

Manchester Synagogues and their Architects 1740-1940

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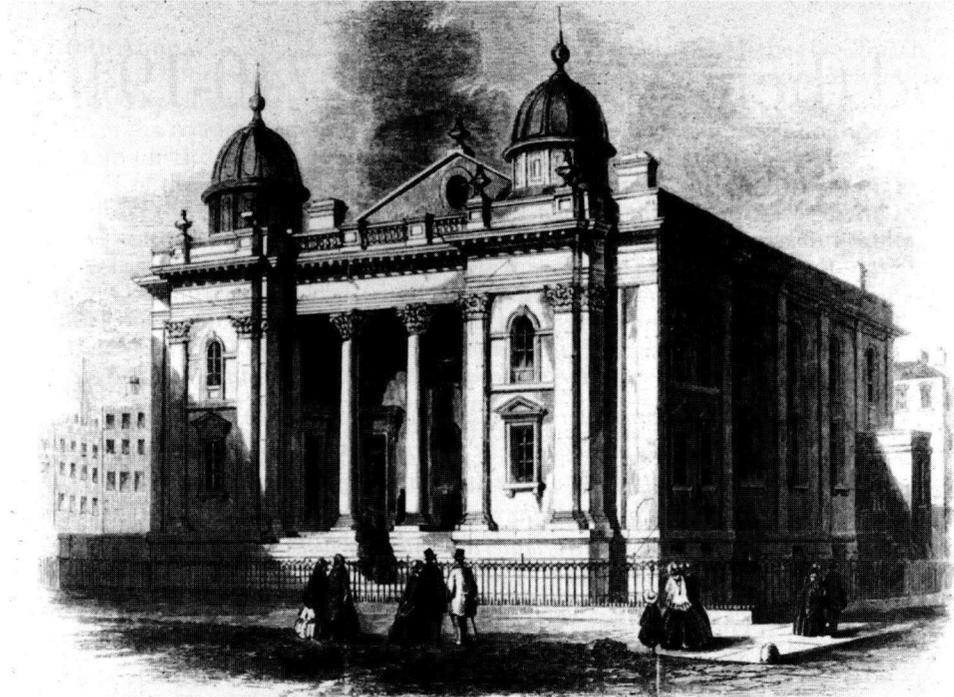
SHARMAN KADISH

Bill Williams, the historian of Manchester Jewry, once observed that the history of Manchester Jewry is like 'a walk up Cheetham Hill Road'.¹ The settlement pattern of the Jewish community, whose presence in Manchester, a city built on the Industrial Revolution, dates back at least to the 1790s, can be traced simply by a tour of the synagogues that they erected. This essay takes surviving synagogues as its primary source material and also looks at some others that have been lost. Encompassing synagogues of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, it examines the character of these little-known buildings in the landscape of a great industrial city and what their architecture says both about Jewish identity and the status of the Jewish community in British society in modern times. Manchester Jewry's built heritage affords an opportunity to explore in miniature the issue of architectural style in relation to Jewish identity in Britain and an attempt is made to place some buildings of local significance in a wider context. This paper introduces a few of the architects, some Jewish, most of them not, who designed Manchester's synagogues and sheds light on how they came to undertake what was still an unusual commission and why they resolved design issues in the way that they did.

JEWISH HISTORICAL CONTEXT

At the bottom of Cheetham Hill Road once stood the Great Synagogue, the Victorian 'cathedral synagogue' of Manchester Jewry, which was opened in 1858 (Fig. 1). This is a significant date in Anglo-Jewish history, being the year from which Jewish political emancipation is conventionally, although not entirely accurately, dated. For in that year, Lionel de Rothschild won his long battle to sit in the British Parliament as a professing Jew without being obliged to swear the Oath of Abjuration, that is, of loyalty to the Crown 'on the true faith of a Christian'. The notion that the (unwritten) British constitution was Christian in character contrasted

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THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE IN COURSE OF ERECTION AT MANCHESTER

Fig. 1

Manchester Great Synagogue (Thomas Bird, 1857-8)

Illustrated Times 2 May 1857

with the ideas of the American and French Revolutions, which stood for a secular state with the Separation of Powers between the Temporal and Spiritual authority. Moreover, from the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century the 'Christian' character of England had meant the Established Anglican Church. Catholics and indeed Non-conformist Protestants were penalised as much as Jews. Catholic emancipation was achieved in 1829. Jewish emancipation took another thirty years. It was not until as late as 1885 that the principle that a non-Christian could stand for and sit in Parliament was finally achieved. It was ironic that the Conservative Party felt itself able to choose a Jew by birth, the future Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, as its leader, whilst a Jew by faith, Rothschild, could not even sit in the House.

Political emancipation of the Jew in England was in reality the logical culmination of a gradual process of civil emancipation. The *de facto* recognition of Jewish rights had generally preceded their confirmation *de jure* on the statute book. From the time of the Resettlement in the seventeenth century, Jews in England had enjoyed advantages over their Continental brethren. It should be recalled that no Jews had

lived officially in Britain since the medieval expulsion under Edward I in 1290. In 1656, during the brief period when the country was a republic, Jews were permitted to return and openly to practice their religion, in the wake of the Dutch rabbi Menasseh Ben Israel's petition to Oliver Cromwell. Henceforth, Jews in Britain suffered no real restrictions in practice on residence, occupation or even ownership of land. Even so, land acquired by Jews for the purposes of building synagogues or for burial of their dead tended to be leasehold. Sometimes it was acquired 'on the lives' of friendly Christians, as was the case in Plymouth in the eighteenth century. The experience of persecution was all too fresh. In the days before formal emancipation the Jewish community kept a low profile, especially in the provinces. Synagogues, like non-conformist chapels and Catholic churches, tended to be found off the public thoroughfare, tucked up alleyways or in courts. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries even relatively tolerant England was not immune from Dissenter riots and anti-Popish outbreaks. The number of Jews in Britain rose steadily from perhaps 6,000-8,000 at the opening of the reign of George III to 40,000-60,000 in 1880, a fraction of one percent of the total population. Early arrivals were generally Sephardim, Jews whose ancestors had once lived in the Iberian Peninsula, but more latterly in Amsterdam or Leghorn. They were soon joined, and in terms of numbers, overtaken by Ashkenazim, Jews from Germany, Poland and Eastern Europe, usually characterised by the fact that their mother tongue was Yiddish. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Jewish communities were established in East London and in the seaports and market towns mainly of southern England. By the mid nineteenth century economic opportunity had irreversibly shifted settlement patterns to the expanding industrial cities of the Midlands and northern England: Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester. The last was ultimately to become home to the largest Jewish community outside London.

Casson and Berry's *Plan of the Town of Manchester and Salford* of 1741 shows a 'Synagogue Alley' in the vicinity of John Dalton Street. However, no other evidence for an organised Jewish community exists until the Jews' burial ground at Pendleton (Brindle Heath) was purchased in 1794.² Today, the Hebrew inscription on the oldest surviving tombstone there yields the civil year 1795. From an estimated 150 Jews in 1815 (compared with perhaps 400 in Liverpool) out of a total population of 130,000, the community grew to about 4,000 at the time of the 1871 Census. Between 1881 and 1914, pogroms and economic hardship in the Russian Empire brought some 100,000 Jewish refugees to Britain's shores, swelling the poverty-stricken immigrant quarters of Red Bank and Strangeways, just as it did the East End of London. Manchester Jewry today numbers about 35,000 people and is, in fact, the only UK Jewish community that is still experiencing growth.

MANCHESTER'S GEORGIAN JEWISH HERITAGE

Soon after the purchase of the burial plot at Pendleton, and before 1796, a synagogue had been established in the upstairs room of a warehouse reached through a passage called Infirmary Yard, off Garden Street, Withy Grove. This was, according to

contemporary accounts, a mean and insanitary street located in the oldest part of the town, the area around the Collegiate Church, principally composed of Long Millgate and Shudehill, which was the market centre of Manchester. In March 1806 the congregation moved a short distance to a former warehouse in Ainsworth Court, Long Millgate, opposite Toad Lane, that had once been used as a school. This upstairs room was reached by an outside wooden staircase.³

The foundation stone of the first purpose-built synagogue in Manchester was laid at the top of Halliwell Street (No.12) on 11 August 1824. By a lease dated 27 April 1825, the land was given over by James Halliwell to Samuel Isaacs and others on an assignment of two terms of 500 years each under 'a Chief Rent of £15'.⁴ The Halliwell Street Synagogue was consecrated on the 2 September 1825 by the Reader of Liverpool's Seel Street Synagogue, the first purpose-built Jewish place of worship in that city, opened in 1807. A drawing in Picton's *Memorials of Liverpool* (1875) depicted a fine classical façade with Ionic portico. Seel Street Synagogue was designed by the prominent classicist Thomas Harrison of Chester (1744-1829). By contrast, Manchester's Halliwell Street Synagogue apparently possessed no distinguishing features, being of plain red brick, constructed at a cost of £1,700. The interior furnishings were of deal, the Ark cupboard grained to resemble mahogany. There was no gallery; the women were screened behind a wooden lattice-work *Mehitzah* [screen] that extended almost to the ceiling. The identity of the architect, if there was one, remains unknown, perhaps just as well because in the following year the roof collapsed, shattering a 'beautiful glass gas chandelier' and destroying the gallery rail.⁵ Fortunately, a committee meeting had broken up half an hour beforehand. There was a *Mikveh* [ritual bath] at Halliwell Street, the first one recorded in Manchester. The synagogue lasted on this site until the 1850s when it found itself in the direct path of the construction of Corporation Street that precipitated the move north to Cheetham and the building of the Manchester Great Synagogue.

MANCHESTER'S VICTORIAN SYNAGOGUES

In 1857 after an architectural competition – the first held outside London for the design of a synagogue – the Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation selected Thomas Bird's design for the Great Synagogue in York Street, afterwards Cheetham Hill Road. Bird beat eleven other contenders⁶ including the senior London Jewish architect Hyman Henry Collins (1832/3-1905) and the young Nathan Solomon Joseph (1834-1909) who was yet to make a name for himself as a specialist in synagogue design as Architect to the United Synagogue in the 1870s. Thomas Bird was fresh from the project for the Cheetham Town Hall (1853-6) that, with its superb ironwork canopy, still stands on the opposite side of the street, until very recently a Listed Building at Risk. It has now been renovated and is in use as an Indian restaurant. The Manchester Great Synagogue itself, abandoned by its upwardly and outwardly mobile congregation, was sold in 1977 and demolished in 1986, despite a Grade II listing in 1952 – one of the earliest synagogue listings in the country.

Bird favoured the Italian Renaissance, the style used for civic buildings and palaces in fifteenth-century Venice and Florence. It was a style that suited well the city fathers, the new Renaissance princes of 'Cottonopolis'. The extravagant street façade of the Manchester Great Synagogue,⁷ of polished stone, boasted for its porch a Corinthian loggia with a pair of columns and entablature, approached by a flight of twelve steps (Fig. 1). The main prayer hall, all brick, had a simple pitched roof set back behind a decorative parapet flanked by a pair of domed turrets. Turrets were to become a feature of synagogue architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. This fashion, it seems, was started on the Continent by Ludwig von Forster's Dohany Street Synagogue in Budapest (1854-9), admittedly there in an overtly 'orientalist' context, although it is not known whether Bird was aware of that precedent. The interior of the Manchester Great Synagogue was arranged according to a basilican plan, with a nave and galleries over the colonnaded aisles, superimposed Corinthian over Doric piers beneath. The Ark was likewise set within a Doric entablature on pilasters of mahogany with paired marble Corinthian columns above. The integral Ark and oval central *Bimah* [reading platform] both owed a debt ultimately to James Spiller's Adamesque London Great Synagogue of 1790. That building had provided the stylistic reference for London's New Synagogue in Great St Helen's, Bishopsgate, which was, in turn, the direct inspiration for the Manchester Great Synagogue. Great St Helen's was responsible for popularising the use of Italianate style for synagogues in Britain. Its architect was John Davies who won a design competition in 1838, the first held in Britain for the design of a synagogue. Great St Helen's was the only synagogue to feature amongst the engravings in H. Melville's and T. H. Shepherd's *London Interiors* (1841) which achieved wide circulation.

Only a few months before the Manchester Great Synagogue was opened, Birmingham's Jewish community had opted for Italianate for its premier building at Singers Hill. It is known from an entry in the Great Synagogue Building Committee minutes that in 1859 Thomas Bird actually visited Birmingham 'to see the synagogue arrangements' there.⁸ Like Bird, the architect of the Birmingham synagogue was to have a wider impact on the character of his city: Henry Yeoville Thomason went on to design the Birmingham City Art Gallery and Council House in the 1870s and 1880s. Today, Birmingham's Singers Hill is the earliest surviving, and working, large scale or so-called 'cathedral synagogue' in Britain. The 1850s saw a decisive shift in synagogue architecture from the back streets into the public realm.⁹ In the 'Era of Emancipation', Jews finally found the confidence to make an architectural statement of their presence on the public street. Monumental synagogues also expressed the economic advancement of an anglicised Jewish elite that was moving up in the world. From then on, freehold sites were purchased in good locations, architects with good reputations like Thomason and Bird were engaged and, occasionally, competitions were held for the best design of a new Jewish place of worship.

Indeed, in Manchester in the year 1857-8 not one but two big synagogues were in process of building on York Street, Cheetham Hill Road: not only the

Orthodox Great Synagogue but also the Manchester Reform Synagogue, only a few hundred yards away on the corner of Park Place on the opposite side of the street (Fig. 2). In fact, by the 1890s, Cheetham Hill Road was to boast no fewer than four purpose-built synagogues within a short distance of one another, marking it out as the premier Jewish district of Manchester. Middle class Jewish families were then moving out into the new residential districts of North Manchester: Cheetham, Hightown and Lower Broughton, the beginnings of a seemingly relentless march northwards to Prestwich, Whitefield and beyond.



Fig. 2

Interior of Manchester Reform Synagogue, Park Place, Cheetham
(Edward Salomons, 1857-8), bombed in 1941

Courtesy of Manchester Jewish Museum

The foundation stone of what became known as the Manchester Great Synagogue was laid on 29 April 1857 on land purchased for £1,275 from the Earl of Derby. Twelve builders tendered estimates in response to an advertisement placed in the Manchester press in March 1857 and the contract was signed with Messrs Davison & Son of Manchester on 1 April 1857 for the agreed sum of £3,465 (the

final bill was over £3,600). A few weeks earlier, on 11 March, had been laid the foundation stone of the synagogue of the Manchester Congregation of British Jews, the first Reform Jewish community outside London. The Manchester Reform Synagogue, Park Place, predated by nearly twenty years the building of the West London Synagogue, Upper Berkeley Street (Davis & Emanuel 1870), the flagship 'cathedral synagogue' of Reform in Britain. However, Park Place was bombed during the Blitz in 1941, the only major Manchester synagogue to become a casualty of enemy action. Its red brick successor in Jackson's Row (Eric Levy and Peter Cummings, 1952-3), off Deansgate, was, according to John J. Parkinson-Bailey, 'the first new building put up in post-war Manchester'.¹⁰ Today, the Reform Synagogue is the only Jewish place of worship in the city centre.

Both Orthodox and Reform synagogues in Victorian Cheetham Hill Road cost their respective congregations comparable sums of money, embracing purchase of the site, construction and fittings, totalling some £5,500 each.¹¹ The Reformers managed to raise the finance required amongst their small but affluent membership. They were helped considerably by the fact that they successfully claimed one third of the £1,500 compensation money given by the newly-incorporated City Council (hence 'Corporation Street') for the compulsory purchase of Halliwell Street, the synagogue from which they had seceded, thereby reducing the financial resources of the Old Congregation for its building plans. The latter congregation appealed to London and beyond for support. Donations from court Jews like the Rothschilds and Sir Moses Montefiore were not enough to obviate the need to raise loans, in particular a mortgage of £2,700. Nevertheless, the Orthodox congregation won the race to open first: the Great Synagogue was consecrated on 11 March 1858, the Reform Synagogue on 25 March.

The Reformers chose one of their own members, architect Edward Salomons (1828-1906), to design their synagogue.¹² Salomons was amongst the first Jewish architects to practice in Britain, a fact itself indicative of the new opportunities flowing from Jewish emancipation. He was born in London, one of fourteen children of a German-Jewish cotton merchant. Whilst he was still a child, the family moved to Plymouth Grove, Chorlton-on-Medlock, in Cheshire. After a short spell working in his father's warehouse, from 1850 he studied architecture at the Manchester School of Design. He set up his own practice in King Street in about 1853 and worked in flexible partnerships with John Philpot Jones, John Ely (1848-1915), Ralph Selden Wornum (1847-1910), Alfred Steinthal (1859/60-1928) and Nathan Solomon Joseph. The name of Edward Salomons was to become identified with the City of Manchester where he lived and worked for the rest of his life.

His best-known building in the city is the Reform Club, King Street (1870-1) (with Jones). The Art Treasures Exhibition Hall, Old Trafford, of 1857, owing an obvious debt to the Crystal Palace, was somewhat more ephemeral. Salomons was winner of competitions held for these and other projects; by contrast, he came nowhere in the important competition for Manchester Town Hall won by Alfred Waterhouse in 1867. Salomons never went in for full-blooded Gothic despite his drawings (he worked as a draughtsman in their office) for Bowman & Crowther's

The Churches of the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding the opinion of *The Builder* that 'This gentleman seems to go in for a new style in every building he erects',¹³ Salomons was most at home in the Italianate and the Romanesque.

Salomons' Manchester Jews' School (1868-9) that still stands in Derby Street, Cheetham, is vaguely Italianate in style, of red brick with decorative bands in black. It replaced an Italianate predecessor with Romanesque detailing (1850-1), by John E. Gregan, in whose office Salomons had spent time as a pupil. Gregan is best known for his *palazzo*-style warehouses and banks that became a Manchester trademark.

The Park Place Reform Synagogue, Salomons' earliest Jewish commission, was confusingly described by *The Builder* as 'a Lombardic, or even Saracenic version, of the Byzantine',¹⁴ but was essentially a Romanesque building with a basilican interior and some slightly exotic touches. Old photographs and a sketch (no original plans seem to have survived), show that the polygonal apse faced onto the main road in order to preserve the correct orientation of the Ark towards Jerusalem. The alternative courses of red and white brickwork (*ablaq*) on the façade, and decorative window-heads, arguably derived from Mamluk architecture. The *Manchester Guardian* judged that the brickwork alone was 'from the necessities of the style, perhaps the most elaborate yet executed in this city'.¹⁵ The arcaded horseshoe windows were inspired by Muslim Spain. This theme was echoed inside in the ironwork arches spanning the aisles whose spandrels were filled with fretwork stencilling, the arcaded gallery front, and especially in the bold horseshoe over the Ark.

The same motifs, far more overtly expressed and coherent, reappeared later at Salomon's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, of 1873-4. The fashion for 'orientalism' in synagogue architecture, the use of Moorish, Islamic or Byzantine styles, arrived in Britain in this decade. The trend had begun in Germany in the 1830s and was thought to express the Jews' supposedly 'eastern' origins. In Britain, fine 1870s synagogue interiors, replete with polychromic decoration in paint, stencilling and mosaic, may be seen in Liverpool, at Princes Road (W. & G. Audsley, 1872-4) (Fig. 3), at Brighton, Middle Street (Thomas Lainson, 1874-5), and at London, St Petersburg Place (George Audsley of Liverpool in association with N. S. Joseph, 1877-9). In all three cases, however, it is worth pointing out that fabulous decoration is confined to the interior, masked behind restrained, predominantly Romanesque façades. Only at Manchester's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue (ignored by Pevsner in his original *South Lancashire* volume of 1969),¹⁶ and later at the Bradford Reform Synagogue, Bowland Street (Healey Brothers, 1880-1), was exotic decoration used overtly on the façade. Unlike buildings in Romanesque or classical style, not to mention the Gothic Revival, these synagogues could never be mistaken for churches.

The façade of the Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue is pleasingly symmetrical (Fig. 4), modest in scale, not grandiloquent like its former neighbour, the Great. It is of Manchester red brick with a central projecting gable and a slate roof. The central entrance is framed within a horseshoe arch, Andalusian in



Fig. 3

Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, Princes Road, Toxteth (W. & G. Audsley, 1872-4)

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Fig. 4

Manchester Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Cheetham (Edward Salomons, 1873-4)
 Copyright English Heritage. NMR

inspiration, this shape repeated in the window heads of the five-light arcade above. The lower floor windows are more ogee in form and other Islamic-inspired decoration occurs in the inlaid blue 'vitrified' marble bosses over the doorway and in the gable, arabesque decoration in the tympanum of the door arch and the use of slender columns. The windows were originally all filled with Islamic-inspired geometric coloured glass, now surviving only in the street façade and at gallery level. Inside, the classical Ark containing the *Sifrei Torah* [Scrolls of the Law, the focal point of the synagogue on the wall facing Jerusalem] is framed within a bold horseshoe arch, reminiscent of Salomons' earlier work at Park Place, although here lobed. The decoration of the walls, especially of the Ark wall and ceiling was originally much more elaborate than it appears today, being covered in large part with a diaper pattern. The *Tevah* [Sephardi term for *Bimah* or reading platform] is slightly displaced to the west end of the space, in accordance with the Sephardi tradition. It has an openwork metallic balustrade, painted gold, the design inspired by *mashrabiya* work as encountered in Egyptian mosques. Similar patterning occurs

in the half-glazed front entrance doors. This form of latticework is also to be found fronting the Ark at West London Synagogue that was opened four years previously (1870), the work of the London practice of Davis & Emanuel.

The choice of Moorish style was consciously appropriate for a Sephardi congregation, since it harked back to its roots in the Iberian peninsular. As Bill Williams has pointed out, 'With the exception of the family synagogue of the Montefiores at Ramsgate, [Manchester boasted] the first Sephardi synagogue in provincial England'.¹⁷ The opening up of rail and shipping routes between Britain and the Mediterranean basin during the 1850s and 1860s had brought Sephardi Jewish textile merchants from Gibraltar, Greece, Corfu, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, and Aleppo (Syria) to Manchester in increasing numbers. However, there is no evidence that Edward Salomons was inspired by the Spanish synagogues of Toledo and Cordova, which were little known in his day: Santa Maria La Blanca (Ibn Shoshan) (c.1200) and El Transito (Abulafia Synagogue) (1357). On the other hand, he acknowledged explicitly that 'The character of the design [was] founded upon the well-known Alhambra and other buildings of the same period...' given that 'the arches throughout [took] the horseshoe form'.¹⁸ Nineteenth-century Moresque was derived more from Owen Jones' widely circulated prints of the Alhambra that were far better known than the former Spanish synagogues.

Jewish commissions notwithstanding (and he is only known ever to have designed one church: Hope Congregational Church at Denton, 1876), Salomons in his personal life moved away from Judaism. He married two Gentile women in succession, and his youngest son Gerald (also an architect) changed his name to Sanville and joined the local parish church. When Edward Salomons died in 1906 he was cremated according to Christian rites at the Southern Cemetery, whose impressive Romanesque chapel he had also designed (1891-2). The *Jewish Chronicle* did not honour him with an obituary, merely noting, with some exaggeration: 'Mr Edward Salomons, FRIBA, who died on Saturday in Manchester, was born a Jew, but never identified himself with the Jewish community.'¹⁹

FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANT SYNAGOGUES

In the decades after the three purpose-built synagogues discussed above were constructed within a few hundred yards of one another in Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester Jewry rapidly grew owing to the influx of refugees from Russian lands, Poland, Roumania and Galicia. The streets around Victoria Station (1844) became Manchester's point of arrival for the new immigrant community. Mainly Yiddish-speaking and accustomed to traditional Jewish life in Eastern Europe, the newcomers looked with suspicion on the big synagogues on Cheetham Hill Road. To them Orthodox, Reform and Sephardi congregations were hardly differentiated; all appeared alike as the *englischer schuls* [Anglicised synagogues] of the English Jewish establishment. As in the East End of London and in other large western cities that hosted Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, pre-eminently New York City, *Hevrot* [prayer circles] and *Shtieblakh* [Hasidic conventicles] proliferated. Makeshift synagogues were organised in private houses and workshops, frequently transferring

to a former church or chapel building.

The fine Grade II listed mid-nineteenth century (c. 1840) neo-classical chapel (Congregationalist, Independent or Methodist depending on source) that still stands at the very bottom of Cheetham Hill Road,²⁰ close to the site of the Park Place Reform Synagogue, was in use as the Manchester Central Synagogue between 1895 and 1928 (church conversion by J. H. Maybury, 1894). That congregation had started life as the Volkovysker Hevrah, an immigrant *Landsmanschaft* [fraternity from the same town of origin] in 1871. Hailing from Volkovysk near Grodno in Byelorussia, on arrival in Manchester the group had first prayed in a makeshift synagogue created 'by knocking together two back yards' and 'covering them with a tinned roof'.²¹ Between c.1907 and 1965 a former Catholic church, situated on the eastern half of Derby Street, on the opposite corner to the Great Synagogue, now demolished, was in use as the Manchester United Synagogue. From 1898 to 1935 the Holy Law Beth Aaron Synagogue occupied a former church 'opposite the bottom of Knowsley Street' near the Cheetham Free Library. This congregation had started life in 1864 as the *Hevrat Torah* and at one time rented the upstairs of a 'Hayshop', hence its nickname the 'Hayshop Shul.' The old church was evidently not much of an improvement. In the 1960s older members recalled 'the ventilation holes in the walls covered with brown paper and the Service conducted to a background of cooing of the pigeons nesting there'.²² On Bury New Road, the Salem Chapel and Schools, at No.12, with a classical portico, became the North Manchester or 'Broyder' Synagogue in 1899 until 1944.²³ This congregation, a *Landsmanschaft* from the Galician border town of Brody, had been founded in 1894. The architects of the conversion were Mills & Murgatroyd, a local practice that usually specialised in warehouses. They were also responsible for the Cheetham Assembly Rooms, built next door to Bird's Town Hall, now demolished.

The Orthodox immigrant community did however patronise the *Mikveh* in the basement of the Great Synagogue which was situated in the heart of the Jewish district. First class, second class and third class facilities were on offer to cater for rich and poor alike. Like in the East End of London,²⁴ private *Mikvaot* are also known to have existed in the 1900s in Red Bank and in Teneriffe Street, Broughton. A *Mikveh* was included in the building of the Manchester New Synagogue, that still stands a short distance to the south of the site of the Great Synagogue and next door to the Cheetham Branch of the Manchester Free Library (Barker & Ellis, 1876-8). Today, the red brick façade with its large round window with *Magen David* [Shield of David] motif, and Hebrew inscriptions, is still visible beneath commercial hoardings. The New Synagogue is now used as wholesale premises for one of the numerous Asian textile manufacturers, who followed the Jews as the newest immigrant group into the Cheetham area. There is nothing left inside: the interior has been entirely stripped of its synagogue fittings and a floor put in at gallery level, although the iron gallery supports are still to be seen. Originally, the synagogue had an open timbered roof of moulded pitch pine, the pews and gallery fronts being of the same material. The gallery, on three sides, was 'surmounted with blue-painted metal screen work.' The Ark was ornate, with a 'heavily panelled

door', raised on five steps, 'with coupled pilasters, surmounted by cornice and balustrade... elaborately moulded and enriched with a carved scroll pediment and finials'.²⁵ The *Bimah* was in the centre of the oblong space, unencumbered by seating. No photographs of the interior have come to light. Originally known as the 'York Street Synagogue and Beth Hamedrash' [study house], it occupied a well-appointed position in its day, having been founded, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, 'to bring together the scattered "Chevrahs", into one compact body.' The foundation stone, now gone,²⁶ was laid on 25 March and the New Synagogue was consecrated by the Delegate Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler on 12 September 1889.

The New Synagogue was designed by Cheetham architect William Sharp Ogden (1844-1926), then in partnership with Edward Warning Charlton. The builders were also local: Robert Neill & Sons of Strangeways who had previously worked on Park Place. Whilst Ogden's plans have not survived, a signed drawing of the York Street elevation was reproduced in *The British Architect* together with a view of the new Sunday Schools for the Broughton Congregational Church, on the corner of Ramsgate and Teneriffe Street, Ogden's only other known ecclesiastical commission, on which he was engaged at the same time. A sketch also appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*.

Ogden was an obscure and somewhat eccentric Manchester man whose life has been researched by the architectural historian Mark Girouard. He was a grandson of William Ogden, the printer responsible for the handbill announcing the meeting that resulted in the infamous Peterloo Massacre in 1819. He was probably educated at the Manchester Free Grammar School and inherited his great-grandfather Peter Ogden's antiquarian and topographical interests. He was an avid collector, bequeathing artefacts and some of his own drawings to the Manchester Museum, the Whitworth Art Gallery and the British Museum. Ogden's most original architectural designs were published in *Mercantile Architecture* (1876, enlarged editions 1885, 1892). They never got built and remained eclectic 'pipe dreams'. Nevertheless, as Girouard has suggested, Ogden's obsession with 'movement' in architectural form anticipated the European Art Nouveau.

Certainly, this radicalism is nowhere evident in Ogden's work for the Jewish community. The New Synagogue was described at the time 'as a bold arrangement of free classic'. However, it is predominantly Romanesque in style, executed in red brick, the style and material typical choices for synagogue design in the latter part of the nineteenth century, especially for provincial communities operating on tight building budgets. Likewise, Ogden's design for the *Ohel* [funeral chapel] at the Urmston Jewish cemetery (Albert Avenue entrance), opened by the New Synagogue in 1894,²⁷ owed nothing to the fantastic shapes he invented for *Christian Gravestones* published in 1877. As for his Talmud Torah School, Bent Street (1894-5), built in the same year, two design schemes were submitted and rejected in turn by the Corporation in 1892 and 1893, but are still preserved in the archives.²⁸ The resulting building was somewhat less florid than Ogden had originally envisaged. It was also less ambitious. Only the central part was constructed, initially without the planned wings. Perhaps though, Mark Girouard is rather hard on Ogden: 'None

[of his buildings] is of the slightest interest,' he writes in *Town and Country* (1992).²⁹ At least Ogden's three commissions for the Jews of Manchester have survived, so that today we can judge for ourselves.

One architectural style was largely conspicuous by its absence from the repertoire of nineteenth-century synagogue architects. Gothic Revival had become the style favoured by 'The Church'. For British Jews, Gothic was identified as Christian and English, religion and nationhood being inseparable. Jews stood outside this nexus. In England and Scotland and even in Ireland, despite the Catholic majority, the Jews felt more comfortable with the religiously neutral neo-classical, Italianate and especially the Romanesque, for their places of worship. In this, the Jewish community found some common ground with many non-conformist Christians who had, by the late Victorian period, come to associate Gothic with the established Anglican Church.

However, shyness of the Gothic did not extend to Jewish cemeteries, where a Gothic style *Ohel* is frequently encountered in the Victorian period. A good example can be found in Manchester at the Southern Cemetery's Jewish section. A photograph³⁰ taken of the *Ohel* at the Prestwich Village burial ground (Manchester Old Hebrew Congregation, Great Synagogue, 1841) before its demolition in 1951 (it was badly vandalised) shows a simple brick building with a single Gothic arched doorway and matching window on the side wall that is visible. Jewish tombstones in the shape of a pointed arch and carved in Gothic lettering are also not uncommon in this period. The stonemasons who worked on these memorials were generally Gentiles. The fact remains, nonetheless, that their Jewish clients did not object to the style adopted. Jews found the association between the neo-Gothic and death quite acceptable. However, in life it was too closely connected with the established Anglican Church.

EDWARDIAN AND INTER-WAR SYNAGOGUES IN MANCHESTER

By the inter-war period the second generation were moving northwards along Cheetham Hill Road. The new Central Synagogue was built in 1927-8 in Heywood Street. A somewhat ostentatious red brick façade, with Roman porch and Grecian detailing, was designed by John Knight of Manchester, with reinforced concrete engineering by Lambourne & Co. Ltd. Pevsner intriguingly described it as 'Liverpool-looking'.³¹ The classical theme was maintained inside in the marble-clad Ark wall that reached right up to the dentilled cornice. The Ark doors were set within a segmental pediment on pilasters with a large arched window above. The galleries were supported on slender piers that extended up to clerestory level. The design was perhaps a little 'retro' for the period.

In 1979, the Central amalgamated with the Broyder Shul in Bury New Road that had purchased a disused red brick Gothic Methodist chapel on Leicester Road, Salford. The combined congregation was renamed the Central and North Manchester Synagogue. Thus, the Heywood Street Central Synagogue had enjoyed a short lifespan indeed. Fifty years must constitute something of a record. Partially used as a mosque in the 1980s, today the old Central Synagogue stands derelict, a

monument to the Jewish communal edifice complex of the twentieth century.

The Roumanian Synagogue was built in Ramsgate Street off Bury New Road in 1924. Traces of its existence have almost entirely disappeared and even the street pattern has been completely altered. Today, all that remains of the synagogue is a broken brick wall on the north side of Willerby Road containing one barely legible sandstone corner stone, out of four originally set. Yet this was a substantial synagogue, far more than a mere rebuilding on the site that had been occupied by the Roumanian Jews since 1914. It included not only a synagogue but also a *Bet HaMidrash*, offices and classrooms designed by the Jewish immigrant architect Peter Cummings (born Caminesky, 1879-1957). The forward-looking building had a large half-moon window between two towers on the main elevation, with smaller windows to match on the side. It is reminiscent of the slightly later work of Marcus Kenneth Glass³² in the North East, whose style may be characterised as cinematic Byzantine. Cummings, in fact, specialised in cinema design. It would be interesting to know whether the two architects were aware of each other's work. The Manchester synagogue had a pitched roof of reinforced concrete and slate, brick walls, and a concrete floor with maple boarding over. Unfortunately, no photographs showing the actual appearance of the synagogue as built have yet come to light, but Cummings drawings have been rescued from destruction by Salford City Council.³³ The interior fittings, disappointingly traditional compared with the architecture, were reinstalled in the successor synagogue at Vine Street in 1953. In 1941 the name of this congregation was changed to the North Salford Synagogue. This was out of fear of attack given that its members were designated 'enemy aliens' because Roumania had entered the Second World War on the side of the Axis Powers.

Walking along Cheetham Hill Road, almost to the point where it becomes Bury Old Road, one reaches Higher Crumpsall Synagogue ([Basil] Pendleton & Dickinson, 1928-9). In fact, Crumpsall, almost symbolically, is located at the crossroads between what is now thought of as 'old' and 'new' Manchester Jewry. North Manchester Jewry, largely second and third generation immigrants from Eastern Europe, has finally 'made it' out of the primary area of settlement in Red Bank and Cheetham Hill, across, (not Delancey as the New Yorkers would have it), but Half-way House, into the leafy suburbs of Broughton Park, Prestwich and Whitefield.

It is often forgotten that Crumpsall Synagogue was for many years the prestige synagogue of North Manchester, superseding the Victorian Great Synagogue for society weddings and functions. Today, it is almost the only synagogue in the whole of Manchester which keeps alive the musical tradition of *Hazanut* [cantorial singing usually with a choir]. *Hazanut* seems to have gone the way of the grand 'cathedral synagogue', with which it became associated in the emancipated Jewish communities of central and western Europe in the nineteenth century. Nowadays, the building is not even full for *Kol Nidrei* [eve of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement]. It has passed its heyday, perceived of as a relic of the past. This is somewhat ironic. Fashions have changed and, not ten minutes walk away from Crumpsall, the

burgeoning Orthodox communities of Broughton Park are furiously opening *Shtieblakh* on every corner. Not all of the denizens of this new 'ghetto' are Hasidim, although Satmar, Lubavitch, Vishnitz and Belz have indeed made their home there. So this mania for *Shtieblakh* is curious, perhaps an emotional search for spiritual intimacy which the big formal synagogue space apparently does not provide. There is a feeling, amongst younger Jews searching for their religious roots, that the modest, sparsely furnished and undecorated *Shtiebl* is somehow more authentically Jewish, redolent of *Yiddishkeit* [traditional Ashkenazi Judaism], than the big synagogue. This attitude actually reflects a woeful ignorance of Jewish architectural history. In the past, Jews built big and decorated in profusion if circumstances permitted. Even in Eastern Europe, Jews had grand masonry synagogues, for example, in Krakov and Vilno, dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Owing to the requirements dictated by orientation, Higher Crumpsall Synagogue offers its Ark end to the street. The classical east elevation, with blind semi-circular apse, is clad in white stone, giving a brooding mausoleum-like appearance. The only decoration is to be found on the apse cornice in the form of lion-head gargoyles. It is highly unusual to find sculpted animal forms, let alone human figures, in Jewish art and this example in stone on the façade of a synagogue is probably unique in Britain. Crumpsall Synagogue was designated Grade II in the Salford Listings Review of 1998. Inside, although sadly neglected, it boasts high quality brass work and some fine stained and coloured glass, in particular the pair of windows depicting a 'Vision of Jerusalem' (east window) (Fig. 5) and the rebuilt Temple of Solomon (west window). These render traditional symbolism in contemporary style. The Crumpsall 'Vision of Jerusalem' is distinctly modernist in its cubic construction with vertical ribbon windows and central dome. It is clearly inspired by the heavy modernist buildings that were being designed in Palestine under the British Mandate by architects such as Austin Harrison and Patrick Geddes. The sun-ray radiating out from behind is typically Art Deco. The identity of the glassmakers has not been established.



Fig. 5

'Vision of Jerusalem' coloured glass window at Higher Crumpsall Synagogue, Manchester

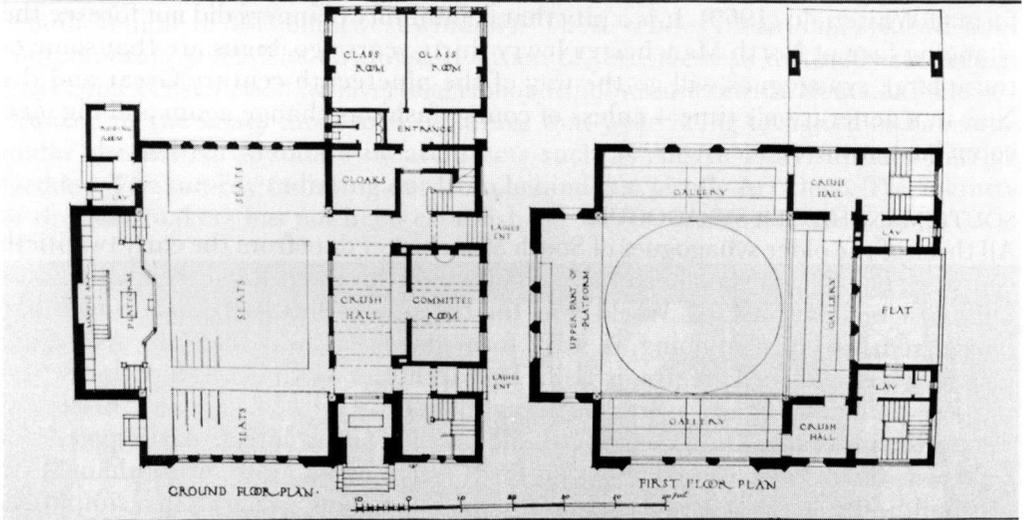
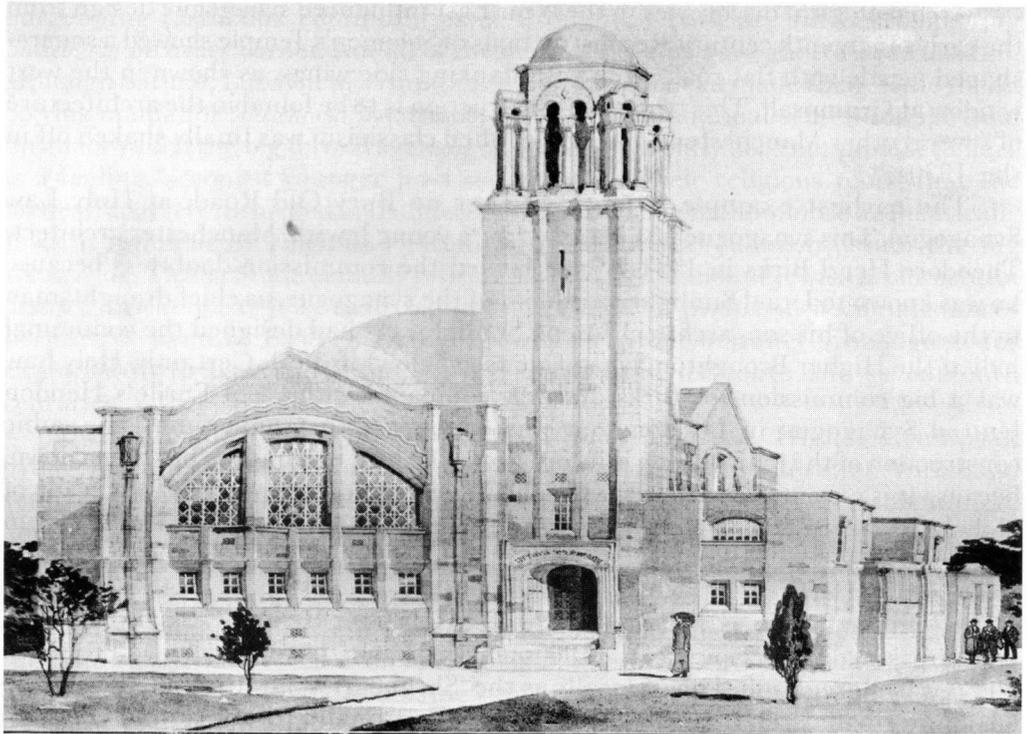
Photo: Andrew Petersen *Copyright Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage*

Archaeological discoveries in the Near East influenced synagogue design from the early nineteenth century. Reconstructions of Solomon's Temple showed a square-shaped façade with flat roof, often with flanking side wings, as shown in the west window at Crumpsall. This tripartite construction is to be found in the architecture of several other Manchester synagogues, when classicism was finally shaken off in the 1930s.³⁴

The earliest example is much further up Bury Old Road, at Holy Law Synagogue. This synagogue was designed by 'a young Jewish' Manchester architect, Theodore Herzl Birks in 1934-5.³⁵ He landed the commission doubtless because he was known to Israel Sunlight, president of the synagogue, as chief draughtsman in the office of his son, architect Joseph Sunlight. He had designed the communal hall at the Higher Broughton Synagogue (see below) in 1931. Certainly, Holy Law was a big commission for Birks and was compared with Cecil Eprile's Hendon United Synagogue in London that was opened at the same time. The cubic construction of the main façade is international style in inspiration, but toned down, because it is executed in brick, a typically English building material. The façade of Holy Law was influential locally, being reproduced after the Second World War in red brick at Jackson's Row Reform (Levy & Cummings, 1952-3) and at Heaton Park (1967). Here, even the *Magen David* over the central bay, the only decorative feature on the façade, is a direct imitation of Holy Law. Heaton Park also features large areas of glazing, typical of the 1960s building boom that also included Prestwich Hebrew Congregation (known locally as the 'Shrubberies' after the Victorian villa which originally stood on the site) (1961-2) and finally the brick and concrete form of Whitefield (1969). It is a pity that community planners did not foresee the changing face of North Manchester Jewry thirty years ago. Signs are that some of these large synagogues will go the way of the nineteenth-century Great and the New in a generation's time – unless of course fashions change again and big *shuls* come back into vogue.

SOUTH MANCHESTER SYNAGOGUES

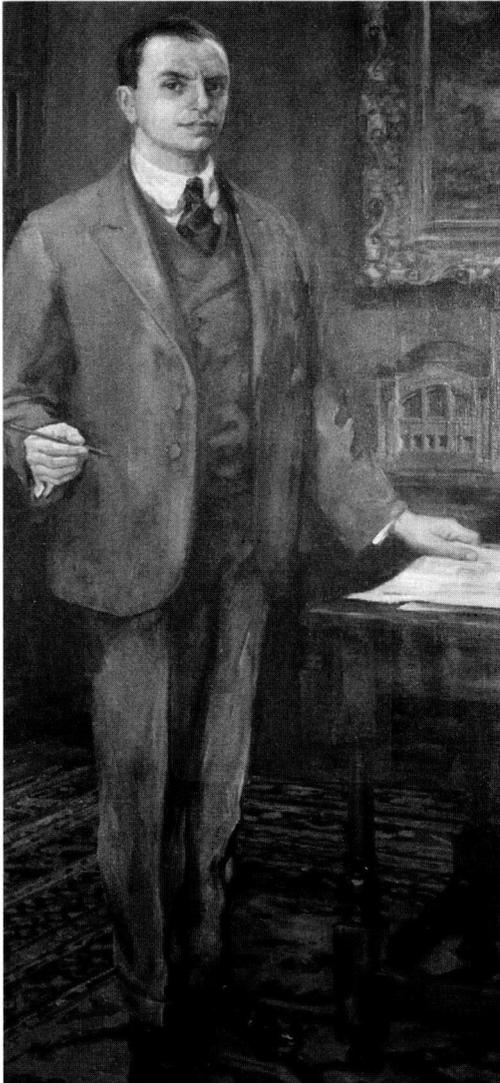
All three of the older synagogues of South Manchester date from the early twentieth century. The South Manchester Synagogue in Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield was built just before the First World War for the prosperous Ashkenazim who had moved south, and in so doing, in 1872 formed a breakaway from the Ashkenazi Great Synagogue in Cheetham Hill. The architect of the congregation's first purpose-built synagogue was Joseph Sunlight (1889-1978) who, at the age of twenty-four, was winner of a limited competition, in which six architects participated, for what was his only known commission for a religious building. Wilbraham Road was built in the style of a Turkish mosque with dome and minaret, in a simplified, almost cubist manner (Fig. 6). Sunlight himself claimed to have used 'St Sophia of Constantinople' as his model, with the tower (that in execution had to be scaled down 'by twenty or thirty feet' on grounds of economy) derived from Westminster Cathedral.³⁶ In the estimation of *The British Architect* the whole gave 'a very satisfactory effect of an Eastern place of worship'.³⁷



NEW SYNAGOGUE, WILBRAHAM ROAD, FALLOWFIELD, MANCHESTER.—Mr. JOSEPH SUNLIGHT, Architect.

Fig. 6
 South Manchester Synagogue, Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield *The Building News*, 3 April 1914
 Copyright: English Heritage. NMR

Whilst exhibiting a mix of stylistic influences, there can be no argument over the fact that the construction of the South Manchester Synagogue was innovative. Reinforced concrete was used for the thirty-five-foot span of the dome and for the lattice girders carrying the gallery, thus dispensing with the need for column supports beneath, probably the earliest application of this technology in a fully-realised manner to synagogue architecture in Britain. Indeed, from the architectural point of view, Wilbraham Road is the most important synagogue building of those still in use in Manchester and is in fact Grade II listed. Threat of closure in 2001 was averted by a scheme to convert the site into a student centre, it being conveniently situated close to the University campuses.



Sunlight himself was immortalised in a portrait by one Phil W. Smith that hangs in an ante-room at Wilbraham Road (Fig. 7). He is shown full length, life size, a confident, young architect, standing proudly by a scale model of South Manchester Synagogue. Sunlight was born Joseph Schimschlavitch in Novogradok in Byelorussia and was brought to England as a child by his parents Minnie and Israel, a cotton merchant, who, like many Russian Jews, was anxious to evade conscription into the Tsarist Army. Israel and Joe became naturalised British subjects in 1900, adopting the surname of Sunlight, no doubt after Port Sunlight on Merseyside, but the family settled in Manchester.

Sunlight's was a classic rags-to-riches life story. Unusually for a first generation Jewish immigrant, he trained as an architect in the office of William Purdey of Brazenose Street. He began his apprenticeship in 1904 earning three shillings a week. In 1907, at the age of nineteen, he had set up on his own at

Fig. 7

Portrait of the architect Joseph Sunlight with plans and a model of the South Manchester Synagogue. By Phil W. Smith, oil on canvas, 1929?, at South Manchester Synagogue

Photograph: English Heritage. NMR

No. 4 St Ann's Square, Manchester, 'and before he was twenty-one had designed and built more than 1000 houses in Prestwich'.³⁸ He himself boasted that 'By 1921 [he] could account for one million pounds sterling worth of buildings from [his] plans'.³⁹ Sunlight acted as architect-developer, buying up land, planning, designing and building whole estates and then selling or letting the properties. He also built factories and warehouses in Cheetham, many of them for Jewish clients, immigrant entrepreneurs like himself. His best-known building in Manchester is Sunlight House, Quay Street, just off Deansgate in the city centre. At fourteen storeys and 135 feet, this Art Deco steel and concrete but Portland stone-clad building was claimed to be the first skyscraper in the north of England when it was erected in 1932-3 as the headquarters of Sunlight's building empire. The original scheme was scaled down from thirty storeys after being blocked by the City Council. After the Second World War (1948-9), a forty-floor extension, intended by Sunlight to be Manchester's answer to New York's Rockefeller Center, never got off the drawing board. A decade later, Sunlight House, rented out as offices to the Ministry of Works, had fallen into a dilapidated condition. Sunlight was criticised as a bad landlord and for allegedly overcharging his tenants, and in 1959 the dispute with the Ministry ended in court to nobody's satisfaction.⁴⁰ Happily, today the Grade II listed landmark has been renovated and adapted for reuse as shops and offices. Sunlight became a member of the Institute of Registered Architects in 1942 but, it seems, never bothered to apply for FRIBA.

Sunlight had a brief political career, elected Liberal MP for Shrewsbury in 1923, some achievement for a Russian-born Jew in a constituency with a staunchly Conservative history and where his family origins were made into something of an election issue. In June 1924 he introduced a private members' bill to make all bricks a standard size.⁴¹ The ideal dimensions of a 'Sunlight Brick' were nine inches by four-and-a-half inches by three-and-a-half inches. He proposed that bricks used in all state-subsidised housing schemes conform to these specifications. The rationale was that an increase in thickness would reduce the number of bricks required per unit thus making building quicker and cheaper, with the unarticulated additional benefit of facilitating Sunlight's own speculative housing schemes. Unfortunately, he faced practical opposition from builders and bricklayers as well as ideological objections to the increased state interference in the building trade that the measure represented. The Bill passed by a single vote but was lost along with Sunlight's seat in 1924. A contemporary newspaper lampooned:

You will never quicken housing
 By such childish little tricks
 As a Bill for making people
 Manufacture bigger bricks.
 No; what's wanted, Mr Sunlight,
 Is a measure which contains
 Some provision which will give our
 Union leaders *bigger brains*.⁴²

Sunlight, like so many of his buildings, was a larger than life personality. He was fond of mythologising his youth in Russia, where his family faced persecution and he himself on more than one occasion narrowly escaped premature death. He claimed to have survived being run over by a *troika* on a bridge at the age of two and subsequently being dropped into the river at the same spot. In Manchester, his father Israel became well-known as a committed Zionist, promoter of Jewish education and founder of the Holy Law Synagogue. Joe Sunlight professed his 'great love for the Jewish faith', imbued in him by his Hebrew teacher in Russia, 'which I have always retained'.⁴³ Yet his lifestyle, especially after the Second World War, was that of a moneyed English gentleman. In addition to his London address at Victoria Square, Belgravia, he owned a large mansion called Hallside, in Knutsford, Cheshire. His wife Edith, née Forshaw (1913-2000), whilst she identified with her father-in-law's Zionist causes, came from a fairly humble Church of England background. Edith was nearly half Joe's age and they finally married in a registry office in Brighton on 8 May 1940. Their only son, Ben Sunlight, the artist, had been born in 1935 (died 2002).

Sunlight died an eccentric millionaire in 1978 remembered chiefly for Sunlight House and for his love of gambling and horse-racing. He left £500 in his will to the minister at Wilbraham Road, 'in recognition of his having looked after the South Manchester Synagogue (which I consider as my monument) with such loving care for so many years'. He is buried in the Jewish section of the Southern Cemetery in Manchester.

Joseph Sunlight acted as 'supervising architect' on the project for Withington Synagogue (Spanish and Portuguese) in South Manchester, but this synagogue, built in 1925-7, was actually the work of the prestigious architect of London Edwardiana, Delissa Joseph (1858-1927), who, like his uncle Nathan Joseph, specialised in synagogue design. Joseph died shortly before Withington Synagogue was opened. In a letter to the City Architects office in March 1925 the young Sunlight claimed credit as 'joint architect'.⁴⁴ English Heritage attributed the building to Sunlight in its 1988 listing. In fact, there is no evidence in the well-preserved set of drawings kept in the City Architects Department that Sunlight had any input into the design scheme at all.

A colony of wealthy Sephardim, many of whom were textile shippers, settled in South Manchester, in Withington and Didsbury, in the early 1890s and a synagogue was opened in a converted house at No. 4 Mauldeth Road in 1904.⁴⁵ A second congregation known as the West Didsbury New Synagogue was established nearby at No. 119 Palatine Road in 1917, the centre of Sephardi South Manchester at that period (peaking at *c.* 180 in 1930). Appropriately enough, the street was nicknamed locally 'Palestine' Road. This synagogue, like the Spanish and Portuguese in Mauldeth Road, was a converted private house, the conversion being carried out by Peter Cummings.⁴⁶ The two groups amalgamated to build the palatial new synagogue occupying a 9,000 square-foot site in Queens Road (later Queenston Road), Withington at an estimated cost of £30,000. The foundation stone was laid on 24 May 1925 and the synagogue was opened on 3 April 1927.⁴⁷

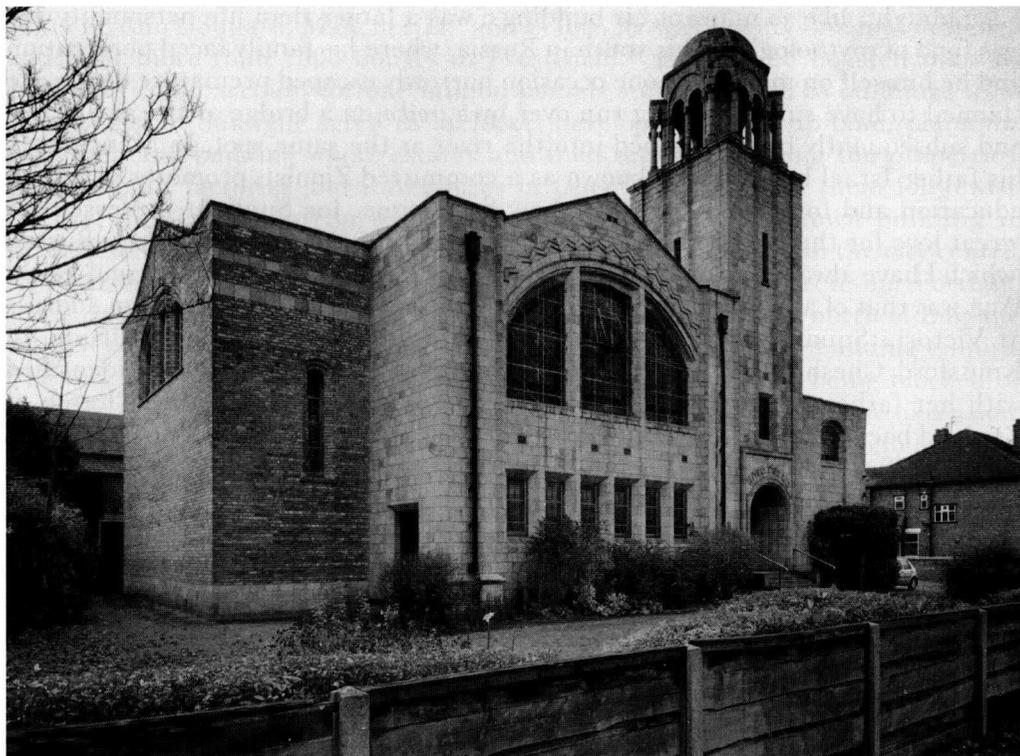


Fig. 8
 South Manchester Synagogue (Joseph Sunlight, 1912-13)
 Copyright: *English Heritage. NMR*

Whereas the Ashkenazim of Wilbraham Road had opted for ‘an Eastern style of architecture’ in 1913 as interpreted by Sunlight (Fig. 8), the taste of the Withington Sephardim was severely European neo-classical. Withington was conceived on the grand scale, a monumental building, three-storeys high and lavish in its use of marble. The white marble contrasts dramatically with the rich red Wilton carpet and the bronze drop electroliers.⁴⁸ However, the giant order of Ionic columns at Withington must surely ultimately derive from the seventeenth-century Spanish and Portuguese Great Synagogue of Amsterdam, the ‘mother’ congregation of the Spanish and Portuguese communities in England.

Delissa Joseph was an architect who experimented with a range of styles for the synagogues that he built, sometimes with bewildering results. Withington was not his first Manchester commission. To the north side of the city the Higher Broughton Synagogue had been constructed on the corner of Broughton Road and Duncan Street, off Bury New Road, in 1906-7. Higher Broughton served an area of secondary Jewish settlement and the scale of the synagogue reflected the newly

acquired affluence of its congregation. Indeed, it was destined to become the North Manchester equivalent of Wilbraham Road, a nominally Orthodox synagogue with a Reform-style floor plan, that combined the Ark and *Bimah* at the east end of the space. In fact, Delissa Joseph had been responsible for introducing Reform-inspired re-ordering into Orthodox synagogues (generally of a highly acculturated type) in Britain in the 1890s. The earliest example is in London at Hampstead Synagogue, Dennington Park Road, built in 1892. Architecturally, Manchester's Higher Broughton Synagogue sported a series of segmental gables, that sat somewhere between 1890s mock Jacobean and 1900s Art Nouveau. The building had an octagonal corner turret, slightly reminiscent of Hampstead's interior dome. However, in Manchester, whilst the frontage was of stone, the dome was of reinforced concrete. Joseph, like Sunlight a little later, was trying out new technology before the First World War. Higher Broughton was demolished in 1969, but Delissa Joseph's colour wash design drawings survive in the Salford City Archives.⁴⁹

Returning to the south side of the city, the Sha'arei Tsedek ['Gates of Righteousness'] Synagogue was established as a breakaway from Withington in 1924. Its founders were unhappy with the formal and grand atmosphere that permeated the parent synagogue and there was also a cultural difference that became more marked over time. For Sha'arei Tsedek took over from West Didsbury as the synagogue of what, in Israel, would be termed the *Edot Mizrah*, the Oriental Jewish community of Manchester. Jews from Persia, Iraq, Aden and Egypt have made their home in Manchester especially since the Second World War. The writer's brother-in-law's family, for example, arrived in Manchester from Egypt after the Suez crisis in the late 1950s, settled in Didsbury and joined the Sha'arei Tsedek. Such families form a close-knit sub-culture within Manchester Jewry and often speak French or Arabic amongst themselves. From the outside the Sha'arei Tsedek building looks deceptively like an affluent villa set within its own grounds. The architects were Pendleton & Dickinson who designed Higher Crumpsall Synagogue.⁵⁰ The interior is strongly redolent of North African and Oriental synagogues to be found in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel where Jews from Arabic speaking lands have settled.

By recovering the architectural history of Manchester's Victorian and early twentieth century synagogues something may be discovered of the rich cultural diversity of a great industrial city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In a lecture. See Williams, B., *The Making of Manchester Jewry 1740-1875* (Manchester, 1976). Lloyd Gartner, in his pioneering study *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914* (London, 1960), wrote 'The topographic history of Manchester Jewry is reasonably described as an ascent of Cheetham Hill Road...', 145 (second ed. 1973).
2. Deed dated 10 March 1794 in the Great Synagogue Archives, but now lost.
3. Based largely on Williams, where early maps are reproduced, *op. cit.*, 12-6.
4. Copy of lease dated 28 August 1836 found in the Great Synagogue Deed Box at Stenecourt Synagogue, opened in 2000, and now deposited in Manchester City Archives.
5. *Manchester Guardian*, 10 September 1825 and 27 May 1826.
6. An advertisement inviting entries was placed in the *Jewish Chronicle [JC]* and *Manchester Guardian [MG]* on 3 January 1857. It attracted eleven enquiries nationally and five architects went on to submit drawings. The present author has written short entries on Collins and Joseph and some other Jewish architects for *New Dictionary of National Biography* (forthcoming).
7. A perspective drawing was produced by the architect and two versions are preserved in the Manchester City Archives. A lithograph was published in the *Illustrated Times*, 2 May 1857, reproduced in Cowen, A. and R., *Victorian Jews through British Eyes* (Oxford, Littman Library and OUP, 1988), 105-6. See also *MG*, 12 March 1858; *JC*, 2 January, 8 May 1857, 19 March 1858; *Builder*, 21 February 1857, 106, 9 May 1857, 266. The mahogany Ark made by a Mr Jackson is preserved at the successor synagogue at Stenecourt, Broughton Park, Salford.
8. Great Synagogue Archives Ms. 139 Building Committee Minutes, 5 May 1859 in M139/4 Box 178 (Manchester City Archives).
9. Neither the London Great Synagogue nor New Synagogue had notable façades fronting major thoroughfares. Splendour was confined to the interiors.
10. Parkinson-Bailey, J. J., *Manchester: An Architectural History* (Manchester, 2001), 169, 328.
11. Williams, *op. cit.*, 253-6.
12. Beenstock, R., 'Edward Salomons - A Sociable Architect', *Manchester Region History Review*, 10 (1996), 90-5, and *New DNB* entry by Kadish, *op.cit.* Salomons' second Jewish commission for London's Bayswater Synagogue (1862-3) in conjunction with Nathan Joseph.
13. *The Builder*, as quoted by Cecil Stewart in *The Architecture of Manchester: Buildings and their Architects 1800-1900* (Manchester, 1956), 52-3.
14. *Builder*, 13 February 1858, 97-8.
15. *MG*, 26 March 1858. The brickwork was executed by a specialist called William Higgins, the general contractor being Robert Neill. See also *JC*, 20 March 1857, 9 April 1858. The interior had a women's gallery and segregated seating was maintained until 1938, see Kershen, A. J., and Romain, J. A., *Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain 1840-1995* (London, 1995).
16. Clare Hartwell makes up for this by featuring two colour photographs in the revised *Buildings of England* volume on *Manchester* (2001). The incorrect date of 1889 derives from an error in the Listing description that confused the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue with the Manchester New Synagogue (see below). See also Beesley, I., and de Figueiredo, P., *Victorian Manchester and Salford* (Halifax, 1988), plate 81.
17. Williams, *op.cit.*, 323.
18. *JC*, 13 June 1873 and 8 May 1874. See also *Builder*, 21 June 1873, 495.
19. *JC*, 18 May 1906.
20. West side, currently 'Durham Pine' furniture showrooms.

21. *The Manchester Central Synagogue, Centenary Souvenir 21 March 1971*, np. Also *JC*, 1 February 1895.
22. Fidler, M., (ed.), *Holy Law Congregation: One Hundred Years, 1865-1965* (Manchester, 1965), 12, 16.
23. *JC*, 1 September, 1899.
24. See Kadish, S., 'Eden in Albion: A History of the *Mikveh* in Britain,' in Kadish, S. (ed.), *Building Jerusalem: Jewish Architecture in Britain* (London, 1996), 101-54. The Great Synagogue *Mikveh* was, it seems, added by the architect on the insistence of the Chief Rabbi. It was located in the basement and accessed through a separate entrance at the rear of the building [No. 8 Knowsley Street?]. The facilities included four bathrooms, a dressing room and a three-room flat for the live-in caretaker. Great Synagogue Building Committee Minutes, 11 May 1857, M139/4 Box 178 and 'Agreement for Letting of Baths', 10 May 1898, M139/4 Box 180 in Manchester City Archives.
25. *Manchester Faces and Places*, 1, 12 (10 September 1890), 190-2 and *Manchester Guardian*, 26 March 1889. Also *JC*, 29 March, 7, 13, 20 September 1889; *Builder* 5 January 1889, 11; *British Architect*, 4 October 1889, 235.
26. A chronogram is buried in the Hebrew inscriptions on the façade, but is too badly painted out to be legible.
27. *JC*, 4 May 1894, 4 May 1900.
28. Manchester City Architects Department, Plan No. 564 Signed and dated Ogden & Charlton, 3, Spring Gardens, Manchester, September 1892, five sheets, marked 'cancelled' and a further six sheets dated August 1893 marked 'not built'. See also *JC*, 10 August 1894, 1 February 1895 and *Builder* 18 August 1894, 119.
29. Girouard, M., 'Acrobatic Architecture: William Sharp Ogden and Others' in Searing, H. (ed), *In Search of Modern Architecture* (1982), 121-34, and reprinted under the title 'Pipe-Dreams in Manchester,' in Girouard, M., (ed.), *Town and Country* (London and New Haven, 1992), 91-100, quoting 99.
30. Poorly reproduced in *JC*, 17 August 1951.
31. Pevsner, *South Lancashire* (1969), 339.
32. On Cummings, see his BAL Biography File at the RIBA Library. On Glass, see Kadish, S., 'Constructing Identity: Jewish Architecture in Britain,' *Architectural History*, 45 (2002) 386-408.
33. Plan Nos.3114A and 3584A found by Joe Martin.
34. A brochure produced in 1928 for the building fund for Crumpsall Synagogue sported a severely classical architects' impression with an elevated portico and tall fluted Corinthian columns. A copy is preserved in the Manchester Jewish Museum. Plans (Nos. 5409A and 5521A) of Pendleton & Dickinson's final scheme were rescued by Joe Martin. See also *JC*, 2 November 1928, 30 September 1929.
35. *JC*, 30 November 1934, 20 September 1935; Fidler, M., (ed), *Holy Law Congregation, op. cit.*, 17; Birks' BAL Biography File at the RIBA Library.
36. Sunlight, J., 'The Design of the Synagogue Buildings,' in *South Manchester Hebrew Congregation, Golden Jubilee of the Synagogue Building 1913-1963, Souvenir Brochure*. Copy amongst the uncatalogued Sunlight papers at the Portico Library, Manchester - partly sorted by this writer. An earlier drawing attached to the building committee's appeal had shown an octagonal tower, see *JC*, 18 October 1912.
37. *British Architect*, 20 February 1914, 157-8, *Building News*, 3 April 1914 (see Fig. 6).
38. *Manchester Evening News*, 18 April 1978. See also 18 April 1979, (will). Other obituaries in *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1979; 21 April 1978 (insertion in classified), 27 April, 11 May 1979 (will); *Manchester Jewish Gazette*, 14 November 1975; *Manchester Jewish Telegraph*, 28 January 1983; *Building Design*, 27 April 1979.
39. 'Sunlight House AD 1929', handwritten personal history later discovered in the foundations and preserved at the Portico Library.
40. Collection of press cuttings on 'Sunlight House' compiled and reprinted for the exhibition 'Ben Sunlight, Brilliant Sunlight,' Portico Library, Manchester, May 2002.

41. *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, vol.174, columns 1949-54, 17 June 1924
42. Signed WHB, an undated article, taken from the *Morning Post*, in Sunlight's press cuttings album at the Portico Library.
43. Sunlight's will.
44. Kept with Withington plans, City Architects Department, Plan No. 17003. A model of an earlier scheme with a dome on a central plan by an unidentified architect [Sunlight?] was photographed and published in Rodrigues-Pereira, B., and Pereira-Mendoza, J., *History of the Manchester Congregation of Spanish & Portuguese Jews, 1873-1923* (Manchester, 1923).
45. *Sephardi Settlement in South Manchester 1850-1940* (Manchester, 1994) [Exhibition catalogue written by Rosemary Eshel and Basil Jeuda]. A photograph of the interior of the converted house at Mauldeth Road shows a bold horseshoe arch over the Ark decorated with patterned stencilling, not unlike Salomons' arches at his two synagogues in Cheetham Hill. See Williams, B., *Manchester Jewry: A Pictorial History 1788-1988* (Manchester, 1988), 59.
46. Plans 'West Didsbury Synagogue - Palatine Road, Manchester'. Two sheets, colour wash signed 'P[eter] Cummings ARIBA/Architect & Surveyor/51 King Street, Manchester/August 1920', exhibited at Manchester Jewish Museum, June 1999.
47. *JC*, 29 May 1925, 8 April, 28 October 1927.
48. Fine colour-wash drawings of which are extant in the synagogue's archives, unsigned. A photograph found in the uncatalogued Sunlight papers at the Portico Library attests to the fact that the state-of-the-art chandeliers were 'designed and manufactured by General Electric Co. Ltd. Victoria Bridge, Manchester'. Most of the original fittings remain in use.
49. Plan No. 8605, Archive ref. L/CS/M11571; *JC*, 7 September 1906, 22 March, 6 September 1907 include a sketch of the façade. 'Order of Service' for the consecration, 2 September 1907 and *Higher Broughton Hebrew Congregation Jubilee brochure* (1957) are in the Manchester Jewish Museum. See also *Building News*, 14 September 1906, 360.
50. Manchester City Architects Department, Plan No. 16360. *JC*, 9 May 1924, 11 September 1925. In 1997 a re-merger was effected between the dwindling congregations of Sha'arei Tsedek and Withington under the new name of Sha'are[i] Hayim, reflecting the decline of the Sephardi presence in Withington and Didsbury. A question mark hangs over the future of both sites, whilst the tension between the congregations, from differing cultural backgrounds, persists.