

Synagogues at risk

Report based on the findings of a survey carried out by Jewish Heritage UK

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Introduction

The Synagogues at Risk (SAR) Survey forms part of English Heritage's Heritage at Risk programme. It was commissioned by English Heritage in order to foster understanding of the specific needs of synagogues as a building type and to identify potential cases of 'Synagogues at Risk'. While recommendations were made on the basis of the survey, the decision on whether particular buildings are put on the Heritage at Risk Register rests solely with the relevant English Heritage regional team.

The SAR Survey has enabled the identification of synagogues that would most benefit from support in terms of grant aid and how to access it, as well as from professional advice regarding repairs and maintenance, security issues and development of tourism potential. The long term intention is to secure a sustainable future for historic synagogues not only as architectural heritage but also, wherever possible, as home to living congregations. To help address some of these issues, English Heritage has since offered Support Officer funding to Jewish Heritage UK.

Background

The primary functions of a synagogue are broader than the bald definition: 'The synagogue is the Jewish place of worship'. The word 'synagogue' derives from the Greek, meaning to assemble. The Hebrew term is *Bet Kneset*, literally, 'house of assembly', denoting the three-fold function of the synagogue as house of prayer, study and assembly. The synagogue has always been a community building with a social function rather than a sacred shrine to which only an elite priestly cast has access. Synagogues may be susceptible to losing these primary uses through demographic decline or shift. Social changes may also adversely affect synagogue usage: changes in modes of worship, as a result of theology or fashion, or simply through the loosening of community affiliation, cultural ties and assimilation.

According to the 2001 Census, regarded as a conservative estimate,¹ the population of British Jewry² stands at 267,000. This figure represents less than half of one percent of the total population of the UK. The Jewish community is thus a tiny minority. Its significance lies in its status as the oldest non-Christian faith minority in Britain. The Jewish community has almost halved in size from a reputed peak of 450,000 in the 1950s. In 1985 the Jewish population had dropped to about 330,000, and to 285,000 in 1995. This overall decline has been attributed to a number of factors, mainly a drop in the birth-rate, resulting in a rising age profile and an excess of deaths over births. Other significant factors are out-marriage, now believed to have risen to over 50 per cent, and emigration, mainly to Israel. Today, immigration of Jews³ to Britain is negligible compared with the influx from eastern Europe (Russian Empire, Austrian Galicia, Romania) in the period 1881-1914 (100,000) and refugees from central Europe, (Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia) in the 1930s (50,000-60,000 including 10,000 unaccompanied children).

In terms of distribution, the Jewish community is increasingly concentrated in a handful of urban and suburban areas in north west London and north west Manchester. This is resulting in the disappearance of smaller communities around the country, in both small towns and large cities, including Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham and Glasgow. In contrast, Manchester's Jewish population, estimate 30,000-35,000, is showing a net increase. This is due to the localised expansion of the *Haredi* (strictly Orthodox) sector with a characteristically high birth rate. On present trends, the expansion of the *Haredi* sector will not result in net growth in the size of London Jewry. London historically has always been home to about two-thirds of British Jewry and remains so today. The Jewish population is estimated at about 179,500 in the Greater London area, including

¹ David J. Graham and Stanley Waterman, 'Underenumeration of the Jewish population in the 2001 Censu, *Population, Space and Place*, 11 (2), pp. 89-102. The 2001 Census for the first time included the optional questions: 'What is your religion?' and 'What is your ethnic group?' The compilation of Jewish population statistics is fraught with methodological and definitional problems. Perhaps as much as one-third of Jews in Britain are not members of a synagogue.

² David Graham and Daniel Vulkan, *Britain's Jewish Community Statistics 2006*, London, Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2007. Compare with research from twenty years earlier: Stanley Waterman and Barry Kosmin, *British Jewry in the Eighties: a Statistical & Geographical Study*, London, Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1986.

³ Mainly from South Africa, Argentina and Israel. Israel received almost one million new immigrants from the former Soviet Union after 1989; very few came to Britain.

Hertfordshire, currently the focus for the growth of new communities affiliated to mainstream synagogue organisations.

It is now recognised that redundancy can pose a threat to the survival of the special interest of an historic building equal to that posed by the deterioration of its actual fabric, and that places of worship are particularly vulnerable in this regard. The battle against redundancy faced by historic synagogues is far more acute than that faced by urban churches because Orthodox Jewish law prohibits travelling on the Sabbath, so synagogues need to be situated within the Jewish neighbourhood and accessible on foot.

Around the country, twenty synagogues built before the Second World War have closed since the start of the Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage in the UK & Ireland (SJBH) in 1996, and at least two post-War synagogues in London (Greenford, West Hackney). This represents one-fifth, (21%) of the number of then working pre-War synagogues included in the original Survey. Six synagogues have been demolished. In East London these are: the Wlodowa, Cheshire Street, E1 (1910, demolished c.2001), Great Garden Street Federation (Lewis Solomon 1896, gutted c.1997) and Clapton Federation Synagogue (Marcus K. Glass 1931-2) – the latter demolished in 2006 in the face of attempts to have it listed. In the Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent Synagogue, in Hanley, (William Campbell 1922-3) was demolished c.2006 to make way for a new bus station, whilst Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, Sheepcote Street, (Ernest Joseph, 1938) was sold to developers who in exchange provided a small synagogue in a new residential complex a short distance away. Although a rare British example of an International Style synagogue, Birmingham Progressive was not listed. Jewish communities are disappearing from whole regions of England, the West Midlands (Wolverhampton, Coventry, Stoke and Birmingham), the North East (Sunderland, Middlesbrough); as well as from less fashionable parts of London.

Whilst the SAR Survey was in progress, Bradford Synagogue (Reform) announced possible closure and Hackney Synagogue did close down just after completion of the survey (in July 2009).

Duration

Fieldwork for the SAR Survey was carried out over period of four months between March and June 2009 and a report to English Heritage submitted in July 2009.

Personnel

The SAR Survey was carried out on behalf of English Heritage by Jewish Heritage UK. The fieldwork was carried out by Dr Sharman Kadish DPhil, FRHist.S., FSA, Director, Jewish Heritage and Barbara Bowman RIBA, IHBC, Consultant Architect to Jewish Heritage. The itinerary of visits was organised by Hadar Sela, Jewish Heritage's Administrator. This report was compiled by Sharman Kadish.

Jewish Heritage was established in 2004 and became a registered charity in 2007 (no. 1118174). Jewish Heritage is the first and only agency dedicated to caring for the

historic buildings and sites of Britain's Jewish community, especially synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. It is an independent body that is aligned with no official bodies within the British Jewish community, whether religious or secular, and receives no funding from them. Its activities are underpinned by the Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage, fieldwork for which was mainly carried out between 1998 and 2001, supported by, amongst others, English Heritage and the HLF. For more information about Jewish Heritage visit www.jewish-heritage-uk.org/

Methodology

A basic one-page *Pro-Forma* and a list of sites was provided for SAR by English Heritage. The format was designed to standardise the information collected across all of the Places of Worship surveys commissioned for the English Heritage Heritage at Risk programme.

The SAR team devised two more detailed questionnaires (appendices 4 and 5), on *Condition* and *Usage* for completion during site visits. In all cases, the *Condition* questionnaire was completed on site, usually by the Consultant Architect. Wherever possible, the *Usage* questionnaire was completed by a representative of the synagogue during the site visit. In some cases, it was completed as a follow-up, usually electronically, sometimes by post or telephone.

All buildings were photographed with an automatic focus 35 mm digital camera. Record photography included exterior shots, plus interior shots – where access was achieved and light levels permitted.

Scope

A total of 37 synagogues in England were originally included in the Survey but one (unlisted) declined to participate so there are 36 results in total. Another synagogue, Coventry, was only listed after the survey started so was not included. All English Regions were represented by at least one synagogue building. The sample represents 39% of the total number (96) of in-use pre-1939 purpose-built synagogues in England included in the original Survey of Jewish Built Heritage.

To qualify for inclusion in SAR a synagogue had to be currently in use for worship or, if closed, not yet converted to an alternative use. Three listed synagogues fell into the latter category: Sunderland, Ryhope Road which closed in March 2006, Liverpool, Greenbank Drive, which closed in January 2008 and Hackney Synagogue which closed in July 2009 and was due to become a church.

Scope by Geographical Distribution

Of the 37 English synagogues included in the survey, 15 are located in Greater London. This preponderance might have been expected to be higher given that about two-thirds of the Jewish community resides in Greater London – a percentage that has remained constant throughout the modern history of Anglo-Jewry since the

Resettlement under Cromwell in 1656. It may be deduced that the survival rate of historic synagogues has been lower in the capital than elsewhere in the country.

Three of the synagogues surveyed are located in Manchester, since the mid-19th century, Anglo-Jewry's second city, having by then overtaken Liverpool in terms of Jewish population. Liverpool is represented by two synagogues. Elsewhere, a single historic synagogue attests to the presence of a Jewish community in any given town or city.

Scope by Age and Protected Status

The SAR Survey included all of the listed synagogues in England. Three are listed at grade I. Until recently Bevis Marks Synagogue, London EC3, was the only grade I listed synagogue in the country. Bevis Marks, in the City of London, is Britain's oldest synagogue and has been in continuous use since 1701. In 2007 and 2008 two major Victorian synagogues dating from the 1870s - London's New West End, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater and then its sister building Liverpool's Princes Road Synagogue - were awarded grade I status.



Princes Road Synagogue, Liverpool. Grade I listed

Eleven of the synagogues covered by the Survey are grade II* listed. These include the small group of surviving Georgian and Regency synagogues mainly in the West Country – Plymouth (1762-3), Exeter (1763-4) and Cheltenham (W.H. Knight 1837-9) – and Ramsgate (David Mocatta 1831-3). The rest are Victorian buildings: Birmingham's Singers Hill (H.R.Yeoville Thomason 1855-6), the earliest surviving example of the grand 'cathedral synagogue' type in the country. The building of monumental synagogues in public places is associated with the era of Jewish emancipation from the 1850s onwards. Important grade II* listed synagogues dating from the 1870s and 1880s are: in London, Hampstead (Delissa Joseph 1892), Brighton, Middle Street (Thomas

Lainson 1874-5), Chatham (H.H. Collins 1865-70) and Bradford Reform, Bowland Street (Healey Bros. 1880-1), the last named upgraded whilst work on the SAR Survey was in progress. In fact, all of the grade II* Listed synagogues have been upgraded from grade II to grade II* since the 1990s.

A single 20th century synagogue, Greenbank Drive, Liverpool (Ernest A. Shannon 1936-7) was upgraded to grade II* in 2008 thanks to the interest taken in this threatened building by the Twentieth Century Society.

Of the remaining grade II listed synagogues included, eight are in London, the most recent to be listed (December 2008) being Hackney (Delissa Joseph 1897, extended by Cecil Eprile 1936). The majority of the London synagogues are Victorian, except Sandys Row which was built as a Huguenot chapel in 1766 and remodelled as a synagogue in 1870. The early 20th century in London is represented by the New Synagogue, Egerton Road, Stamford Hill, N16 (Joseph & Smithem 1915) and Golders Green (Lewis Solomon & Son 1921-2, extended by Messrs Joseph 1927). A single 1960s synagogue, Marble Arch (T. P. Bennett & Son 1960-1) is included.



Marble Arch Synagogue, London. Grade II listed

All three Manchester synagogues included date from the early part of the 20th century and are grade II listed. Of the remaining grade II listed synagogues surveyed, the following are purpose built Victorian buildings: Grimsby (B.S. Jacobs 1885-8) and Leicester (Arthur Wakerley 1897-8) whilst Reading (W.G. Lewton 1900-1), Blackpool (R.B. Mather, 1914-16) and Sunderland (Marcus K. Glass 1928) date from the early 20th century.

In addition to the listed synagogues, Jewish Heritage decided to include some other Victorian and early 20th century synagogues that are not listed but that are of some significance on either architectural and or social/historical grounds. The last remaining synagogues in the East End of London (in addition to Sandys Row): Congregation of Jacob (Lewis Solomon & Son) Nelson Street (Lewis Solomon & Son) and Fieldgate Street (William Whiddington 1899, rebuilt late 1950s) were visited during fieldwork.



Congregation of Jacob, London. Unlisted.

Bristol Synagogue (H.H. Collins with S.C. Fripp 1870-1), currently unlisted, completed the West Country, the English region richest in synagogues and Jewish cemeteries dating from the Georgian and Regency periods. It was also intended to survey Bournemouth Synagogue (Lawson & Reynolds 1910-11) which was under consideration for listing at the time of survey, but it was not possible to get access to the building.

Condition of the building fabric

The project brief laid down the parameters for the on-site survey of the condition of each synagogue in the following terms:-

“The focus in assessing the condition of the building should be on grant eligible areas, namely roof coverings, drainage systems, high-level stonework and the basic structure of the building. Carrying out a full condition survey of the building is outside the scope of the project. Instead the fieldworker will be asked to sum up the overall condition of the building on the basis of a brief visual inspection and place it in one of the following categories:

Good = no obvious problems

Fair = one or two minor problems and general wear-and-tear

Poor = widespread problems; lack of basic maintenance

Very bad = serious problems which require urgent attention”

The findings of the condition assessments are summarised in Table I.

Table 1: Condition of the building fabric

Condition	No of syngagogues	% of survey
Good	3	8%
Fair	21	57%
Poor	9	24%
Very bad	3	8%
No Return	1	3%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

Twenty four (65%) of the synagogues surveyed were deemed to be in 'Good' or 'Fair' condition. Almost one third (32%), however, fell into the 'Poor' or 'Very bad' categories. One synagogue did not participate in SAR, representing another 3%.

The condition of 32% of all the synagogues included in SAR is a matter for concern.

Seven synagogues were undergoing, or were about to undergo, repair work at the time of our site visit. Scaffolding was in place either inside or outside the following buildings: -

Brighton, Ramsgate, Birmingham (Singers Hill), Liverpool (Princes Road), London (Hampstead) and London (Sandys Row), whilst at Manchester (Wilbraham Road) building work to convert the synagogue into a Jewish student centre was in abeyance.

Of the seven synagogues undergoing repairs at the time of our site visit, three were being renovated thanks to public funding under the Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RGPOW) Scheme, namely: London (Sandys Row), Brighton and Liverpool (Princes Road). Repairs to London (Hampstead), Ramsgate and Birmingham (Singers Hill) were being funded from private sources. Manchester (Wilbraham Road) was acquired by a Jewish-owned property company for redevelopment as a down-sized synagogue with a residential Jewish student-centre attached (See 'Case Studies' below).



Montefiore Synagogue, Ramsgate, during repairs.

Manchester (Higher Crumpsall) and London (New West End) have also received grants under RGPOW. There is every prospect that the condition of the New West End will be significantly improved as a result, whilst the problems faced by Higher Crumpsall – partially caused by poor construction and fabric – and partly as a result of other factors – remain to be solved fully (See ‘Case Studies’ below).

Whilst the SAR Survey was in progress, three out of the 12 synagogues that fell into the ‘Poor’ or ‘Very bad’ categories were up for sale or in the process of being sold out of the Jewish community. These were: London (Hackney), Liverpool (Greenbank) and Sunderland (Ryhope Road). Hackney has been sold to a Gospel church but the fate of the other two buildings has yet to be decided and they should therefore be considered to be ‘At Risk’.

Turning to the other end of the scale: one out of the three - all London - synagogues found to be in ‘Good’ condition has been a beneficiary of RGPOW, namely Hampstead. Repairs at the other two, Bevis Marks and Congregation of Jacob (unlisted) have been paid for mainly from private resources.

Two synagogues in the ‘Fair’ category’ have been recipients of public grant aid: Exeter Synagogue back in 1997 and the New Synagogue, Stamford Hill in 2005. As a result, the latter was removed from the Buildings at Risk Register, where it had been for over a decade.

Use

Table 2: Level of Use for Worship

Frequency of Services	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues in survey
Full-time	3	8%
Frequent (once a week)	27	73%
Regular (once a month)	2	5%
Occasional (6 times a year)	1	3%
Not in Use	3	8%
No Return	1	3%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

The vast majority (81%) of the synagogues including in the SAR Survey hold religious services at least once a week in the main prayer hall. For our purposes, only services held in the actual prayer hall of the historic building were counted as ‘usage’ of the synagogue. Weekday or winter services held in a *Bet Midrash* or adjoining communal hall were generally excluded, unless the *Bet Midrash* is situated under the same roof as the historic synagogue.

This apparently healthy level of usage of historic synagogues masks underlying trends that may be cause for concern, revealed by a closer study of membership numbers and attendances at services. For example, two of the synagogues that claim to hold ‘Frequent’ *i.e.* weekly services, do not actually achieve a *Minyan i.e.* the quorum of ten males over the age of 13 required to hold a full Orthodox service. Four (11%) of the

37 synagogues in the Survey are affiliated with the Reform movement where women can count towards the *Minyan*.

Congregations were asked to give attendance figures for a normal *Shabbat* morning, and for the most important holiday, *Yom Kippur*; the Day of Atonement. Average figures are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Average Attendance at Services

Number of People (M&F)	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues in survey
0-9	2	5%
10-20	6	16%
20-50	11	30%
50-100	6	14%
100-200	2	8%
200-250	4	11%
No Return/Closed	6	16%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

Whilst use of the building may be frequent, most commonly weekly, the number of users is, for the most part, quite small. Just over one half (51%) of synagogues attract weekly congregations of less than 50 people, men and women.

Eight congregations (21% of the total) - are dipping below the viability level of 20 people (assuming that half of the congregation consists of men).

At the top end of the scale, no historic synagogue attracts more than 250 worshippers to an ordinary *Shabbat* morning service, although several big London synagogues can attract 600 or 700 worshippers on *Yom Kippur*. The best attended synagogues are all in London and have large memberships from a wide catchment area.

The returns on membership size for the historic synagogues included in the SAR Survey are shown in Table 4. Overall trends in terms of the growth and decline of membership of historic synagogues are shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Membership Size

Number of Households	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
0-50	4	11%
50-100	5	13%
100-200	7	19%
200-500	11	30%
600-1000	3	8%
1000+	1	3%
Closed/no members	5	13%
No return	1	3%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

Synagogues are largely funded by revenue from membership fees. Synagogue membership fees are typically, but by no means always divided into contributions for the upkeep of the congregation and for burial. The upkeep of the congregation generally includes payment of officials, such as the rabbi and the secretary, sometimes a *Hazan* and caretaker – as well as the running costs of maintenance and utility services to the building. Typically, it includes buildings insurance. Even in London, where umbrella organisations own most of the buildings, individual synagogues are responsible for their own insurance arrangements. Many are insured with Ecclesiastical. Two provincial congregations with less than 50 members each complained about the burden of high premiums.

Independent congregations set membership fees at levels decided by their own management committees. London synagogues belonging to one of the umbrella synagogue organisations may find their fees set for them by the head office. Sometimes there is a sliding scale, whereby pensioners pay reduced fees. Fees in London, and especially in the more affluent neighbourhoods, tend to be higher than elsewhere. There is no single rate levy across synagogues, or even within particular synagogue bodies.

Underlying trends are also indicated by the statistics for overall growth and decline in synagogue membership, as summarised in Table 5.

Overall, historic synagogues are losing members rather than gaining them. This trend is most marked in the regions, where nearly half are experiencing contraction.

Table 5: Trends in Synagogue Membership

	Growing	Static	Shrinking	Not Applicable/ No Return	
London*	8	4	4	0	16
%	50%	25%	25%	0%	
Regions	2	4	10	5	21
%	9%	19%	48%	24%	
TOTALS	10	8	14	5	37
%	27%	22%	38%	13%	100%

* Including Elstree, Herts.

All of the synagogues in London employ a rabbi or some other 'clergyman', at least on a part-time basis. Several of the large London congregations employ more than one minister, a *Hazan* or youth worker. In the East End, one rabbi is shared between the four Ashkenazi congregations. Twelve (57%) of the provincial congregations do not have even a part-time minister and depend on competent laymen and periodic visits from the Minister to Small Communities, appointed by the United Synagogue. Only six (16%) of synagogues have a Jewish university chaplain based locally who actually uses their buildings for student events.

Three-quarters (28 (76%)) of the synagogues lack a caretaker or other personnel (including the rabbi) living on site, despite the fact that many of the older ones were built with accommodation for staff. Nearly half of all provincial synagogues lack a resident caretaker, usually on the grounds of cost. In some cases ancillary accommodation has become dilapidated, particularly in the East End of London – even where the main prayer hall is in relatively good condition. Renovation and putting empty flats back into use would benefit congregations both as a potential source of revenue and by providing increased security. At the other end of the scale some large, affluent synagogues can afford a full-time ‘maintenance officer’.

Summary findings

All results

Total: 36*	Good	Fair	Poor	Very bad
Full time	1	1	0	0
Frequent	2	17	7	2
Regular	0	2	0	0
Occasional	0	1	0	0
Not in use	0	0	2	1

* no visit was made to Bournemouth Synagogue

Listed synagogues in use for worship

Total: 29	Good	Fair	Poor	Very bad
Full time	1	1	0	0
Frequent	1	17	6	1
Regular	0	1	0	0
Occasional	0	1	0	0
Not in use	0	0	0	0

London only [including Elstree]

Total: 16	Good	Fair	Poor	Very bad
Full time	1	0	0	0
Frequent	2	7	3	2
Regular	0	1	0	0
Occasional	0	0	0	0
Not in use	0	0	0	0

Outside London [excluding Elstree]

Total: 20	Good	Fair	Poor	Very bad
Full time	0	1	0	0
Frequent	0	10	4	0
Regular	0	1	0	0
Occasional	0	1	0	0
Not in use	0	0	2	1

The condition of one third of synagogues in the survey (and 28% of *listed* synagogues in the survey) is a cause for concern.

Of the 12 synagogues in poor or very bad condition, six were undergoing work at the time of the survey, three of those with RGPOW grant.

English Heritage should consider putting Greenbank Drive Synagogue, Liverpool and Sunderland Synagogue on the Heritage at Risk Register on account of their condition and lack of use.

The condition of the other synagogues in poor or very bad condition should be monitored on a regular basis.

Case studies

I. The New Synagogue, Stamford Hill, London, N16. Grade II

Architectural Significance Behind Ernest Joseph's Edwardian Baroque facade (1915), the interior is a partial replica on a smaller scale of the demolished New Synagogue in Great St Helen's, Bishopsgate, City of London and contains some of its original fittings, including the concave mahogany Ark, and candelabra.

The Challenge The synagogue was on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register for over a decade (1996-2007). It was acquired in stages by a strictly Orthodox sect, the Bobover Hasidim, who come from a very different worship tradition from that of the United Synagogue, by whom the synagogue had been built. Bobov today own the whole complex, comprising the New Synagogue itself, the 'Old' Bobov *Shul* and *Yeshivah* opposite (No.87 Egerton Road) and the Victoria Community Centre, now the *Talmud Torah* boys' school (No.90 Egerton Road) where a small United Synagogue *Minyan* still worships.

The Solution The New Synagogue has been given a new lease of life. It is now used regularly for Friday night and *Shabbat* morning services. Services attract an average of 120-150 people. It now has a membership of 130 Bobover families and is growing. The Bobovers are taking increasing pride in their historic building, welcoming visitors, and would be amenable to participating in Heritage Open Days in the future.

The price paid for continuation in Jewish use was liturgical reordering. This involved the removal of the central *Bimah*, a pared down version of the 1838 original and its replacement by a small reproduction *Bimah* made in Israel. The four candelabra⁴ from the corners of the original *Bimah* have been relocated on the Ark platform. Most of the pews, which dated from the 1915 rebuild, have been removed and replaced by simple trestle tables and chairs. A high *Mehitzah* gallery screen, a timber trellis, has been installed in the gallery to hide women worshippers from view according to Hasidic practice. The interior of the synagogue has been repainted magnolia and cream, thought to be closer to the original colour scheme than the pale blue décor dating probably from the 1960s. A new marble floor has been laid.

£1.5 million has been spent on renovations so far, including a small grant from the RGPOW Scheme for roof repairs. The Hasidim are raising funds for a lavish refurbishment of the interior including ancillary accommodation, renewal of the electrics and bespoke tables, chairs and chandeliers in order to turn the space into a synagogue *cum Bet Midrash*. Hidden lighting and air conditioning have already been installed. Repair of the 'Zion' window over the west gallery will alone cost £18,000. This window is claimed to be the earliest in the country to feature the emblem of the State of Israel after 1948. The architect of the renovation is Israel-based David Oestricher, who specialises in work for the *Haredi* community in Israel and internationally.

⁴ One of these is reproduction, having been stolen ca. 1997 when the building was redundant.

2. Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue, No. 1 Victory Road, Hermon Hill, E1 1. Grade II*

Architectural Significance Housed in the Venetian Gothic former Merchant Seaman's Orphan Asylum designed by George Somers Clarke the elder in 1861-3, latterly part of Wanstead Hospital.

The Challenge The redundant building was purchased by the new Jewish congregation in 1994, who restored and provided a home to the magnificent Ark and panelling rescued from the Synagogue within the Tottenham Jewish Home and Hospital (1913-15), with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Ronald Wylde Associates were the architects. The building reopened as a synagogue in 2000.

The Solution A successful conservation project that has rescued and reused one historic building using materials salvaged from another. Sukkat Shalom holds service at least once a week, has a membership of 315 families and is growing.

3. Greenbank Drive Synagogue, Sefton Park, Liverpool. Grade II*



Architectural significance A rare art-deco period synagogue designed in 1936–7 by Ernest Alfred Shennan, who was knighted for his work on the Mersey Tunnel. The tripartite brick-faced façade, by then traditional in synagogue design, was given an original twist through the use of tall vertical windows and countervailing curves in the quoins, arches and window surrounds. The light and airy interior makes extensive use of steel and reinforced concrete in the elegant curved cantilevered gallery and unusual arcaded clerestory girders.

The challenge Following closure early in 2008, this synagogue was upgraded to Grade II* thanks to the intervention of the Twentieth Century Society. The Liverpool Jewish Housing Association has been encouraged to look afresh at plans to convert Greenbank into a sheltered housing complex without destroying the integrity of the historic building.

The solution The likelihood now is that the housing scheme will be abandoned and the synagogue sold to a church organisation. If this can be done before the empty building falls prey to vandalism it should allow for retention of the building's special interest. In the meantime the building has been put on the Heritage at Risk register.

4. Withington Congregation of Spanish & Portuguese Jews, West Didsbury. Grade II



Architectural Significance In the 1930s the area around Palatine Road, Didsbury was nicknamed 'Palestine Road, Yidsbury' because of its visible Sephardi Jewish population. The Withington Synagogue was the last work of prominent Jewish architect Delissa Joseph in 1925-7. When Joseph died before completion, Joe Sunlight acted as "supervising architect". Occupying a 9,000 square foot site in Queenston Road, Withington Synagogue is notable for its monumental triple-height interior.

The Challenge The building is now too large for the congregation's needs. The Jewish population of the immediate neighbourhood is diminishing. In 1996 the membership merged with the Oriental Jewish community that maintains its own synagogue (of 1924-5) nearby. The combined congregation, Sha'arei Hayim ("Gates of Life") also includes Sephardim who have moved out to Hale in Cheshire. In 2009 the total membership stood at about 600, the majority of whom no longer live in the immediate neighbourhood of the two 1920s synagogues. The regular *Shabbat* morning service at Withington draws about 130 people, a healthy number - but dwarfed by the size of the building. Regular weekdays morning, afternoon and evening services, attracting 10 to 15 men, are held at in the *Bet Midrash* at Sha'are Tsedek.

After tentative moves to dispose of one or more of the buildings, the congregation has come to terms with the fact that, in the future, they will need to consolidate their remaining membership still living in the Didsbury area around the historic building on Queenston Road. It is intended that all services will eventually be held there. Meanwhile, in 2008, proposals were drawn up to build a new synagogue in Hale, on the site of a former farm. The plans include a new-build synagogue for 200 with gallery, linked hall and ancillary space, plus residential conversion of an existing barn and farmhouse on the site.

This site is very close to the new Ashkenazi synagogue at Hale, and not far from the successor to Wilbraham Road (see *Below*) at Bowden. Thus, in the early 21st century - in neighbourhoods of tertiary Jewish settlement (in Cheshire) the pattern of synagogue building in the inter-war period (in Fallowfield and Didsbury) - is being replicated. Demographic shift puts into question the long-term viability not only of Queenston Road but also of its un-built successor in Hale.

5. Former South Manchester Synagogue, Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, M14. Grade II

Architectural Significance One of the most significant early 20th century synagogues in the country but threatened by closure in 2001. It was built just before the First World War, 1912-13, for the prosperous Ashkenazim who formed a breakaway from the Ashkenazi Great Synagogue in Cheetham Hill. The architect, like so many of his clients, was a self-made Russian-born immigrant Joe Sunlight (né Schimschlavitch 1889-1978), who went on to become a major developer in the City of Manchester.



Wilbraham Road was built in the style of a Turkish mosque with dome and minaret, in a bold, almost cubist treatment, clad in buff glazed terracotta. Sunlight professed to have used 'St Sophia of Constantinople' as his model, with a much scaled-down tower derived from Westminster Cathedral. In the estimation of *The British Architect* the whole gave 'a very satisfactory effect of an Eastern place of worship'⁵. 'Byzantine' synagogues were becoming fashionable on the continent in this period and the ambitious young architect also employed innovative German building technology in his only known religious commission; reinforced concrete for the 35 ft span of the dome - claimed to be the widest span yet built - and for the lattice girders carrying the gallery, thus dispensing with the need for column supports beneath - the earliest application of this technology in a fully-realised manner to synagogue architecture in Britain.

The Challenge In 2002 a new South Manchester Synagogue by Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams was opened in Bowden, Cheshire to where Ashkenazi communal life has shifted. The Grade II Listed building in Wilbraham Road was rescued from redundancy by a Jewish property company who came up with the imaginative idea of converting the site into a residential Jewish student centre, it being conveniently situated close to the University campuses.

The scheme, by architects Provan & Makin (who have also worked on a number of church conversions), to downsize the worship space by one half, has involved insertion of a floor at gallery level which significantly changes the character of the interior. As reconstructed, the downstairs remains in use as a synagogue. The existing pews have

⁵ *British Architect* 20 February 1914, pp. 157-8.

been retained, now divided lengthways in the American Conservative manner, by a metalwork screen *Mehitzah*. This serves to provide gender-separate seating, to compensate for the loss of the women's gallery. Such reordering was possible thanks to the Reformed layout of the original synagogue, with forward facing pews and the absence of a central *Bimah*. The architects have hived off the side aisles under the galleries, separating them from the main space by glass walls, to create, respectively, a meeting room and small *Bet Midrash*. In practice, the students tend to worship in the main space.

The ancillary Stern Hall was demolished in 2008 in preparation for the building of an accommodation block containing 65 single bedrooms. This part of the project is now on hold due to the recession. Despite this, the Manchester Jewish Student Centre project has already boosted usage of the building. During term time, morning services are held every day as well as regular Friday night and *Shabbat* morning services. Special events organised by the University Jewish Society and the Jewish Chaplain (Monday nights) bring in students: the monthly 'Friday Night Fever' attracts 200-250 for the *Shabbat* evening meal, currently catered from a makeshift kitchen on the ground floor. Whether an eventual 'enabling development' of 65 bed-sit units on the site of the Stern Hall will be viable, remains to be seen. The present purpose-built (1980s) accommodation for Jewish students, Hillel House in Moss Side, M15, is currently experiencing difficulties filling places.

6. Higher Crumpsall Synagogue, Bury Old Road, Manchester M8 Grade II

Architectural Significance In classical style by local architects Pendleton & Dickinson, Higher Crumpsall Synagogue, built 1928-9, boasts a well-designed worship space with high quality fixtures and fittings excellent Art Deco stained glass. The pair of windows over the Ark and behind the rear gallery is particularly notable, depicting a contemporary 'Vision of Jerusalem' and the rebuilt Temple of Solomon, rendering traditional symbolism in modernist style.

The Challenge Despite grants in 2004 and 2006 totalling £281,000 under the EH/HLF Joint Scheme, this synagogue remains at risk. The building has been made water-tight, with renewal of the roof and repairs to the Ark wall. Serious problems, some damp, structural movement, corrosion of steel and reinforced concrete, remain. Phase 3 internal works will require not merely cosmetic decoration but will involve shoring up the ceilings which are becoming unsafe. Cracks have appeared and sections of plaster are loose or have fallen. Thus, the long-term future for this building has not yet been secured.

Although the synagogue is full to capacity on occasion, it is perceived by some within the Jewish community as too formal and old-fashioned. It is, however, situated barely five minutes walk away from one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in Europe so there is potential for the utilisation of the synagogue both for continued worship and for additional multi-purpose activities. Unfortunately, the adjacent King David school, largest Jewish school in Manchester, and the *Shul* are separated by the municipal boundary between the City of Manchester and Salford City Council. The future of the synagogue may well depend on reaching across that boundary.

7. Sunderland Synagogue, Ryhope Road, Sunderland. Grade II.



Architectural significance Built in 1928 and seen by Pevsner as 'vigorous and decorative', Sunderland was one of a series of synagogues designed in a distinctive cinematic art-deco style by the under-appreciated Jewish architect, Marcus Kenneth Glass, who was based in Newcastle upon Tyne. The colourful façade features corner towers, red and yellow *ablaq* striped brickwork, arcaded porch with Byzantine basket capitals, mosaic and abstract stained glass.

The challenge This synagogue was listed in 1999 and even then faced redundancy as the once-vibrant Jewish community in the town dwindled. It now stands empty and neglected; the schoolhouse next door has been damaged by arson. In 2006 its sister building, the Clapton Federation Synagogue, Lea Bridge Road, London (1931–2), Glass's only London synagogue, was demolished in the face of attempts made locally to get it listed.

The solution During the SAR Survey Sunderland was put on the market and, thanks to publicity in the local media, excited some interest. Possible uses mooted are: a Buddhist temple, a restaurant or even a boxing-ring.

LIST OF SYNAGOGUES IN THE SURVEY

APPENDIX I

REGION	NAME	LISTING GRADE	IN USE AS SYNAGOGUE
East Midlands	Leicester Synagogue	II	Yes
East Midlands	Nottingham Synagogue	II	Yes
East of England	Liberal Synagogue, Elstree	II	Yes
London	Golders Green Synagogue	II	Yes
London	Hampstead Synagogue	II*	Yes
London	Bevis Marks Synagogue	I	Yes
London	Marble Arch Synagogue	II	Yes
London	West London Synagogue	II	Yes
London	New West End Synagogue	I	Yes
London	Lauderdale Road Synagogue	II	Yes
London	New London Synagogue	II	Yes
London	New Synagogue, Stoke Newington	II	Yes
London	Hackney Synagogue	II	No
London	Sukkat Shalom Synagogue	II*	Yes
London	Sandys Row Synagogue	II	Yes
London	Fieldgate Street Synagogue	Unlisted	Yes
London	Nelson Street Synagogue	Unlisted	Yes
London	Congregation of Jacob	Unlisted	Yes
North East	Sunderland Synagogue	II	No
North West	Withington Synagogue,	II	Yes
North West	South Manchester Synagogue	II	Partly
North West	Higher Crumpsall Synagogue	II	Yes
North West	Blackpool Synagogue	II	Yes
North West	Princes Road Synagogue, Liverpool	I	Yes
North West	Greenbank Synagogue, Liverpool	II	No
South East	Reading Synagogue	II	Yes
South East	Middle Street Synagogue, Brighton	II*	Yes
South East	Chatham Memorial Synagogue	II*	Yes
South East	Montefiore Synagogue, Ramsgate	II*	Yes
South West	Bristol Synagogue	Unlisted	Yes
South West	Plymouth Synagogue	II*	Yes
South West	Bournemouth Synagogue	Unlisted	Yes
South West	Exeter Synagogue	II*	Yes
South West	Cheltenham Synagogue	II*	Yes
West Midlands	Singers Hill Synagogue, Birmingham	II*	Yes
Yorkshire	Grimsby Synagogue	II	Yes
Yorkshire	Bradford Synagogue (Reform)	II	Yes

LIST OF GRANTS OFFERED TO SYNAGOGUES UNDER THE REPAIR GRANTS FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP (RGPOW) SCHEME

YEAR OF STAGE I OFFER	NAME OF SYNAGOGUE	VALUE OF GRANT OFFER
2003	Brighton Middle Street	342,000
2003	Plymouth	26,000
2004	Manchester Higher Crumpsall	145,000
2005	London New Synagogue	62,000
2006	Manchester Higher Crumpsall	151,000
2007	Liverpool Princes Road	112,000
2008	London New West End	106,000
2009	London Sandys Row	254,000
2009	Liverpool Princes Road	71,000
TOTAL		1,269,000

UK JEWISH POPULATION

APPENDIX 3

	Census 2001	Board of Deputies 1995
Greater London	149,790	182,700
Surrounding Areas	18,990	13,650
Rest of Home Counties	10,760	8,300
Greater Manchester	21,730	26,000
Leeds	8,270	10,000
Glasgow	4,330	5,600
Brighton and Hove	3,360	5,300
Southend	2,720	3,400
Liverpool	2,700	3,800
Birmingham	2,340	4,000
Bournemouth	2,110	3,000
Gateshead	1,560	1,100
Newcastle	960	1,100
Cardiff	940	1,500
Edinburgh	760	900
Southport	700	1,100
Hull	670	1,100
Nottingham	630	1,000
Luton	530	1,300
Rest of Britain	33,160	8,350
UK Total	267,000	285,000
England	258,000	
Scotland	6,600	
Wales	2,200	

UK Faiths		
Christian	71.6%	42,079,000
Muslim	2.7%	1,591,000
Hindu	1.0%	559,000
Sikh	0.6%	336,000
Jewish	0.5%	267,000
Buddhist	0.3%	152,000
Other	0.3%	179,000
No Religion	15.5%	
No Answer	7.3%	

Boroughs with highest concentration of Jews		
Barnet	14.8%	46,690
Hertsmere	11.3%	10,710
Harrow	6.3%	13,110
Redbridge	6.2%	14,800
Camden	5.6%	11,150
Hackney	5.3%	10,730
Bury	5.0%	8,920

Figures reproduced from *Jewish Chronicle*, February 21, 2003.

CONDITION SURVEY

Condition precis:

	Good	No obvious problems
	Fair	One or two minor problems and general wear and tear
	Poor	Widespread problems: lack of basic maintenance
	Very bad	Serious problems which require urgent attention

	Good	Fair	Poor	Very bad			
Full time	1	6	11	16			Building unlocked?
Frequent	2	7	12	17			
Regular	3	8	13	18			Interior inspected?
Occasional	4	9	14	19			
Not in use	5	10	15	20			

General Site Notes:

Condition

Rating: good, fair, poor, very bad as precis
 Roofs / elevations not visible?

Drainage system (rainwater goods & gullies etc)

Rating			
			Plant growth in gutters/ hopper heads
			Disconnected, missing or detached rainwater goods
			Water discharging into walls
			Blocked drains with plant growth
			Rot outbreak
			Failed plasterwork as a result of water ingress
			Blistered paintwork / water staining to decorations
Notes:			

Roof coverings

Rating			
			Slipped or missing slates or tiles
			Slate or tile debris around the perimeter of the building
			Cracked or missing leadwork
			General failure of flashings etc
			Rot outbreak
			Failed plasterwork as a result of water ingress
			Blistered paintwork / water staining to decorations
Notes:			

High level masonry

Rating				
				Significant areas of badly eroded masonry at high level, particularly of towers and spires
				Fallen debris – brick, stone etc around perimeter of building
Notes:				

Structural stability

Rating		
		Significant cracks, bulges or other structural defects in walls, where these appear likely to threaten the stability of the whole or a large part of the structure of the building
Notes:		

General maintenance

Rating				
				General problems with window glass and stonework
				Signs of vandalism eg broken windows, graffiti, refuse,
				Paintwork not renewed
				Widespread failure of external render
Notes				

LEVEL OF USAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is being conducted by Jewish Heritage on behalf of English Heritage. The survey encompasses mainly Listed historic synagogues that were purpose-built and other Listed buildings that are currently in use for Jewish worship.

In addition to our site visit to assess the general **CONDITION** of your synagogue building, we would also like to gauge the level of **USAGE**.

It would be most helpful if you could fill in this short questionnaire (ten minutes maximum!) and email it back to us at:

admin@jewish-heritage-uk.org

Please be assured that specific information on individual synagogues will not appear in our final report. The report will be an overview of historic synagogues in England as part of the English Heritage 'Heritage at Risk' programme. It will help English Heritage to understand the needs of synagogues as a specific building type amongst places of worship in general. It will enable them to offer support to congregations that need it most, especially grant aid through the English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund Joint Listed Places of Worship Repair Grant Scheme.

Thank you for your kind co-operation that is much appreciated.

NAME OF SYNAGOGUE:

YOUR NAME:

DATE:

I. FREQUENCY OF WORSHIP

How frequently is the building used for services?

Please choose one of the following 5 categories.

Ia. Full time

In daily use for worship

Shacharit

Mincha

Ma'ariv

Ib. Frequent

In use at least once a week on a regular basis for worship

Friday night

Shabbat morning

Shabbat evening

Ic. Regular

In use at least once a month on a regular basis for worship

Friday night

Shabbat morning

Shabbat evening

Yomim Tovim

Id. Occasional

In use up to 6 times a year, but not on a regular basis.

Ie. Not in use

Closed for an indefinite period.

2. ATTENDANCE

2a. What is the average attendance at services?

Friday night

Shabbat morning

Yom Tov morning

2b. How many members does the synagogue have?

i.e fee-paying members by head of household

2c. Is the congregation growing or shrinking?

3. JEWISH COMMUNAL ACTIVITY

What other activities take place in the synagogue?

3a. Is there a Heder?

Y/N

How many children attend?

3b. Do students from a local university use the building?

Y/N

3c. Is there a rabbi?

Y/N

Full time

Part-time

3d. Is there a student chaplain/chaplains who arranges events in the synagogue?

Y/N

3e. Are you the only synagogue in town?

NB This question is only applicable to small communities.

Y/N

If YES, are they:-

Orthodox

Reform/Liberal/Progressive

Chabad-Lubavitch

3f. Do you regularly hold other communal activities in the building besides worship?

eg social events, meetings, weddings etc.

Y/N

4. PUBLIC ACCESS

Do you ever open your synagogue to the general public?

4a. Do you participate in Heritage Open Days (September)?

Y/N

If so, how many visitors do you have? on

European Jewish Heritage Day

National Heritage Open Days

Other (eg Open House London, Brighton Festival etc)

4b. Do you have school parties/civic groups visiting the synagogue?

Y/N

If so, can you indicate how many parties/individuals visit per year?

Do you charge a fee for visits?

Do you provide any printed information for visitors such as guidebooks, leaflets or postcards?

5. SECURITY

What security measures do you have in place to protect your synagogue?

5a. Do you have any of the following?

Please select from the following list:

Window grilles

CST approved shatter-proof plastic window film

CCTV

High boundary walls or railings

External lighting

Entry 'phone

On-site caretaker or other personnel living on the premises

Police guard

Paid private security guard(s)

CST trained volunteer guard(s)

Other *Please specify*

5b. Have you had any breaches of security recently (since January 2007)?

Please select from the following list:

Break-in(s)

Squatters inside building or in grounds

Vandalism

Stone-throwing

Graffiti

Other *Please describe*

ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION THAT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

GLOSSARY

The following terms, unless otherwise indicated, are transliterations from the Hebrew.

Almemar Term for *Bimah* of Arabic derivation.

Amud Lectern. See *Shtender*.

Arba Minim 'Four species' of produce: date palm, willow, myrtle and citron used in the *Succot* ritual.

Aron Kodesh, Aron HaKodesh Holy Ark, focal point of synagogue in which Scrolls of the Law are housed.

Ashkenazi, (pl.) Ashkenazim Jews originating in central and eastern Europe, following the German or Polish rite.

Bet Din Rabbinical court presided over by three judges or *Dayanim*.

Bet Midrash Religious study hall often attached to a synagogue.

Bet Knesset Hebrew name for synagogue.

Bet Taharah Mortuary.

Bimah Reading platform, traditionally centrally place in Ashkenazi synagogues from where portions of the *Torah* are read aloud to the congregation during some services, especially on *Shabbat* morning.

Cohen (pl) Cohanim By tradition, descendants of Aaron the High Priest in Biblical times who today perform specific functions in the synagogue service. *Cohanim* are forbidden to enter cemeteries for reasons of ritual purity and a special area is often set aside for them at the entrance to the site or by the *Ohel*. *Cohanim* are themselves often buried in a special plot set aside for them.

Dayan (pl) Dayanim Rabbinical court judge

Duhan Ark Platform, from which the congregation is blessed by the *Cohanim* during Sabbath and festival services, a ceremony commonly called in the Ashkenazi English-speaking world *Duhan-ing*.

Ehal See *Hehal*

Ezrat Nashim Women's section of the synagogue, often a gallery.

Gematria System of numbering in Hebrew by adding together the numerical value of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet used to spell a particular word. Traditionally employed in dating and for finding symbolic meanings in the language.

Genizah Repository for used prayer books and other religious appurtenances, usually on synagogue premises.

Haham Chief Rabbi of the Spanish & Portuguese Congregation.

Halakhah Orthodox Jewish law.

Hanukiah See *Menorah*

Havdalah box. Spice box used in ceremony performed at the termination of the Sabbath on Saturday night. Literary 'separation' between the 'holy' and the 'secular.'

Hasid (pl.) *Hasidim* Adherents of *Hasidut* (*Hasidism*), pietistic religious movement founded in eastern Europe in the 18th century and divided into various sects, each following a particular dynastic rabbinical leader or *rebbe* eg Lubavitch, Satmar, Sassov.

Haskalah The Jewish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century that began in German lands and is most associated with the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86) in Berlin.

Hazan (pl.) *Hazanim* Cantor

Hazanut (Heb.) *Hazónus* (Yiddish pronunciation) Cantorial music in the synagogue, from the 19th century, often accompanied by a male voice choir, unaccompanied by instrumentation. In the Reformed synagogue, perhaps a mixed choir, accompanied by an organ.

Hehal Sephardi and Oriental term for Ark. Often pronounced *Ehal* in the Spanish & Portuguese community.

Hevrah (pl.) *Hevrot* Prayer circle often functioning as a friendly society within east European immigrant communities.

Hevrah Kedisha Burial society which prepares the dead for burial.

Huppah Wedding canopy beneath which stand the bride and groom during the marriage ceremony.

Kehillah A self-governing religious community of Jews. Often used today simply to mean 'congregation'.

Klei Mikveh, Kelim Mikveh, Mikvat Kelim Small ritual bath for utensils.

Keter Decorative metalwork crown, often silver, placed on the handles of a Torah scroll.

Kiddush, Kiddushim Blessing over wine made on Sabbath and festivals. Accompanied by refreshments after the synagogue service and/or followed by breaking of bread for the festive meal.

Kollel Advanced religious seminary college for married men.

Landsmanschaft Society of immigrants originating from the same town in Eastern Europe.

Luhot Tablets of the Law, double-headed stone bearing abbreviated form of the Ten Commandments, usually placed above the Ark in a synagogue.

Magen David (lit.) Shield of David. Star of David emblem.

Mahamad Board of Management of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation.

Maskil (pl.) *Maskilim* Proponent, leader of the *Haskalah* Jewish Enlightenment.

Matzevah Tombstone.

Mehitzah Partition in a synagogue between the men's and women's section. Often in the form of a latticed grille or fine curtain.

Menorah Seven branched candelabrum which stood in the Temple in Jerusalem. Popularly used to refer to the nine branched candelabrum (*Hanukiah*) lit on the festival of *Hanukah*.

Mezuzah Parchment scroll inscribed with scriptural verses placed in a container and affixed to door-posts and gates of Jewish homes and buildings.

Mikveh pl. *Mikvaot* Ritual bath. Sometimes found in the basement of a synagogue or as a separate outhouse.

Minyan Quorum of ten males, over the age of 13, required for collective worship.

Mitnaged (pl.) *Mitnagdim* (*Misnagdim* Yiddish) Opponents of *Hasidim*, especially in Lithuania, from the 18th century onwards.

Mizrah Direction for prayer facing Jerusalem, towards which synagogues are traditionally orientated. A decorative plaque indicating the direction for prayer.

Ner Tamid Perpetual lamp hung over the Ark in a synagogue. Sometimes a series of hanging lamps in the Sephardi and Oriental traditions.

Ohel (pl) *Ohelim* Prayer house or funerary chapel at burial ground. Especially a small walk-in memorial devoted to a deceased Hasidic rabbi.

Omer calendar. Notice board in the synagogue for *Sefirat HaOmer* the counting of the 49 days between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*. *Lag B'Omer*; the 33rd day of the *Omer* is a minor holiday.

Parohet (pl) *Parohot* Embroidered curtain covering the Torah scrolls in a synagogue.

Pesach Passover

Pinkas Congregational record book, usually written in Hebrew and/or Yiddish.

Rimonim Finials placed on the handles of Torah scrolls, often worked in silver with bells.

Sedrah Portion of the Pentateuch read in the synagogue every Sabbath morning in an annual cycle. Also called *Parshat HaShavuah* or 'Portion of the Week'.

Sephardi, (pl.) *Sephardim* Jews originating from the Iberian Peninsula.

Sefer Torah (pl.) *Sifrei Torah* Scrolls of the Law containing the Pentateuch, kept in the synagogue Ark and used in public worship.

Shabbat The Jewish Sabbath which lasts from sunset on Friday to nightfall on Saturday.

Shavuot 'Festival of Weeks' Pentecost

Shechitah Jewish ritual slaughter of animals for kosher food

Shemos (Yid.) or *Shemot* (Heb.) Lit. 'Names'. Burial plot in Jewish cemetery for sacred texts and appurtenances containing '*HaShem*' 'The Name' [of God]. Sometimes confused with a *Genizah*.

Shiviti Decorative inscription or wall plaque featuring the opening word from a verse in Psalm 16

'I have set [the Lord always before me.]'

Shofar Ram's horn blown to mark the Jewish New Year.

Shtender (Yiddish) Lectern facing Ark occupied by prayer leader during services especially in Hasidic synagogues. Called *Amud* in Hebrew.

Shtetl (Yiddish) Small town inhabited mainly by Jews in Eastern Europe before the Second World War.

Shul/Shool (Yiddish) Synagogue

Shtiebl (pl) *Shtieblekh* (Yiddish) Small Hasidic synagogue often in a private house.

Simhat Torah Festival of the 'Rejoicing of the Law' that marks the completion of the annual cycle of readings from the Torah.

Succah Temporary booth open to the sky erected to celebrate the festival of *Succot* (Tabernacles), as a reminder of the nomadic existence of the Biblical Children of Israel in the desert.

Talmud Torah Elementary religious school for boys.

Tas Decorative shield or 'breastplate', often silver work, hung over the Torah scroll mantle in Ashkenazi and some Sephardi usage.

Tevah Sephardi and Oriental term for *Bimah*.

Tik Wooden case protecting Torah scrolls, often decorated with silver, used by North African and Oriental communities.

Torah The Pentateuch; used generally to apply to the Jewish religious sources and tradition.

Yad (lit.) 'hand.' Silver pointer used to keep the place when reading from the Torah scroll on the *Bimah*. Usually fashioned in the shape of a hand.

Yeshivah Traditional religious seminary for young men.

YKVK or '*Yud Kay Vav Kay*' The unspoken four letter name of God referred to by its Hebrew initials.

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