

Changing London

AN HISTORIC CITY FOR A MODERN WORLD

BUILDINGS AND PEOPLE: LONDON'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

London is the world's greatest multi-cultural city. More than one in three Londoners – 1.8 million in all – are now from an ethnic minority group with resident communities from over 90 different countries. Over three hundred languages are spoken and fourteen different religions practised.

But this is not new. London has always thrived by being an open and tolerant city. Since its Roman foundation it has been a city of immigrants and newcomers engaged in commerce. Each generation has left its mark on the buildings, in the names of its streets, and on the character of whole areas.

This edition looks at just a handful of these cultural groups and their continuing relationship with London's spectacular heritage of both historic and modern buildings (such as the stunning Buddhapadipa Temple in Wimbledon shown here). Londoners from different backgrounds tell us about the places and buildings that mean most to them, and what they value most about London.

What it reveals is that irrespective of their backgrounds the overwhelming majority of Londoners care passionately about the city's past, present and future heritage.

Philip Davies

*'Old and new
are neighbours'*

Hasib Abdul,
Aged 11, the East End

CONTENTS

2/3
A Brick Lane building
– chapel, synagogue,
mosque
Londoners' Voices
4/7
A Rich Cultural Tapestry

8
The Islamic Cultural
Centre and London
Central Mosque
9
The Anglo Sikh
Heritage Trail

10
Jewish Heritage UK
11
The Jamyang Centre
12
Faith Places





A BRICK LANE BUILDING –
CHAPEL,
SYNAGOGUE,
MOSQUE....

LONDONERS'

CHANGING LONDON ASKED A GROUP OF LONDONERS TO NAME THEIR FAVOURITE AREA, BUILDING OR OTHER PART OF HISTORIC LONDON.

Peter Romanski

'London doesn't forget. There are so many memorials and statues. My favourite is the one of King George III on horseback near Trafalgar Square. Very elegant, quite unlike 'Mad King George'. My family are from Poland and of course, he came from immigrant stock too.'

Henry Lee

'My parents came from Hong Kong to open a restaurant in London and we've been in Chinatown ever since. I love it. I just hope the current proposals to redevelop it don't happen. It's a real centre for the Chinese community – although maybe the pagoda-shaped phone boxes are a bit much!'

Vera Okumbe

I love the parks and gardens. In Ghana, we've lots of open space of course but it's not green like in London. I live near Crystal Palace and my kids love the dinosaur statues in our local park.'



Joel Karamath

'For me, it's not so much specific buildings. It's the amazing range of uses that London puts its historic buildings to – like the ICA in the Mall. Here's this really classic building and inside there's cutting-edge art.'

Vishula Mahabir

'It's got to be Soho. I really like the buzz of the area, especially Old Compton Street with all its bars and pavement cafes. London is really becoming a 24 hour town. It's great.'



Ayumo Nakamura

'I like ornate buildings, Gothic buildings like St Pancras. I suppose it's because in Japan where I come from, everything is very simple. In London there are so many elaborate buildings.'

MANY COMMUNITIES FIND A FOCUS IN A BUILDING FOR WORSHIP. JUST SUCH A BUILDING IN BRICK LANE HAS BEEN A SPIRITUAL HOME TO THREE VERY DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES OF IMMIGRANTS OVER THE CENTURIES. IT IS STILL GOING STRONG AS **PADDY PUGH** EXPLAINS.

For more than 250 years successive groups of people from other countries have settled in Spitalfields, East London. Each has made a significant contribution to the character and culture of the area. Perhaps more than any other, the large classical building on the corner of Brick Lane and Fournier Street is a reflection of that story.

Huguenot silk weavers, fleeing religious persecution in their native France, came to Spitalfields in the early 18th century and the New French Church was built for their worship in 1743. It then passed into Methodist use in 1819, but by the 1890s, with Spitalfields housing a large Jewish community

emanating from eastern Europe, the church was re-consecrated as the Machzeike Hadass Great Synagogue. Since the War the Jewish community has left Spitalfields, being replaced gradually by people from Bangladesh and the Indian sub-continent. So today the former Great Synagogue (listed

grade II*) has become the Jamme Masjid, or Great Mosque, and a minaret will soon be added to its Brick Lane elevation. Once again, the buildings of Spitalfields are being adapted to suit the needs of communities who live there, but in a way which respects their character, history and sense of place.

VOICES



Melanie Gabuten

'Being part Japanese and part Swedish, I'm attracted to the mix of cultures and people in London. And that goes for the buildings too. I particularly like areas like Shoreditch and Whitechapel because they've got a busy, happening feel.'

Tom Hunter

'I'm half Greek. I live in Highbury, but I own an Italian restaurant in Elephant and Castle. If I had to pick a favourite building, it would be Kenwood House, not just because of the building itself, but the greenery all round, the views, the ponds on the Heath.'



Francoise Picot

'I'm biased because I live there, I like Ealing a lot. In fact I like a lot of London suburbs. I suppose it's because of all those rows of houses that are sort of the same but individual. It's not like Paris where I'm from. Most people live in flats, so the suburbs are mostly just endless apartment blocks.'

Alice Richards

'We came from Barbados, but I've lived in Walthamstow for 30 years. I use the market a lot – someone told me it's the longest in London, maybe even in Britain. You can get everything there and most important, it's cheap!'

Vikram Tagore

'I very much like the Gherkin. That's probably a bit boring because everybody seems to like it. But it works. When it's lit up it's fantastic and close up it fits in really well with the other buildings around it, even though it's so different.'

Sabrina Grill

'When I came to London from Austria, I lived in Greenwich and then Deptford. I preferred Deptford – Greenwich was too touristy, although it's got wonderful buildings. But I like the sense of being in a real part of London, like Dalston where I live now. Even the derelict buildings remind you of people's past lives here.'



A RICH CULTURAL TAPESTRY

HERE WE LOOK AT A CROSS-SECTION OF THE CAPITAL'S RICH MIX OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WHICH ARE ASSOCIATED WITH PAST AND PRESENT COMMUNITIES. SOME ARE RECENT (AND POSSIBLE LISTED BUILDINGS OF THE FUTURE) ADDING TO THE LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF LONDON'S VARIED NEIGHBOURHOODS. A NUMBER OF OLDER ONES ARE NOW BEING PUT TO NEW USES – IT IS THE INFORMAL FLEXIBILITY OF OLD BUILDINGS THAT HAS SO OFTEN PROVED A SEEDBED FOR NEWCOMERS, NEGATING ASSUMPTIONS THAT THE OLD SHOULD BE SWEEPED AWAY IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS.



Pellicci's Café



Pellicci's Café



French Hospital



Former Odeon Cinema



Jewish Soup Kitchen



Jewish Soup Kitchen

Pictures from far left to right

CHINATOWN

GERRARD STREET, WESTMINSTER

Established by families moving out of the bomb-ravaged east end after 1945, Chinatown, centred on Gerrard Street with its many listed former Georgian townhouses has secured itself as one of the capital's most colourful attractions.

– www.chinatown-online.co.uk

PELLICCI'S CAFÉ

BETHNAL GREEN ROAD

One of a dying breed: grade II listed classic Italian café, run by the Pellicci family since 1900 (remodelled into its current form in 1946) and decorated with art deco marquetry panelling and Formica worktops.

– www.classiccafes.co.uk

FRENCH HOSPITAL

MONMOUTH STREET, SEVEN DIALS

Former 19th century French Hospital, now the Covent Garden Hotel.

FORMER ODEON CINEMA

PARSONS HILL, WOOLWICH

Art Deco streamlining at its best: grade II former Odeon cinema of 1937, once unused and a "Building at Risk", now sympathetically restored and finding a new lease of life as a home for the evangelical New Wine Church and conference centre.

– www.gatewayhouse.com

JEWISH SOUP KITCHEN

BRUNE STREET, SPITALFIELDS

Built in 1902 to provide charitable support for Jewish immigrants to the area and grade II listed. Since converted to high quality apartments, but retaining its finely inscribed terracotta cornice.

– www.portcities.org.uk/london



Institut Français



Institut Français



The Ismaili Centre

Pictures from top left to bottom right

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS
QUEENSBURY PLACE
SOUTH KENSINGTON

A remarkable building of 1937-39, housing the Institut Français – since 1910 the official French government centre of language and culture in the U.K. Listed grade II.
– www.institut-francais.org.uk

THE ISMAILI CENTRE
CROMWELL ROAD
SOUTH KENSINGTON

Religious and cultural centre for the followers of the Aga Khan, Imam to the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim community. Completed in 1983, its polished granite surface, interspersed with teak window frames, provides an interesting contrast with the Victoria & Albert Museum directly opposite.
– www.christopherlong.co.uk/pri.ismaili.html

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST PATRICK
SOHO SQUARE

Built in the mid-1890s to replace an earlier building that had served since 1802 as the only place of worship for the then growing Irish community. Italianate in style with a striking campanile reaching 125 feet, St Patrick's is listed grade II*
– www.stpatricks.uk.com

ST GEORGE'S GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALLIE STREET, TOWER HAMLETS

The oldest German church in Britain (founded in 1762), recently fully restored by the Historic Chapels Trust. Listed grade II*
– www.hct.org.uk

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE
GUILDHALL YARD, CITY OF LONDON

First discovered in 1988, the remains to be seen today, carefully preserved and integrated into the Guildhall Art Gallery, are considered to date to circa AD 120 and may be associated with Hadrian's visit at that time. Made mostly of timber, it may have housed up to 7,000 spectators.
– www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/corporation

ST OLAV'S KIRKE & SEAMEN'S MISSION
ALBION STREET, ROTHERHITHE

Built in 1927 for the many Norwegian seamen whose ships visited the docks. Listed grade II it now caters for a large ex-pat. community, and has strong links with the Norwegian Royal Family.
– www.sjomannskirken.no



Roman Catholic Church of St Patrick



St George's German Lutheran Church



Roman Amphitheatre



St Olav's Kirke & Seamen's Mission



Rudolf Steiner House



Greek Cathedral of Aghia Sophia



Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Hindu Temple



Synagogue, Bevis Marks



Swedish Seamen's Church



Chinese Worship & Ministry Centre

Pictures from top left to bottom right

RUDOLF STEINER HOUSE
PARK ROAD, MARYLEBONE

The sinuous stairway of this grade II building of the 1920s reflects its founder's belief in the expression of the spirit through the physical movement of a building.
– www.anth.org.uk/rsh

GREEK CATHEDRAL OF AGHIA SOPHIA
MOSCOW ROAD, BAYSWATER

Built in 1878-9 in Byzantine revival style – a Cathedral since 1922 and listed grade II. London's first organised Greek Orthodox community was established in the 1670s.

SHRI SWAMINARAYAN MANDIR HINDU TEMPLE
BRENTFIELD ROAD, NEASDEN

Opened by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 1995, this is the largest Hindu stone Mandir in the Western hemisphere – construction included shipping almost 6,000 tonnes of European limestone and Carrara marble to India for carving before bringing back to site.
– www.mandir.org

SYNAGOGUE, BEVIS MARKS
CITY OF LONDON

Completed in 1701 for Sephardic Jews (from Iberia) and listed grade I. Almost demolished in the 1880s, it is a spectacular and rare survival.
– www.bevismarks.org

SWEDISH SEAMEN'S CHURCH
LOWER ROAD, ROTHERHITHE

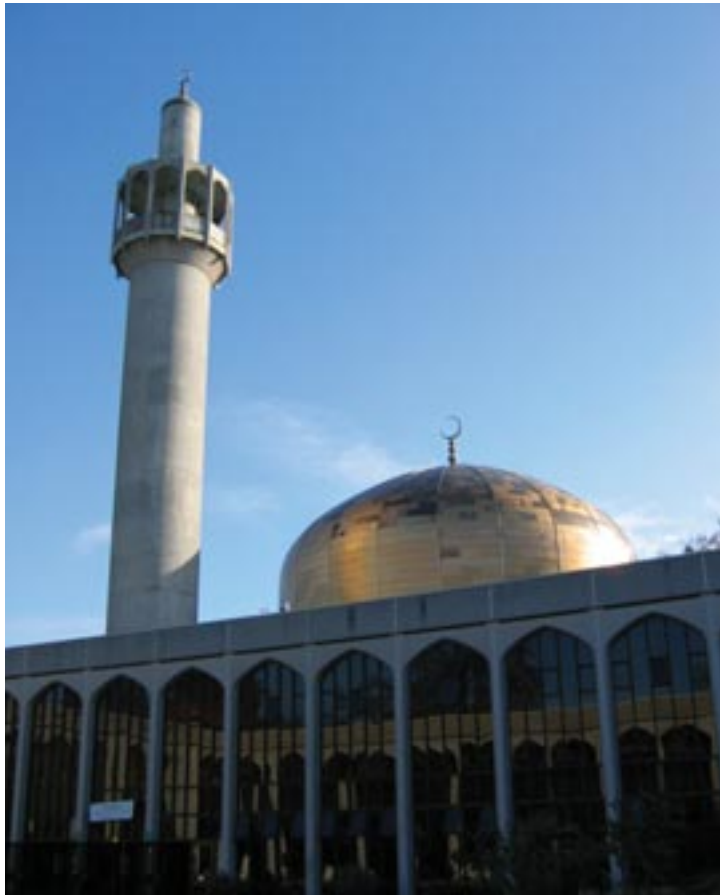
Completed in 1966 to replace an earlier building, and unmistakably Scandinavian in style, it serves the needs of visiting seamen and London's Swedish community.
– www.swedish-church.org.uk/index-eng.html

CHINESE WORSHIP & MINISTRY CENTRE
BROOK GREEN, HAMMERSMITH

Former Synagogue of 1890, recently refurbished for use by the Chinese Church in London. Although established for over 50 years, and with a growing congregation, this is the first building of worship that the CCIL can call its own. Not listed, but it adds character to the surrounding Conservation Area.
– www.ccil.org.uk

THE MINARET THAT CALLS TO LONDONERS

THE LONDON CENTRAL MOSQUE IN REGENT'S PARK IS NOT JUST A PLACE OF WORSHIP: THE ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE WHICH IS PART OF THE COMPLEX IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ITS KIND IN THE WESTERN WORLD. GORDON DULIEU WENT TO FIND OUT MORE.



Abdesselam Ben Daoud

'This building is important not just to the Muslim community but to London as a whole'

Moves to establish a mosque in central London began as far back as the 1890s, but it wasn't until 1920 that a formal proposal was put forward. 'Even so,' says Abdesselam Ben Daoud, the Mosque's press officer, 'it took until 1940 for the government to agree in principle. The Egyptian ambassador was the main force, urging the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain to allow the project to go ahead.' The U.K. made a donation of £100,000 and the rest of the amount required to purchase the land in Regent's Park was raised across the Muslim world.

Abdesselam takes up the story: '2.3 acres at Hanover Gate were bought, complete with the original villa. King George VI formally handed it over in 1944, but still the project was slow to get going. The first plans were not finalised until 1959 – and they were rejected. I think it was a cultural rather than a design thing: some people didn't seem to want a mosque there. But the trustees pressed on and organised an international competition. There were 52 designs from 17 countries. Finally, in 1973 a design by the British architect Frederick Gibberd was chosen and building went ahead at last.'

Costs rose: the original figure of £3 million became £6 million. However, the London Central Mosque was finally a reality. 'But like so many faith buildings, the Mosque has always been much more than just a place of worship,' comments Abdesselam. 'It became clear that we needed to build an extension to house the many activities designed to help our community learn about their faith, their culture and how they could

contribute to the life of London and the wider world. In 1994, we opened the Islamic Cultural Centre at a cost of £2 million.'

The range of events and activities at the Centre is impressive. It receives around 15,000 visitors a year and welcomes members of many faiths; the staff are particularly active in interfaith groups. 'The library houses 20,000 books and manuscripts on all aspects of Islam,' says Abdesselam. 'It's important people learn about their culture, especially children, and we try to encourage that at all times. We run Islamic courses for those who want to know more or are exploring Islam for the first time. And there's a 'New Muslim' programme because there are an increasing number of converts – Islam is a world religion after all. We also offer courses such as our training course for those making the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.'

The Centre also offers secular help as well: free legal advice, courses on political and cultural issues, even free health care. Abdesselam Ben Daoud sums up the spirit of the place: 'Our aim is to support the Islamic community in this country, but also to build bridges to overcome prejudice. That's why this building is so important, not just to the Muslim community, but to London as a whole.'



'PRESERVING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE' CELEBRATING SIKH HERITAGE

HARBINDER SINGH
OF THE ANGLO SIKH
HERITAGE TRAIL
EXPLAINS THE AIMS OF
THIS NEW INITIATIVE.



Cannizaro House, Wimbledon, was built in the early 18th century as a gracious private residence and, over the years, has been home to a number of distinguished figures, including the last Maharajah of the Punjab, Duleep Singh. It has been converted into a 45 bedroom hotel, with beautiful landscaped grounds which hold many delightful surprises, including a 'Gothic' aviary, ornamental lake and, in the summer months, an open air theatre.



The Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail is a unique project that promises to change the cultural landscape of Britain. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage it was launched in July 2004.

The Trail is a project of the Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust. MDSCT was first established in 1993, the centenary year of the Maharajah's death, with the objective of highlighting and promoting Anglo Sikh Heritage. Since then it has engaged in a series of initiatives, including the 'Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' exhibition in collaboration with the V&A; the annual 'Portrait of Courage' Lecture at the Imperial War Museum; the 'Jawans to Generals' Exhibition in collaboration with English Heritage, and numerous other projects, including the commissioning of a bronze statue of Maharajah Duleep Singh, the first major piece of Sikh art outside India. In 1993 and 1998 the Trust hosted two highly successful festivals of Anglo Sikh heritage with the latter adopted by the V&A for the launch of the "Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms" exhibition.

In recent years as various initiatives have highlighted the true extent of how much relevant material is to be found in the UK, issues of Sikh heritage & culture have gained prominence within the community. This was highlighted at an initial consultative conference for the Trail held at the V&A in July 2001.

Conceived as a national initiative, the Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail draws together all relevant UK locations, institutions and artefacts into one inspirational project, including, of course, London. From the final resting place of the first Sikh settler; to royal treasures and palaces, the project vividly demonstrates the deep historical roots that make the Sikh community no strangers to the UK.

For the first time ever the Trail will bring to life a little known aspect of the cultural landscape of Britain. Visitors to the ASHT website will be able to follow the Trail through a series of locations, exhibits & institutions; plan actual visits and explore the themes which provide the historical background to the

Trail. In explaining the Anglo Sikh relationship through the historic environment, the Trail offers a major source of information, education and inspiration, and it will develop dynamically with new material, locations and partners coming on stream all the time.

Given that a central aspiration of the project is to establish and maintain durable links between institutions and communities, we are focusing specifically on developing volunteer recruitment. We have already made great strides in attracting young Sikh volunteers. We are now seeking to widen this to all age groups through a series of events for community organisations.

INFORMATION POINT

For information on the work of the Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque, visit www.iccuk.org

The Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail's website can be found at www.asht.info



The Old Silver Mint

SAVING CALCUTTA

Together with the London Rivers Association and a number of other consultants, English Heritage has been demonstrating how conservation-led regeneration can transform one of the world's most deprived cities. Once the city of palaces and the capital of British India, Calcutta's magnificent heritage of buildings holds the key to its future prosperity. By sharing our skills and experience with fellow professionals we are helping the local agencies there to develop a conservation-based strategy for the regeneration of the heart of the city.

JEWISH HERITAGE UK:

OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY NOW HAS ITS OWN DEDICATED CONSERVATION AGENCY TO CARE FOR ITS RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE



EXCAVATIONS IN 2001 IN MILK STREET IN THE CITY OF LONDON REVEALED A 13TH CENTURY STONE-LINED 'MIKVEH' (RITUAL BATH) IN THE CELLARS OF A PROPERTY OWNED BY JEWISH FINANCIERS, THE CRESPINS, DATING FROM BEFORE THE EXPULSION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FROM ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD I (1290). THIS IS THE FIRST MEDIEVAL 'MIKVEH' UNEARTHED IN BRITAIN THAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH CERTAINTY. THE 'MIKVEH' WAS RESCUED FROM LOSS DURING REDEVELOPMENT BY REMOVAL TO THE MUSEUM OF LONDON (WHICH ORGANISED THE DIG), WHERE IT AWAITS RECONSTRUCTION FOR FUTURE EXHIBITION.

Protecting the material cultural heritage of Britain's Jewish community – synagogues, cemeteries, archives, artefacts and ritual silver – is the primary task of Jewish Heritage UK. Set up with a grant from Hanadiv Charitable Foundation and operating under the auspices of the London Jewish Cultural Centre, Jewish Heritage UK fills an important gap in providing independent professional support to congregations, trustees and synagogue organisations which are responsible for historic buildings, sites and collections. They will be able to turn to Jewish Heritage UK when faced with the challenges posed by such issues as maintenance and management of historic buildings, practicalities of carrying out repairs to conservation standards, guidance through the listing and planning processes and, above all, finding imaginative ways of keeping fine old buildings in beneficial use.

Its Director, Dr Sharman Kadish, has been active in Jewish heritage conservation since the 1980s and has published several books on Anglo-Jewish history and heritage. She is also the Project Director

of the "Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage in Britain and Ireland" which was set up with the support of English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund and which has also attracted funding from, amongst others, the RIBA, The British Academy and the Arts & Humanities Research Board.

Jewish Heritage UK will promote British Jewry's cultural heritage to the wider public by encouraging participation in The Civic Trust's Heritage Open Days and the popular European Jewish Heritage Day, organised by B'nai Brith, a Jewish voluntary service organisation with members in 58 countries. Opening historic synagogues to tourism – in a carefully managed manner – can do a great deal to promote British Jewry's rich cultural heritage and raise money for its preservation. Several historic synagogues have already benefited from Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage grants. Jewish Heritage UK hopes that vitally needed match funding will now be found inside the Jewish community to take this important work further.



Dr Sharman Kadish

THE SURVEY OF THE JEWISH BUILT HERITAGE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Beginning as a pilot project in London's East End in 1996, the Survey is the first thematic building recording project relating to the architectural heritage of a non-Christian minority in this country. It embraces a wide range of Jewish monuments, buildings and sites, from the mediaeval to the modern, both sacred and secular, including purpose-built synagogues, *Mikvaot* (Jewish ritual baths), cemeteries, schools, hospitals, soup kitchens, communal offices and meeting halls.

Priority has been given to "emergency recording cases" i.e. the documentation of sites that are in physical danger through radical alteration or demolition. Particularly at risk are synagogues faced with imminent closure – the population of British Jewry is rapidly shrinking, numbering just over half of the estimated post-war peak of 450,000.

The Survey's database contains both text and a digital image library that, together with the paper and

photographic archive, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record as a national resource for architectural historians, educators and conservationists. A book *The Synagogues of Britain and Ireland: An Architectural History* is also planned, with photography by English Heritage.

INFORMATION POINT

For further details of the work of Jewish Heritage UK, visit www.jewish-heritage-uk.org

THE JAMYANG CENTRE: A HAVEN OF PEACE IN BUSTLING SOUTH LONDON

A BUILDING THAT ONCE DISPENSED EARTHLY LAW BUT WHICH NOW BESTOWS A MORE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE.



Not so long ago a visit to this Victorian building, tucked away in a quiet backstreet of Kennington, would probably have resulted in some form of punishment being meted out or even being placed under lock and key. Happily, the welcome now is far warmer and the accommodation on offer is voluntary!

This former Criminal Magistrates Court was built in 1869 to the designs of Thomas Charles Sorby. Faced in red brick with stone dressings, it is the earliest surviving example of this type of building in London. After being replaced by a new facility in nearby Camberwell Green, it became a maximum security court for special remands, housing, amongst others, suspected IRA terrorists and those who took part in the Iranian Embassy siege. Its closure in 1990 led to a period of disuse and neglect, and with decay setting in, this important building could easily have been demolished or converted out of all recognition. Listed grade II in 1993, and immediately placed on English Heritage's Register of Buildings at Risk it was purchased at auction and sensitively converted into the Jamyang Buddhist Centre. Much of the work was done by volunteers, although an award of over £300,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund helped to ensure high standard repairs to the roof, fabric and services.

Unattractive recent additions were removed, but great care was taken to retain original features, so most of the panelling, doors, fireplaces, glazed brick and signs can still be seen. The main court has become the Shrine Room, with a nine foot

statue of Buddha placed where the Magistrate once sat. Holding cells are now offices and the former high-security courtyard is now a tranquil garden retreat for meditation. For a very modest sum, it is even possible to stay in the original cells, which have been retained as b&b accommodation, although this time you get to keep the key!

The Jamyang Buddhist Centre follows the Gelugpa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and it was visited by its foremost teacher, the Dalai Lama in 1999. The Centre provides a wide range of classes and workshops both for newcomers and those looking for more detailed knowledge and understanding of Tibetan Buddhist teaching. The Centre is to be applauded for the tremendous achievement in saving the building and providing it with a new lease of life. It is somehow fitting that a building designed for trial and punishment has been adapted in to a centre for spiritual enlightenment.



INFORMATION POINT

For further details of the work of the Centre visit www.jamyang.co.uk or telephone 020 7820 8787. It is located at 43 Renfrew Road, SE11



RELIGION AND PLACE IN TOWER HAMLETS

PETER GUILLERY INTRODUCES A BROAD RANGING SURVEY MAPPING THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AS THE FOCAL POINTS FOR COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS, NOT JUST IN LONDON, BUT ACROSS THE UK

Religion and Place is an English Heritage research project that is exploring the history of buildings for religious worship. The survey takes in post-Reformation buildings of all faiths and denominations, sizes and architectural qualities, relating them to local patterns of settlement up to the present to include mosques, gurdwaras and mandirs alongside churches, chapels and synagogues. Places of worship are often the most prominent and architecturally distinctive buildings in any neighbourhood, to which local residents have strong attachments, whether they visit them regularly or not. Tower Hamlets, with its rich history of religious mix, has been included to represent the capital. Fieldwork in Tower Hamlets has identified 167 sites that in 2003 were either places of worship, or buildings erected for worship, but are now in other uses. Investigation of these sites is reaching new audiences, supporting conservation initiatives and creating records for posterity.

The case studies are intended to understand buildings not primarily as artefacts, but more as reflections of distinctive local histories, and the contribution they have made to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The long view is also important, helping to draw out that across centuries of immigration, persecution and assimilation there have always been established and economically dominant groups alongside the emerging and insecure. Some assert their presence, others conceal theirs, sometimes gradually becoming more assertive. The experiences and heritages of those who do not now see themselves reflected in the great buildings have precedents and change our perceptions of history. An open understanding of 'English heritage' reveals the disparate as interdependent, not as being either 'ours' or 'theirs'.



**GURDWARA
 SIKH SANGAT**
 A Sikh temple,
 housed since
 1963 in a former
 19th century
 coach house

NEXT ISSUE LONDON'S MARKETS

London's markets are one of its greatest glories. From Leyton to Leadenhall, from Brixton to Bermondsey, markets of all shapes and sizes offer everything from meat, fish, fruit and veg to antiques and collectibles. The next issue of Changing London will examine this rich and vibrant heritage of sites, buildings and street life.



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