thus seems to have been, among the architectural community, a good appetite for the type of 'free space' granted by synagogue commissions. From a reading of examples such as the West London Synagogue, this free form of eclecticism might well have even been the answer most widely offered by Jews in response to Hübsch's question. Certainly in relation to the manner in which churches were being designed during the period, it represented a suitably distinctive Jewish architectural identity.

Within the West London Synagogue's eclectic and exilic landscape, the element of continuity was, once again, invested in the ritual objects through which the congregation performed the choreography of the service. The synagogue sanctuary is designed around the familiar layout of objects: the *Bima*, for example, was situated at the centre such that prayers and readings would be directed eastward from within the congregation (**Fig. 16**). Although the central position of the *Bima* is evident from the original architectural drawings as well as from early photographs, the focus of the space was later shifted towards the east. Following the Reform custom that originated in Germany, the *Bima* was moved to a position immediately in front of the *Ark* with prayers and readings performed towards the congregation from the front. (**Fig. 16**) Nonetheless, the combination of the *Ark*, Eternal Light and *Bima* was retained. The *Amod* was also in some sense retained as the pulpit can be seen as its Anglicised replacement, just as the silk scarf became an Anglicised replacement for the traditional prayer shawl.

The semi-autonomous nature of the *Bima* and *Ark* emphasised their importance as a set of objects placed *within*, not as part of, their surroundings in the West London Synagogue. They stood apart even before the *Bima* was moved eastwards in an actual physical act of autonomy. The familiarity of this combination meant that they appeared, to those who are part of the particular religious culture, as belonging to a lineage of similar sets through the history of synagogues rather than belonging to this synagogue in particular. The *Ark*'s autonomy was given special emphasis. The use of a dome, latticed windows and gate seem to endow it with the status of a complete architectural object. Many of the published etchings of the synagogue reinforce this message by showing the *Ark* devoid of context and thus with a strong sense of placelessness as a floating piece of architecture. It is perhaps indicative of this autonomy and of the hierarchy in a synagogue that when the building's foundation stone was ceremoniously laid, it was placed not as the first stone of the walls, but as a foundation stone of the *Ark* itself [54, p.10].



Figure 14: An illustration of the West London Synagogue from *The Graphic*, 1889.



Figure 15: An illustration from *The Building News* depicting the West London Synagogue, 1890.

A Modern Tyre: Princes Road Synagogue, Liverpool (1872–74) and New West End Synagogue, St Petersburg Mews, Bayswater, London (1877–79)

In the Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool and the New West End Synagogue in London, built with great confidence and at great expense at the end of the 1870s, we find perhaps the strongest expression of an exilic architecture during that pivotal decade for Jewish architecture in Britain. The combination of an ambitious community that was placing real importance upon its architecture, with an architect held in high regard, produced a pair of buildings which carried exilic ideas to their most magnificent extremes.

These two synagogues were both designed by the brothers, George and William Audsley, and are remarkably similar in layout and ornamentation. As such they can be discussed together in this final section. After seeing the success of the Liverpool synagogue, Samuel Montagu, 1st Baron Swaythling of the New West End congregation invited George Audsley to design a similar building in London, but with a substantially larger budget [53]. He pointedly invited George personally rather than inviting the brothers' firm [55]. Of the two brothers, George usually led the design process, an assumption based on his more extensive writings and lectures. It is to him that most of the credit for the firm's ingenuity is usually given. In fact this later commission was shared with Nathan Joseph, a Jewish architect who, although well respected, was less accomplished and seems to have been appointed primarily to advise on the building's specifically Jewish requirements. Indeed, correspondences suggest that the Audsleys took a certain amount of pleasure in including unusual design elements that would go unnoticed by their appointed chaperon.

The New West End Synagogue, and to a lesser extent its predecessor in Liverpool, was formed in the aftermath of a particular dispute within the Jewish community. The 'Battle of Bayswater', as it came to be known in the press, raged for several months over whether to extend or rebuild the existing Bayswater Synagogue, outgrown by its congregation, or not. Facing inaction, a vocal group left to set up a new community nearby [48; 56; 57]. As such, the new building was unusually important to this prosperous community's self-perception and this explains why great care was put into selecting the architect and their design. Although the exterior presents a bold façade for the New West End Synagogue (**Fig. 17**), it barely hints at the opulent indulgence of Jewish expression which can be found, naturally, on the inside.

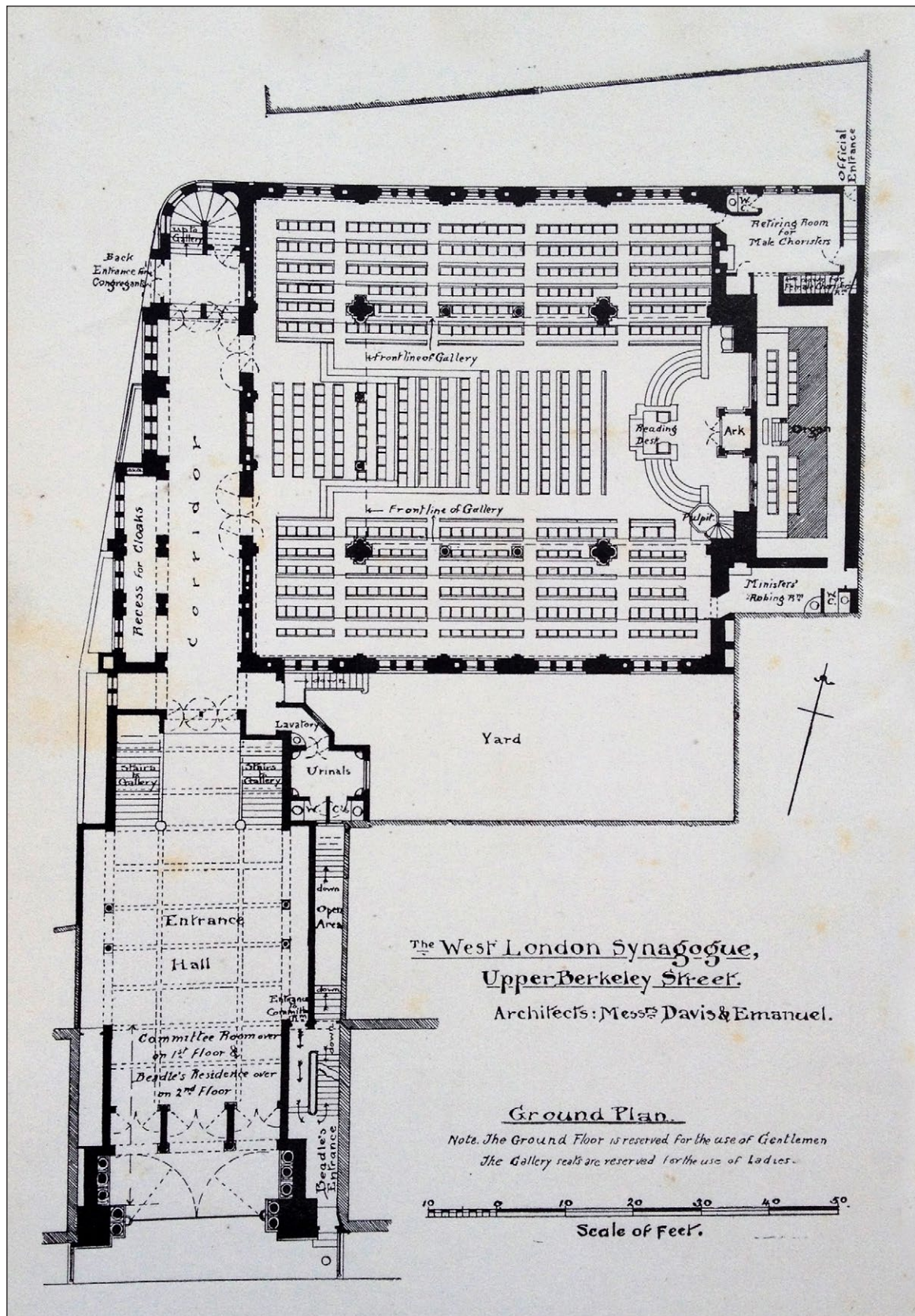


Figure 16: A plan of the West London Synagogue showing the revised position of the Bima, labelled as the 'Reading Desk', and reorientation of the seating.



Figure 17: The Exterior of the New West End Synagogue.

The interiors of this pair of synagogues are, as so often, described as belonging to many contradictory stylistic groups. In the article written by a *Jewish Chronicle* correspondent to report on the completion of the Princes Road Synagogue, it is alternately described as Saracenic and as of the 'Gothic school', while another article in the same newspaper asserted that it is in the Graeco-Byzantine style [58]. Its entry in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* simply concludes that it is a 'muddle of styles'.

The most common descriptor attached to both of these synagogues is Moresque. This isn't an accurate description, however, as we shall see, but it does capture the impression that the buildings made on those who encountered them for the first time. Approaching each of the synagogues, one would have first been struck by the imposing domed turrets – now demolished on the Princes Road example – that were redolent of towering minarets. Inside, the Islamic-style domes of the *Ark* would have had a similar effect (**Fig. 18**).

Certain observers [59] have attributed this to nostalgia for the 'Golden Age' of Spanish Jewry for many of the same reasons as in the previous two synagogues. The re-publishing of Owen Jones' etchings of the Alhambra, of which Audsley was a known admirer, and which more or less coincided with the opening of these synagogues, might well have reinforced this perception [60]. But such an explanation seems unlikely to have been the intention. Unlike the West London Synagogue, the members of the New West End community were primarily Ashkenazi jews [61; 62], and Samuel Montagu, an active advocate for the



Figure 18: Decorations atop the Ark in the New West End Synagogue.

new Eastern European Jewish immigrants, would hardly have desired to distance the community from its Eastern European roots. To describe these buildings as Spanish-inspired Moorish style is hence to make too simplistic a categorisation.

Instead, the Moorish elements of these two synagogues are part of a broader Orientalising approach that can best be described as radically eclectic. Carroll Meeks has provided a useful system for classifying the practice of Eclecticism, degrees of which have always been central to architectural advancement [63]. He describes eclectic design as it progresses from 'commingling' different styles within a single city street to 'engrafting' them together within a single building. This then evolved into more reactionary Revivalist Eclecticism whereby the associative values of each style became more tightly controlled according to its historical precedent. Late-nineteenth century synagogue architecture almost invariably falls into the fourth category which Meeks identifies, that of Creative Eclecticism. Meeks defines this mode of design as exhibiting 'freedom and independence rather than literal exactness' in its use of historical forms, evolving them into something new, not what was seen in the 'historic past'. Synagogues, by virtue of creating an intentional theatre of the 'alien', because of the exilic consciousness of Jewish people, were able to embrace such a 'free' approach earlier than was widely acceptable in other buildings. We shall see that for George Audsley this offered a rare outlet for his pent-up Creative Eclectic impulses.

An exploration of the architect's earlier career and intellectual fascinations reveals how this explosion of Jewish exilic architecture came about, and why these two synagogues, especially the New West End, proved to be the ideal client and ideal commission for George Audsley. His appointment as architect for the Liverpool synagogue was decided by way of an architectural competition to which 'all the leading Jewish architects of England' had been invited to take part. The only exception was Audsley, a Christian architect best known for his church building, who had never designed a synagogue before. According to a later account in *Shoppell's Modern Houses* (a popular architectural magazine) his design was 'unanimously' favoured by the building committee, 'much to the surprise of the other competitors' [64, p. 8–9].

George Audsley sat at the heart of the Victorian fascination with the exotic and with theories about the role of nationalism in architecture. Alongside Owen Jones and Christopher Dresser, with whom Audsley shared a publisher [65], he was a pioneer of the ornamental pattern-book, a genre that swept Victorian Britain. Audsley's many books contained reams of flat, chromo-lithographic templates of vividly coloured motifs which instructed the designer, or layperson, how to evoke a specific historical era or distant culture through architectural decoration. A further book that he published, *Handbook of Christian Symbolism*, catalogued in detail the meanings of specific Christian symbols [66], suggesting therefore that his use of symbols was precise and intentional.

To this interest in decoration should be added Audsley's specific interest in 'Oriental' art, especially that of Japan, which constituted perhaps the most mysterious 'other' for Victorian Britain. On this subject he was an authority, lecturing and publishing about the subject [67; 68]. He delighted in the striking contrasts that gave Japanese art its vibrancy. In his self-illustrated two-volume tome, *The Ornamental Arts of Japan*, he invited British readers, for example, to marvel at the 'delicacy and accuracy' of the floss silk and gold thread set against a 'deep blue satin' background of a *Fukusa* embroidery [69].

Reading through Audsley's books on decoration and on Japanese art, filled as they are with elaborate prints, one is struck by his penchant for and mastery of bold colour. Intriguingly he often borrowed a colour palette from one set of cultural motifs and applied it to the motifs of another. This is most evident in his illuminated manuscripts such as the unparalleled *Sermon on the Mount* [70; 71]. Even his pattern templates in books such as *Polychromatic Decoration as Applied to Buildings in the Medieval Style* use a palette clearly influenced by his Japanese investigations [72], as though he is retrospectively painting colour into history to evoke certain non-chronological associations.

These interests clearly also informed Audsley's later architectural ambitions, and yet curiously they are absent from the architectural projects that he completed prior to the two synagogues. They were more commonly expressed in his other design endeavours. His piano designs, for instance, were richly decorated in the suggestive flat ornament found in his pattern books. His bold colour combinations are also evident in his furniture, often combining, say, Gothic forms with a Japanese colour palette. And occasionally in the architectural flourishes added to his organ designs we can see a nascent interest in depicting fleeting glimpses of the Orient.

However, in the sphere of architecture, it was only when designing these two synagogues that George Audsley was suddenly able to fully indulge his vision in an empyrean landscape of colour, pattern, symbolism and mythical sense of the Orient. Both of the buildings were hence filled with symbolic references to the Islamic, Japanese, Gothic, Saracenic and Classical canons, juxtaposed together into a cohesive whole of

scintillating exuberance. As though he was emulating a page from his own pattern books, the collision of disparate historical and global motifs creates something wholly unfamiliar from seemingly simple parts (Figs. 19, 20).

The riot of associations is reminiscent of the quintessential exercises in Creative Eclecticism in Glasgow by Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, of whom Audsley was a noted admirer. Some of Audsley's later works, such as the Bowling Green Offices in New York, even closely emulated Thomson's idiosyncratic form of Greek Eclecticism [73]. Thomson's combinations of styles, especially from Greek, Indian Hindu and Egyptian architecture, were also replete with didactic symbolism. Epitomised by his Caledonia Road Church, Thompson's buildings present a heroic vision of Orientalised 'otherness' through a scenographic picturesque quality that addressed the questions of imperial expansion and cultural identity that Britain was grappling with at the time. As with Audsley's synagogue designs, the Thomsonsque approach was also defined by its slightly ruinous quality, wavering between a futuristic vision and a relic seemingly unearthed during archaeological adventures from afar, reports of which were already delighting Victorian Britain.

Given this eclectic background, Audsley was the ideal candidate to try his hand at Jewish architecture. His desire to combine his passions into a vision of an Orientalised 'other' was embraced by the two synagogue communities, and by Anglo-Jewry more broadly, as an embodiment of the exilic alien landscape in which Judaic ritual could be dramatised. Certainly this quality can be unmistakably found in the New West End Synagogue in London. Standing at the centre of the sanctuary, looking east towards the *Ark*, its golden domes lit from behind by the richly coloured rose window, one is surely put in mind of a shimmering Oriental city lifted from the pages of Marco Polo, glistening before the rising sun (Fig. 21). The space was perhaps later best summed up by a *Jewish Chronicle* journalist who suggested that it had the 'gaudy grandeur of the tomb of Tutankhamen' [74], capturing both the seeming timelessness of its ruinous quality and the sense of 'otherness', intriguingly referring to perhaps the ultimate 'other' within the mythic depths of Jewish history, i.e. Egypt, which reputedly enslaved its people.

Although this extreme sense of the 'alien' as a setting for ritual was never explicitly articulated within the popular press, or by those parties involved in the design of synagogues in the 1870s, the Chief Rabbi



Figure 19: Detail from the upper gallery in the New West End Synagogue.



Figure 20: Detail from the Ark in the New West End Synagogue.

of the United Synagogue perhaps came closest. Rabbi Adler, one of the main instigators of Anglo-Jewry's promotion of 'Anglicisation', came over to give an address at the inaugural ceremony of the Princes Road Synagogue in Liverpool. He lavished praise upon the community for having built a synagogue of the highest artistic taste. Most intriguingly he declared, 'You have set yourself a monument in this. The modern Tyre' [75, p. 390]. The choice of such a comparison cannot have been incidental, for Tyre remains best known within the Judaeo-Christian tradition as the city whose destruction was prophesied by Ezekiel [76]. However, far from being an ominous comparison, the reference highlights the mystical fantasy at play in the synagogue's architecture. Tyre was, to the ancient Israelites, the exotic 'other' from which the rare cedars of Lebanon were sent in order to build the Jerusalem Temple. Its prophesied mortality underscored the transiency of the exotic fantasy for, as Ruskin writes about Tyre in *Stones of Venice*, 'only memory remains' [77, p. 2]. This perfectly described 'otherness' was then even more pronounced in the New West End Synagogue than in its Liverpool predecessor.

The ritual objects and the choreography of ritual that take place in relation to both of Audsley's synagogues were, of course, the element of continuity within the fantasised exilic landscape. The familiar combination of the *Ark*, *Bima*, *Amod* and Eternal Light re-enacted the idea of the portable *Mishkan* set up in the midst of the alien desert dunes. The centrality of these pieces was emphasised by Audsley and by the congregation even more acutely as autonomous architectural objects than they had been in the West London Synagogue. The *Ark* now was only minimally integrated into the apse and could easily be imagined, devoid of context, standing even as a building in its own right. This impression would have been even more pronounced when the New West End Synagogue was first opened. In order that the synagogue could be opened free of debt, the building was constructed in two phases, and the initial phase did not include much of the internal decoration. The walls of the sanctuary and the apse were hence plainly plastered, while the columns that support the gallery and arcades were left as exposed iron, 'unseemly in their rough state' [78, p. 13]. In contrast, the *Ark*, *Amod* and *Bima* were completed to perfection, with their ornate marble, alabaster and gold leaf resplendent against the bare-walled surroundings. This ordering of the building works hence revealed where the focus of the synagogue lay, and in which part of the architecture any sense of sacredness is bound up.



Figure 21: Interior of the New West End Synagogue.

Certainly at the inaugural ceremony for the new synagogue building, with the walls and columns still bare, with the ritual objects resplendent, and the Ark's golden Assyrian domes glistening in the sunlight that streamed in through the rose window, the image of the portable *Mishkan* assembled in exile was abundantly clear. Thus the Ode sung at the climax of the service was eminently appropriate. According to the *Order of Service* booklet printed for the event, it was a song in three verses with an evolving chorus in between [79]. The first verse describes the building of ancient Jerusalem and the construction of the Temple, a divine dwelling place of stone. The second verse relates the 'desolation' that followed the destruction of Jerusalem and the original Temple by God's own 'vengeful hand'. The final verse depicts the years of Jewish exile when 'thy wandering sons' travelled 'from shore to shore', with temples of stones being replaced by those of 'prayer'. It is remarkable that at the opening of this newly built house of prayer at the end of the 1870s, a version of the arc of Jewish history should be recounted which de-emphasised monuments of stone in favour of the embrace of displacement and a portable identity. To emphasis this point, the first chorus used a biblical phrase, attributed to an observer looking out over an Israelite encampment and who speaks of the beauty of 'Jacob's dwellings' (אהליך יעקב) in which 'Jacob' was a synonym for the Israelites. By the final chorus the phrase was transformed into the less tangible 'Jacob's voice' (קול יעקב). This Ode seems to be a reminder of the sole perennial Jewish imperative within synagogue building: that there should be no desire to recreate the original Temple, but rather to build sites in which one could dramatise and embrace the concept of exile. The New West End Synagogue was clearly such a site.

We Are All Jews Now

I would define the history of this century [as one in which] hundreds of millions of people in Africa, in the Balkans, South East Asia, soon you will see more, are becoming 'Jews' [George Steiner].

The exilic condition is not unique to Jews. Intellectually and emotionally, as the influence of nation states and absolutes are eroded today, increasingly broad categories of people are defining themselves by it. Circumstantially, the 20th century saw ever larger groups become stateless or 'hunted' [80; 81]. Within this context, the Jewish experience can be instructive as having developed practices that have long formally embraced exile. For Kant, this embrace was captured by the biblical instruction against the use of 'graven images', which, more than simply discouraging physical monuments, prompted continuous restless inquiry [82, p. 84]. For Scholem, it constitutes the Jewish brand of messianism, thereby rejecting the Christian concept of a messianic sublime that has a position in the historical past, in favour of a symbolic messiah whose significance as the marker of the end of time can never arrive. Thus there is no longing for the past in Jewish thought, only a restless 'looking to the future' [83, p. 57], or as Scholem puts it, 'a life lived in deferment' [84, p. 35]. Too few architects have to date engaged with the synagogue as a model which so clearly addresses this condition. When Bruno Zevi pointed to Erich Mendelsohn's 1921 Einstein Tower as an example of Jewish architecture [85, p. 165], he was right in that it captures something of the Jewish sense of restlessness and 'knowledge in motion' through its formal acrobatics. But in the 1870s British synagogues discussed in this essay we can find a more experiential enjoyment of exile which truly attempts to locate one's place in relation to history.

The five synagogues as described were an attempt, consciously or otherwise, to translate the exilic architecture of the *Eruv* into a more concrete form. Just as the *Eruv* must exist in the context of a 'found' city, so too these synagogues created for themselves a found landscape of borrowed styles and motifs. The minimal physicality of the *Eruv* is mirrored by the essential aspects of the ritual objects which call the space into being as a synagogue: the surface of the *Bima*, the glow of the Eternal Light or the enclosure of the *Ark*.



Figure 22: A synagogue ablaze in Germany on Kristallnacht in November 1938, from the Yad Vashem Archive.

Like the *Eruv*, the identity of the synagogues as such is only legible to those with knowledge of the tradition. And as with the *Eruv*, the synagogue structure has no intrinsic sacredness, and is only sacred in the act of momentarily containing a dramatisation of a Jewish world-view. Any architectural grandeur is only seen as valuable insofar as it facilitates the more important immaterial trappings of shared communal experience, be they text, music, or performed ritual.

This portable notion of architecture was premised on a culturally held fluency in the art of re-appropriating one another's motifs. In light of the collapse of Jewish emancipation across Europe that followed the hope of the late-19th century, one must acknowledge the darker undercurrent that accompanied the building of synagogues with Orientalised elements in this period. The mark of 'otherness' that the Jews of Kassel pleaded against turned out to be a harbinger of rising anti-semitism across the continent. By the start of the First World War, the label of 'Oriental', which at first carried a sense of nobility, had become firmly a negative one. And perhaps it always had been that way. David Kalmar points out that the gentility of the letter sent to the Florentine Jewish leaders by the Accademia del Arti Delle Disegno masked the aggressive anti-Jewish tone of the meeting that had rejected the original synagogue design, during which one participant's diatribe called for the committee to 'tell the truth' to the Jews and bar them from building altogether [34, p. 87]. Ultimately the underlying antipathy towards 'otherness' culminated in the images, seared now in the Jewish consciousness, of synagogues in all manner of exotic styles being burnt by Nazis on *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 (Fig. 22). British Jews were spared the horrors of what happened on the European continent, but the painful reminder of the perpetual tension in Judaeo-Christian culture, between fluid (Judaeo) and fixed (Christian) identities, had a profound effect and contributed to preventing the radical experiments within synagogue building from continuing as the twentieth century unfolded.

Innovative experiments from 1870s synagogues, not least those by a Christian architect, George Audsley, offer however a pointer to how a creative approach to Jewish architecture might develop in future.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

References

1. **Kalmar, I.** The Israelite Temple of Florence. In: Verkaaik, O ed. *Religious Architecture: The Anthropological Perspective*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; 2013.
2. **Levine, L.** *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press; 2005.
3. **Vlaardingerbroek, P.** *The Portuguese Synagogue In Amsterdam*. Netherlands: Waanders BV, Uitgeverij; 2013.
4. **Fletcher, BF.** *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*. 6th ed. London: Batsford; 1921.
5. **Fletcher, BF.** *The Romance of Architecture*. London: Batsford; 1929.
6. **Fergusson, J.** *A History of Architecture in All Countries*, Vol 1, 2nd ed. London: John Murray; 1874.
7. **Kadish, S.** *The Synagogues of Britain and Ireland*. New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press; 2011.
8. **Jamilly, E.** *The New West End Synagogue: An Architectural Appreciation* [Report]. London: Working Party on Jewish Monuments; 1990.
9. **Kadish, S.** Constructing Identity: Anglo-Jewry and Synagogue Architecture. *Architectural History*. 2002; Vol 45.
10. **Glasman, J.** Architecture and Anglicisation. In: *Jewish Quarterly*. 1987; 34(2).
11. **Hübsch, H.** *In Welchem Style Sollen Wir Bauen?* Karlsruhe: Müllerschen; 1828.
12. **Fraser, M.** *John Bull's Other Homes: State Housing and British Policy in Ireland, 1883–1922*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; 1996.
13. **Appelbaum, D.** Jewish Identity and Egyptian Revival Architecture In: *Journal Of Jewish Identities*. 2012; 5(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/jji.2012.0020>
14. **Synder, SC.** Acculturation and Particularism in the Modern City: Synagogue Building and Jewish Identity in Northern Europe. University of Michigan, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis); 2008.
15. **Anon.** An Ecclesiological Day in Manchester. In: *The Ecclesiologist*. 1857; Vol 18 (February).
16. **Anon.** Synagogue Details. In: *Jewish Chronicle*. 1873; August 29.
17. **Linsay, P.** *The Synagogues of London*. London: Vallentine Mitchell and Co; 1993.
18. **Renton, P.** *The Lost Synagogues of London*. London: Tynsder Publishing; 2000.
19. **The Bible.** (Old Testament, undated). Exodus 33, 25–27, 35–40.
20. **Babylonian.** Talmud (200–700 CE approx). Tractates *Shabbat*, *Succah* and *Eruvin*.

21. **Heschel, AJ.** *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux; 1975.
22. **Babylonian Talmud.** (200–700 CE approx). Tractate *Megillah*. Chapter 4.
23. **Babylonian Talmud.** (200–700 CE approx). Tractate *Eruvin* (especially chapters 1, 3).
24. **Jamilly, E.** Hyman Henry Collins: A Profile. In: *Quest*. 1965; (1).
25. **Glasman, J.** Architecture and Anglicisation. In: *Jewish Quarterly*. 1987; 34(2).
26. **Anon.** The Battle of Bayswater. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1873; January 24.
27. **Jacobs, L.** Inaugural Sermon [lecture] London Metropolitan Archives ACC/3121/D/01/081. London; 1964.
28. **Sutcliffe, A.** *London: An Architectural History*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press; 2006.
29. **Anon.** The New Central Branch Synagogue. In: *Jewish Chronicle*. 1870; January 14.
30. **Krinsky, CH.** *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning*. New York, NY: Dover Publications; 1996.
31. **Pevsner, N and Radcliffe, E.** *Yorkshire: The West Riding*. 2nd Ed. London: Yale University Press; 1967.
32. **Kamiya, T.** James Fergusson and Indian Architecture. In: *Discovery of Asia by Architectural Historians*. 2001; [unpublished, http://www.kamit.jp/08_fergusson/ferg_eng.htm, accessed 28 March 2014].
33. **Bedoire, F.** *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture 1830–1930*. Stockholm: KTAV; 2004.
34. **Kalmar, D.** Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews and Synagogue Architecture. In: *Jewish Social Studies*. 2001; 7(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2979/JSS.2001.7.3.68>
35. **Said, E.** *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books; 1979.
36. **Kirsch, A.** *Benjamin Disraeli*. New York: Schocken Books; 2008.
37. **Disraeli, B.** *Tancred*. London: Henry Colburn; 1847.
38. **Friedrich, T.** *Tempel und Palast Salomos*. Innsbruck: Wagner; 1887.
39. **Fergusson, J.** *Temples of the Jews and Other Buildings in the Haram Area*. London: John Murray; 1878.
40. **Viollet le Duc, E-E.** *Lectures on Architecture*. London: Sampson Low et al; 1877.
41. **Anon.** The Anglo-Jewish Association. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1882; June 23.
42. **Jamilly, E.** Anglo-Jewish Architects and Architecture in the 18th and 19th Centuries. In: *JHSET*. 1953–55; Vol 18.
43. **Collins, H.** Letter to the Editor. In: *The Builder*; 1867.
44. **Anon.** (undated) *The West London Synagogue*. London Metropolitan Archives ACC/2886; Southampton University Archive. Hartley Library MS140.
45. **Bernard, P.** *A Beacon of Light: A History of the West London Synagogue*. London: West London Synagogue; 2014.
46. **Rocker, S** 150,000 Pounds Lottery Jackpot for West End Synagogue. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1996; 1 November.
47. **Anon.** Jewish Synagogues. In: *The Building News*. 1867; July 19.
48. **Anon.** 'To Architects for the Proposed New Building of the West London Synagogue, Conditions' [Letter] MS140 1/31. Southampton: Southampton University Archive; 1867.
49. **Davis, D and Emmanuel, B.** (undated) Ground Plan [drawing] Special Collections SS/07/037/117. London: London Metropolitan Archives.
50. **Jamilly, E.** A Century of Anglo-Jewish Life 1870–1970. In: Levin, S ed., *Lectures to Commemorate the Centenary of the United Synagogue*. London: United Synagogue; 1973.
51. **Anon.** The New West London Synagogue. In: *The Building News*. 1867; April 7.
52. **Anon.** 'Removing Scrolls of the Law' [illustration, English Heritage boxfile: London Synagogues]. *The Graphic*. 1889; 16 November.
53. **Davis, D and Emmanuel, B.** [Letter] Southampton University Archive. Hartley Library MS140; 1867.
54. **Anon.** The West London Synagogue of British Jews. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1870; July 1.
55. **Mirwitch, J.** 'The Architecture of the New West End Synagogue' [lecture and unpublished notes]; 2007.
56. **Anon.** The New West End Synagogue. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1879; March 23.
57. **Anon.** The Battle of Bayswater. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1873; January 24.
58. **Anon.** The New Synagogue at Liverpool. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1874; December 18.
59. **Morris, J.** 'A General Review of the History and Development of the Synagogue from an Architectural Viewpoint', [unpublished thesis]. Southampton University Archive MS 116/69; 1931.
60. **Jamilly, E.** All Manner of Workmanship. In: Kadish, S ed. *Building Jerusalem: Jewish Architecture In Britain*. London: Valentine Mitchell; 1996.

61. **Lipman, V.** *The Building and Congregation 1879–1979*. Pamphlet to commemorate centenary. London: New West End Synagogue; 1979.
62. **Halford, F.** 'Invitation to Laying of Foundation Stone'. London Metropolitan Archives ACC 2712 13 071; 1879.
63. **Meeks, C.** Creative Eclecticism. In: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. 1953; 12(4).
64. **Anon.** The Synagogue of the Old Hebrew Congregation, Liverpool. In: *Shoppell's*. 1908; May.
65. **Acompanado, G.** *The Audsleys, The Blackies and the Practical Decorator and Ornamentalist*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University; 2010.
66. **Audsley, G** and **Audsley, W.** *Handbook of Christian Symbolism*. London: Day & Son; 1865.
67. **Audsley, GA** and **Bowes, JL.** *Keramic Art of Japan*. London: Henry Sotheran; 1881.
68. **Audsley, GA.** *Notes on Japanese Art*. London: David; 1874.
69. **Audsley, G.** *The Ornamental Arts of Japan*. London: Sampson Low et al; 1884.
70. **Audsley, G** and **Audsley, W.** *The Sermon on the Mount*. London: Day & Son; 1861.
71. **Audsley, G** and **Audsley, W.** *A Guide to the Art of Illuminating and Missal Painting*. London: George Rowney And Co; 1861.
72. **Audsley, G** and **Audsley W.** *Medieval Ornamental Style*. London: Henry Sotheran; 1882.
73. **Fox, D.** 'George Ashdown Audsley' [unpublished biography]. Philadelphia, PA: Friends of the Wanamaker Organ; 1995.
74. **Bermant, C.** The Last Bastion of Tolerant Orthodoxy. In: *Jewish Chronicle*. 1981; November 27.
75. **Anon.** The New Synagogue at Liverpool. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1879; September 11.
76. **The Bible.** (Old Testament, undated). *Book of Ezekiel*. Chapter 26.
77. **Ruskin, J.** *Stones of Venice*. London: John Murray; 1933.
78. **Anon.** The New West End Synagogue. In: *The Jewish Chronicle*. 1879; March 23.
79. **Anon.** New West End Synagogue. 'Order of the Service' [pamphlet]. London Metropolitan Archives ACC 2712 13 071; 1879.
80. **Steiner, G.** *In Bluebeard's Castle: Or Some Notes Towards a Redefinition of Culture*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press; 1971.
81. **Zack, N.** *On Beauty and Consolation* [interview with George Steiner]. Oregon, WA: University of Oregon; 2006.
82. **Kant, I.** *Critique of Judgement*. New York, NY: Cosimo; 2005.
83. **Knight, C.** George Steiner's Religion of Abstraction. In: *Religion and Literature*. 1996; 28(1).
84. **Scholem, G.** *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. New York, NY: Schocken Books; 1974.
85. **Zevi, B.** Hebraism and the Concept of Space Time in Art. In: Dean, A ed. *Bruno Zevi on Modern Architecture*. New York, NY: Rizzoli; 1983.

How to cite this article: Fenster, L. Exilic Landscapes: Synagogues and Jewish Architectural Identity in 1870s Britain. *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research*. 2018; 3(1): 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/ajar.47>

Published: 17 January 2018

Copyright: © 2018 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

ju *ARENA Journal of Architectural Research* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 