



SHAHPORAN & MASJID ISLAMIC CENTRE

STUDENT CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW

The Shahporan Mosque was set up in the early 1990s by the local Bangladeshi community in a converted end of terrace house on Hackney Road, an inner city district in London's East End. To the rear of the house was a single story works building, which the mosque had adapted to serve as a prayer hall.

In 2008, architecture practice Makespace were appointed to replace this prayer hall with a new building to create as much prayer space as possible, and to integrate this with the existing house-mosque.

IN 1990, THERE WERE ROUGHLY 400 MOSQUES AROUND THE UK. BY 2016, THAT NUMBER HAD RISEN TO 1,800.



ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES



The existing building is listed Grade II and is located in a conservation area. This project therefore needed to successfully negotiate heritage and contemporary architecture, as well as to encapsulate a contemporary British Muslim identity.

The facade of the building is derived from a tile pattern from 13th century Anatolia which is abstracted to form the full height of the building. A metal mesh is placed over the rest of the facade in the style of traditional mashrabiya screens. The pattern for the screen is taken from the windows of the Shah Jahan Woking mosque, the first built mosque in Britain (see our separate case study).

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HOW IS THE SPACE USED BY THE COMMUNITY? WHAT DOES IT SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

According to 2011 Census, 14.1% of Hackney residents are Muslim, with 1.3% of overall residents speaking Bengali. The community has grown from when the mosque first opened in 1990. In 1996, the group who were in charge of the mosque bought the premises and from then on, have continued to expand to cater for the growing population and demand.

We met Nur Buksh, Chairman of Mosque and Islamic Centre Trust with Shahed Saleem, architect, founder and director of Makespace, having grown the practice's expertise in residential, community and faith buildings from its base in London's East End.

"Because when we see that people increasingly came to live in this area, we needed more space for the prayer. In a jumma, like today, there wasn't enough space for the community. So, we decide to build two floors. Even now, it still doesn't accommodate all these people. When we are short of space, people pray outside. We need to extend near the yard, but we cannot go further."



REFLECTIONS

HOW HAVE COMMUNITIES OF DIERSE ETHNIC HERITAGE HAD A VOICE IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF SITES THAT ARE SIGNIFICANT TO THEM?

Makespace Architects are an established London practice with a long tradition of working with community organisations, local authorities, housing associations, and homeowners. The local Bangladeshi community are at the heart of this mosque renovation with Makespace. Together they reimagined this from a converted end of terrace house into a visible mosque and Islamic Centre, setting a new British Muslim architecture. There has been a shift from imitating existing styles to developing their own architectural language.



REFLECTIONS

"My own endeavour is to see if we can develop a kind of indigenous approach to Islamic architecture. Can you develop a style which is particular to this country but which incorporates the identities of the people who come and use the building, the identities of Muslim communities who use it? It was quite important for me that these guys like the building because that vindicates the design of it. If they can identify with the building and feel proud of it, then that's important. Plus, people who are not Muslim like the building as well, so, you know, the people who live here or other people are quite happy for it to be here as it enhances the neighbourhood, for a wider group of people. So, it's about that balance, being able to negotiate different sort of cultural backgrounds. I've described it as kind of multi-vocal - a building that speaks a number of languages."

Shahed Saleem, architect at Makespace

