

SYNAGOGUES AT RISK? 2015

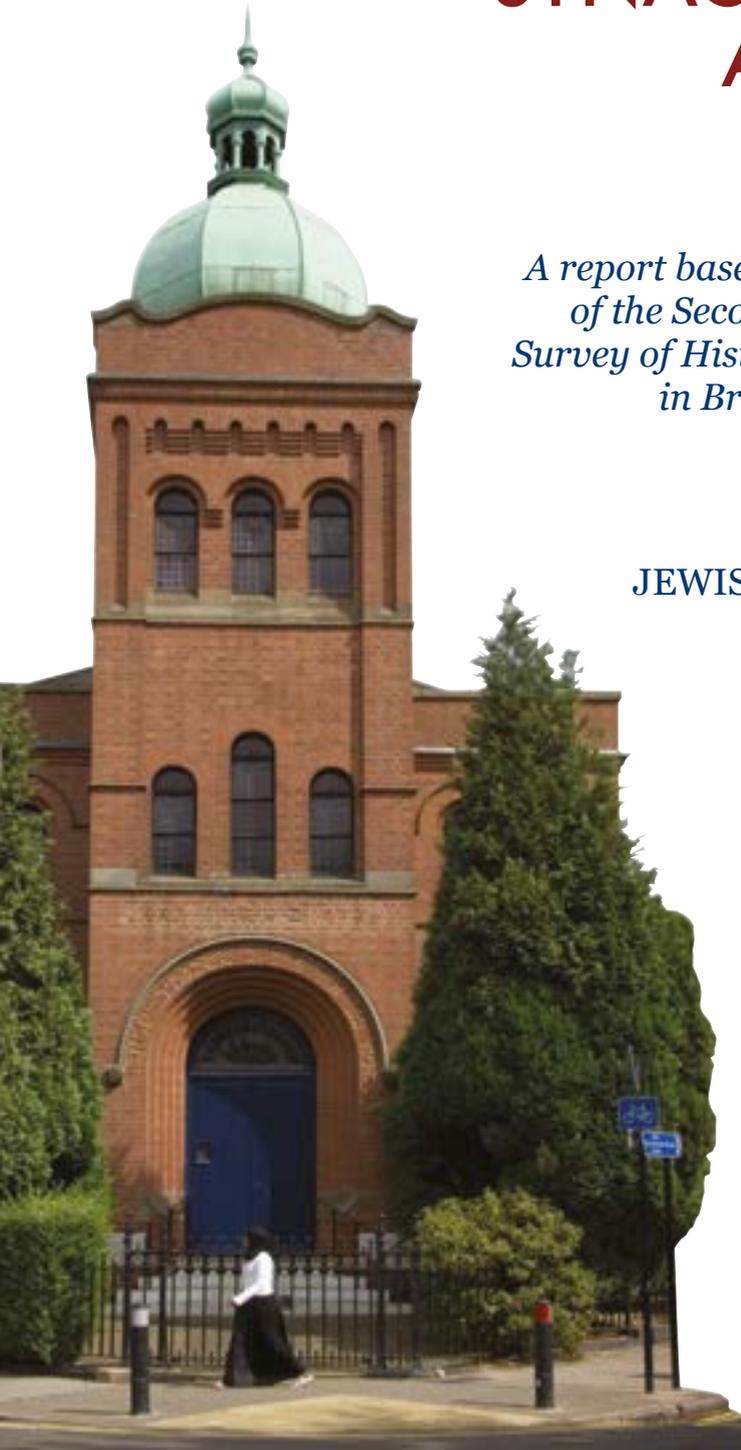
*A report based on the findings
of the Second Quinquennial
Survey of Historic Synagogues
in Britain and Ireland*

carried out by

JEWISH HERITAGE UK



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Synagogues at Risk? 2015

Report based on the findings of the Second Quinquennial Survey carried out by Jewish Heritage UK

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Executive Summary

Jewish Heritage's Second Quinquennial Survey of historic synagogues followed on from the first *Synagogues at Risk* Survey (2010) that was commissioned by English Heritage. 45 historic synagogues were invited to participate. These were mostly Listed buildings that were in use for worship. The actual sample consisted of 38 buildings. The 2015 results were compared with those from 2010. The following conclusions were drawn:

- Overall historic synagogues are in better shape than they were five years ago.
- This is especially the case in London where all but one (92%) buildings in the participating sample (14 buildings) are now rated as in Good or Fair condition in terms of both indicators: Condition and Usage. Indeed over half (53%) have shown significant improvement.
- This may be attributed to the completion of repair projects, access to sources of funding, both private and public (especially from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)) and healthy levels of usage by congregations. The attraction of a well-appointed building is undoubtedly a factor in improving levels of usage.
- The disparity between the situation of synagogues in the capital and nationwide has persisted since 2010. However it has not widened. Indeed 4 buildings out of 24, one sixth of the regional sample, have shown significant improvement. A further 13 have achieved stability having attained a rating of 'Fair'.
- Despite the challenges, many regional historic synagogues are managing to keep going despite the small size of their congregations. Some are very active in hosting school and civic groups, and achieve impressive visitor numbers on Heritage Open Days and similar events.
- Progress may be attributed to the commitment and enthusiasm of individuals and the ability to access funding. Outside guidance and encouragement from Jewish Heritage plays a crucial support role here. Nationally, the message of the importance of instituting a Maintenance Regime, to ensure that gains made do not go into reverse, has not yet got across to all synagogues. More work by Jewish Heritage is needed in training and mentoring in good practice for custodians of historic synagogues.
- Almost half of historic synagogues in 2015 may be classified as currently a matter for concern or likely to become so in the not too distant future. These are most likely to be inter-war buildings situated in the North of England.
- Other cases for concern include a group of highly graded Victorian buildings in different parts of the country: Liverpool (Princes Road) Grade I, Bradford Grade II* and Brighton (Middle Street) Grade II* all need urgent work to arrest further deterioration. This is especially true in the case of Bradford, where a Repair Grant has been awarded for the first time but not yet implemented.
- When one adds in the six synagogues in the regions that declined to participate, either because they are currently closed or have not yet found a new use, or because their future has been cast into doubt, the number of At Risk buildings increases substantially.
- The overall proportion of historic synagogues potentially or currently At Risk has increased from about 33% to 37%, that is, to over one-third since 2010.

Introduction

Five years have passed since the original *Synagogues at Risk?* (hereafter SAR 2010) survey and report that was published in the summer of 2010. That project was the first of its kind undertaken in order to monitor the state of the historic buildings of British Jewry. It formed part of English Heritage *Heritage at Risk* (HAR) programme that included Listed places of worship, mainly churches, but also buildings of other faiths. The 2010 SAR Survey 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 were put on – or, indeed, removed from – the Heritage at Risk Register rested solely with English Heritage and their relevant regional teams.

In 2014-15 Jewish Heritage decided to repeat the exercise and thus institute it as a regular Quinquennial Survey (hereafter 2nd QS) following the example of the Church of England. The Church of England has a well-established institutional mechanism for supporting the fabric of its historic places of worship as well as the congregations that they serve. A key practice is the conduct of a fabric survey once every five years. The Church’s Quinquennial Inspection is carried out by a specialist conservation architect commissioned by each church, parish or diocese, as appropriate. In the absence of any such system for synagogues, and as a follow-up to SAR 2010, Jewish Heritage has taken the lead in establishing a regular ‘Quinquennial’ in order to provide on-going support for the benefit of the custodians of historic synagogues up and down the country.

It should be emphasised at the outset that Jewish Heritage cannot be held liable for our QS which is a service that is being provided free of charge to historic synagogues. It is not meant to be an in-depth fabric analysis but its value lies in its ability to ‘flag up’ actual or potential problems. The QS is conducted primarily for forward planning purposes. In line with its charitable objectives, Jewish Heritage needs to know which individual buildings are most ‘at Risk’ so as to prioritise its efforts to assist them. In addition, the exercise aims to instil the habit of regular maintenance on the ground on a five-yearly cycle. While our QS is clearly of benefit to all participating synagogues, it is the individual buildings and their owners that bear responsibility for commissioning a full fabric survey by a qualified conservation architect or surveyor of their choice. It must be understood that Jewish Heritage, as a charity, cannot undertake full surveys and costings for individual projects, unless specifically commissioned to do so.

Despite recent changes in the Heritage landscape (Historic England was created in April 2015), the needs of the buildings and congregations remain. The purpose of the 2nd QS has remained 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 value of the 2015 QS has been enhanced by comparison with 2010. It has now been possible to compare the state of the buildings then and now, thus providing a body of demonstrable evidence of changes, for better or worse, over time. As shall be seen, in some cases, the situation has improved, which is ground for optimism. Since 2009 historic synagogues

have accessed over £1 million of public funding principally through the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Repair Grant for Listed Places of Worship (RGPOW) (see Appendix 2). In other cases, the situation has deteriorated, often the consequence of lack of maintenance. A periodic QS highlights the importance of constant building maintenance and repair to arrest greater costs in the future. The data amassed will help plan strategically for future preservation. It will also direct fundraising efforts for specific projects. These will have maintenance plans factored into them. 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. This is the goal of Jewish Heritage.

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 2011 Census, for the first time since the 1950s, the population of British Jewry may actually be showing a slight net increase, although opinion is not unanimous on the matter. Initial estimates put the total number of Jews in Britain at 263,000, down from 267,000 recorded in the 2001 Census. Subsequent analysis revised this figure up to 269,568¹ and most recently to 271,295². Whichever figure is correct, the Jewish community remains less than half of one percent of the total population of the UK: it 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 was 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).

¹ See Graham D. December 2013 ‘2011 Census Results: Thinning and Thickening: Geographical Change in the UK’s Jewish Population, 2001-2011’. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research. Available on the JPR’s website. Plus c2,000 Jews in Ireland.

² *Jewish Chronicle* 6 March 2015, quoting the same authority, Dr David Graham of the Board of Deputies of British Jews Demographic Research Unit.

³ In 2015, Jewish immigrants from Israel, Arab countries (eg Egypt, Iraq and Yemen) as well as from South Africa and Argentina, have been joined by small numbers from France who feel threatened by violent incidents and terrorist attacks, most seriously in Toulouse and Paris. Israel received almost one million new immigrants from the former Soviet Union after 1989; very few came to Britain.

In terms of distribution, the overall trends remain the same as in 2001. 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 continues to grow, perhaps now unofficially estimated at 35,000⁴, showing a net increase. This is due to the localised expansion of the *Haredi* [strictly Orthodox] sector with a characteristically high birth-rate. The expansion of the *Haredi* sector is also influencing the population level of London Jewry but remains confined to specific enclaves. London historically has always been home to about two-thirds of British Jewry and remains so today. The Jewish population is estimated at under 200,000 in the Greater London area. Today's largest Jewish communities are not only to be found in the now 'traditional' areas of north London (Stamford Hill and Clapton in the Borough of Hackney) and north-west London (Golders Green, Hendon and Edgware in the Borough of Barnet), but further out in South Hertfordshire (Hertsmere). Borehamwood, Elstree and Radlett are the fastest growing communities in the country, with a preponderance of young families 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.

Broadly, distribution trends identified in the first SAR have continued over the past five years. Jewish communities are still disappearing from less fashionable neighbourhoods in London. Two synagogues that took part in SAR 2010, in the interim, went out of use and were, or are in the process of being sold out of the Jewish community: Hackney, Brenthouse Road E9 and Fieldgate Street Great Synagogue, E1, thus confirming the accuracy of our analysis at that time. Indeed, in East London, not only the 'Old' East End of 19th century immigration, covering Aldgate, Whitechapel and Stepney (LB Tower Hamlets), but also secondary areas, like Hackney proper, that were thriving in the inter-war period are in decline. Indeed, although beyond the scope of this study, even the tertiary areas of Ilford and Gants Hill (LB Redbridge) are increasingly affected, with implications for synagogues built in the 1960s and 1970s. To some extent this has benefited north-west London, where there is evidence of migration from the eastern suburbs especially to Edgware. Elsewhere in north-west London, Willesden, Brondesbury, Dollis Hill and Cricklewood (LB Brent), were for a long time regarded as in decline. However, over the past decade the rapid growth of the New Brondesbury Synagogue, ironically located in the hall on the Brondesbury Park Road side of the former Willesden Synagogue, Heathfield Park (an important 1930s building by German émigré Fritz Landauer, never Listed and now much altered) has bucked the trend. This well illustrates the unpredictable nature of

⁴ Although this figure is not represented by the official Census results.

Jewish demographic distribution in London, especially under conditions of a volatile, and currently over-heated, property market.

Nationally, Jewish communities continue to contract and even disappear, especially in the Midlands and North. Four synagogues, all of which were included in SAR 2010, have since closed. Three of these have been sold out of Jewish communal use (Coventry, Sunderland and Blackpool) and none has as yet achieved a new use.

Duration

Fieldwork for the 2nd QS was carried out between June and November 2014 and this report was completed by May 2015.

Personnel

The QS was carried out by Jewish Heritage UK, which 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 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). For more information about Jewish Heritage, its aims, research and publications⁵ visit www.jewish-heritage-uk.org/

The fieldwork was carried out on behalf of Jewish Heritage by Consultant Architects Viorica Feler-Morgan RIBA, GradDiplCons AA; Hedy Parry-Davies RIBA, GradDiplCons AA, AABC and Consultant Surveyor Lynda Jubb FRICS. The lion's share of site visits⁶ were made by Mrs Feler-Morgan: 25, of which 10 were in London. Mrs Feler-Morgan also flew to Cork in November 2014, the first time that the Irish Republic was included in the QS. Mrs Parry-Davies undertook surveys of 6 synagogues, comprising 4 in the London area and the Georgian synagogues of Plymouth and Exeter. Mrs Jubb carried out 7 synagogue surveys mainly in the North West and at Bradford.

Site access and the fieldtrip itinerary was organised by Sharon Hood, Jewish Heritage's Administrator. This report was compiled by Dr Sharman Kadish DPhil, FRHist.S., FSA, Director of Jewish Heritage.⁷

⁵ See Kadish, S, *Jewish Heritage in England: An Architectural Guide* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2006), *The Synagogues of Britain and Ireland: An Architectural and Social History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), *Jewish Heritage in Britain and Ireland: An Architectural Guide* (Swindon: Historic England, 2015).

⁶ Jewish Heritage would like to thank the Community Security Trust (CST) once again for their support. As on previous occasions, they kindly provided an updated letter of introduction to facilitate access and photography.

⁷ The Director also accompanied Mrs Feler-Morgan on fieldwork in Scotland (Glasgow, Edinburgh) and Ramsgate in August and September 2014 respectively.

Methodology

The second QS largely adhered to the tried and tested format designed in 2009-10. This was in order to ensure standardised data that could be compared with that collected across other Places of Worship surveys commissioned for Historic England's on-going 'Heritage at Risk' programme.

An expanded list of sites was drawn up (see below and Appendix 1). Two basic criteria were again used in order to measure the 'Level of Risk': Condition' and 'Usage'. Hence, during site visits the QS team used the two questionnaires, on *Condition and Usage* that were devised by Jewish Heritage for SAR 2010⁸. These were more detailed versions of the original one-page *Pro-Forma* originally provided by English Heritage. In all cases, the *Condition* questionnaire was completed on site 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 of the exterior was carried out, plus interior shots where access was achieved and light levels permitted. Most of the buildings included in the 2nd QS were previously photographed in large format by English Heritage for Jewish Heritage research and publications.

A new element in 2015 was the introduction of a one-page *Condition Feedback* form, drawn up by the Director in response to requests for follow-up guidance from individual sites. The Consultant Architects/Surveyors used this form to summarise key findings and recommendations for action, set out in order of priority. A courtesy copy was sent to all sites that required it.

The data gathered was collated and the statistics that formed the basis for this Report were calculated on the basis of the Grid originally provided in 2010 by English Heritage that measured *Condition* against *Usage* on a One-to-Twenty scale to arrive at a 'Level of Risk' score for each synagogue. One is the top rating and Twenty the bottom rating. It was agreed in advance with participants that information that identified individual sites would not be put into the public domain.

⁸ See Appendices in SAR 2010.

Scope

A total of 45 synagogues were approached to participate in the Survey. Of these 7 declined to participate, so there are 38 results in total. All English Regions were represented by at least one synagogue building. The sample represents 36% of the total number (96) of in-use pre-1939 purpose-built synagogues in England included in the original Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage. In addition, the two Listed synagogues in use in Scotland, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, were officially included within the scope of the 2nd QS⁹.

To qualify for inclusion in SAR 2010, a synagogue had to be currently in use for worship or, if closed, not yet converted to an alternative use. In 2015 four Listed synagogues fell into the latter category: Blackpool and Coventry in addition to Sunderland (Ryhope Road) and Liverpool (Greenbank, Drive) that were already redundant in 2010. In London, Hackney Synagogue was omitted because since SAR 2010 it closed, was sold and converted into a church.

In 2015 the scope was expanded slightly to include more unlisted in-use synagogues built before the Second World War. In addition to the three in the East End of London included in 2010, were added 5 regional synagogues: Bournemouth, Margate, Southport, Portsmouth and Cork in Ireland.

Also in 2015, two more Listed synagogues, that are now primarily used for secular purposes (albeit with an occasional religious service) were included: Canterbury Old Synagogue (Grade II) that is now the music and recital room of the King's School and the former Manchester Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue (Grade II*) that in 1984 became the Manchester Jewish Museum.

Scope By Geographical Distribution

Of the 38 English synagogues included in the 2nd QS, 14¹⁰ 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.

Four of the synagogues surveyed in 2015 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 one synagogue. Elsewhere, a single historic synagogue attests to the presence of a Jewish community in any given English town or city. Scotland is officially represented by two synagogues. For the first time the Irish Republic is included, represented by Cork. There are no qualifying synagogues in Wales or Northern Ireland.

⁹ In 2009 Jewish Heritage undertook to survey these two buildings separately, using the SAR methodology, because they fell outside the jurisdiction of English Heritage. The Scottish findings formed an Appendix in the unpublished version of the Report.

¹⁰ Including Elstree, Hertfordshire.

Scope By Age and Protected Status

The 2nd QS included all of the Listed synagogues in England. Three are Listed at Grade I. Until the 2000s 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. Glasgow's Garnethill Synagogue (John McLeod and N.S. Joseph, 1879-81) that dates from the same era, enjoys equivalent protection – Scottish A Listed, bringing the total number of top-rated synagogues included in the 2nd QS to four.

Twelve of the English 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) and Exeter (1763-4), 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), Bradford (Healey Bros. 1880-1) and the former Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue (Edward Salomons 1873-4), now the Manchester Jewish Museum. Nearly all of the Grade II* Listed synagogues have been upgraded from Grade II to Grade II* since the 1990s.

A single twentieth century synagogue, Greenbank Drive, Liverpool (A. Ernest Shennan 1936-7) was upgraded in 2008 due to the interest taken in this threatened building by the Twentieth Century Society.

Of the remaining Grade II Listed synagogues included, seven¹¹ are in London. The majority of the London synagogues are Victorian, except Sandys Row, 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 [Digby Solomon] 1921-2, extended by Messrs Joseph [Ernest Joseph] 1927). A single 1960s synagogue, Marble Arch (T. P. Bennett & Son 1960-1) is included. In 2014 it was determined that the Grade II Listing extended beyond the facade, inset in a Georgian terrace, to the modern interior.

Canterbury's Old Synagogue is a unique Grade II-Listed Egyptian Revival building (Hezekiah Marshall 1847-8), included here for the first time. The three in-use Manchester synagogues in the QS 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 or Edwardian buildings: Grimsby (B.S. Jacobs 1885-8), Leicester

(Arthur Wakerley 1897-8) and Reading (W.G. Lewton 1900-1). A newcomer was Bristol (H.H. Collins and S.S. Fripp 1870-1) that became Listed since 2010 thus completing the West Country, the English region richest in synagogues and Jewish cemeteries dating from the Georgian and Regency periods. Interwar Edinburgh Synagogue (James Miller 1929-32) is on the Scottish B List.

In addition to the Listed synagogues, Jewish Heritage decided to include more 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 two last remaining synagogues in the East End of London (in addition to Sandys Row), Congregation of Jacob (Lewis Solomon & Son 1920-1) and Nelson Street (Lewis Solomon & Son 1922-3), were visited during fieldwork. Outside London, both Margate (Cecil J Eprile and Reeve & Reeve 1928-9) and Southport (Packer & Crampton, 1922-6) consented to inclusion.

Condition of the Building Fabric

As in 2010 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 poor = serious problems which require urgent attention”

The findings of the Condition Survey are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1A: Condition of the Building Fabric 2015

Good	10	26.3%
Fair	19	50%
Poor	9	23.7%
Very Poor	0	0%
No Return	0	0%
TOTAL SAMPLE	38	100%

Twenty nine of the synagogues surveyed were deemed to be in 'Good' or 'Fair' condition. This figure represents over three quarters (76.3%) of the sample. Almost one quarter (23.7%) fell into the 'Poor' category.

¹¹ An eighth, the former Hackney Synagogue (Delissa Joseph 1897, extended by Cecil Eprile 1936), was excluded.

Table 1B: Condition of the Building Fabric 2010

Good	3	8%
Fair	21	57%
Poor	9	24%
Very Poor	3	8%
No Return	1	3%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

As can be seen from a comparison with the ‘Condition’ findings in 2010 (Table 1B above), the state of the fabric of synagogues has improved overall. While the majority – now half – of buildings are in a reasonable condition, the number deemed to be in good condition has more than trebled to just over one-quarter of the whole.

The condition of over 75% of the synagogues included in the 2nd QS is satisfactory.

This may be attributed to the completion of programmes of repair within the past five years, some of which were already underway in 2009-10 and others that were initiated and/or completed since that date. In total, six synagogues have benefited/are set to benefit under the public repair grant schemes namely, London (New West End, Sandys Row, Golders Green), Leicester, Bradford and Cheltenham.

This represents a total public investment of over £1,000,000 since 2009 (see Appendix 2).

It is encouraging that two synagogues specifically noted to be in the ‘Fair’ category’ in 2010 thanks to earlier public funding are now rated as ‘Good’: these are London (Bobov New Synagogue) and Exeter. In 2005, the former had been removed from the Buildings at Risk Register, where it had languished for over a decade. Other synagogues that in the past (since 2004) have received public funding and are now considered to be in Good condition are London (Sukkat Shalom) and Plymouth.

Repair projects at several other buildings have been funded largely from private sources (including grants from charitable foundations): London (Hampstead, Congregation of Jacob), Ramsgate and Birmingham (Singers Hill), where a major restoration project was set in motion and completed in the winter of 2014-15, after the official 2nd QS had taken place.

On the other hand, nearly one-quarter of all synagogues surveyed in the 2nd QS were still a matter for concern, although none were now considered to be in such a bad state as to be rated as very seriously At Risk. Categorised as ‘Poor’ are two highly Listed Victorian synagogues Liverpool (Princes Road, Grade I), Brighton (Middle Street, Grade II*), despite the fact that they have in the past received public grant aid. The condition of Bradford (Grade II*) remains a particular cause for concern, although a RGPOW was pledged in 2013.

Indeed, the bald statistics quoted above mask several worrying underlying trends:

1. **North/South divide:** Synagogues rated in the ‘Good’ category are most likely (although not always) to be found in London, the south and the west of England. Synagogues rated ‘Poor’ are most likely (although not always) to be found in the north.
2. **Lack of Maintenance:** Seven of the synagogues rated ‘Fair’ have shown some deterioration in condition since the 1st QS. This may be ascribed to neglect or lack of on-going maintenance, including simple and inexpensive tasks such as gutter clearance. The message regarding the importance of maintenance as prevention against greater expense has not yet reached all historic synagogues.

3. **Non-participation:** A further 7 synagogues declined to participate in the 2nd QS. The majority of these are considered likely to fall into the ‘Very bad’ category. Of these 5 were either up for sale, in the process of being sold out of the Jewish community or had already been sold but a new use not yet found for them¹²: London (Fieldgate Street, unlisted), Blackpool, Coventry, Liverpool (Greenbank), and Sunderland (Ryhope Road). In the two remaining cases (neither a Listed building)¹³ it is known that disposal of the site has been under consideration in the recent past.

Usage

Table 2A: Level of Usage for Worship in 2015

Frequency of Services	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
Full-time	8	21%
Frequent (once a week)	20	52%
Regular (once a month)	1	3%
Occasional/No Minyan	7	18%
Not in Use/Not applicable	1	3%
No Return	1	3%
TOTAL SAMPLE	38	100%

The majority (52%) of the synagogues included in the 2nd QS 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 high level of usage of historic synagogues could be somewhat misleading, as revealed by a closer study of membership numbers and attendances at services. For example, in several cases, 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. A small minority of respondents are affiliated with the Reform movement where women can count towards the *Minyan*. Hence, a more subtle interpretation of the data was made than had been the case in 2010 (comparison with Table 2B):

Table 2B: Level of Usage for Worship in 2010

Frequency of Services	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
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%

¹² This figure excludes previous participant, Hackney, Brenthouse Road, that has now become a church.

¹³ Bournemouth Synagogue (Lawson & Reynolds 1910-11) was turned down for Listing in 2010 against the expert advice of English Heritage.

On this reading, 2015 still registered healthy usage. In fact, five more buildings were being used for their full complement of services than was the case in 2010, even though the overall figure for 'Full' and 'Frequent' services dropped slightly, the percentage in these two categories now standing at a combined 73% as opposed to 81% in 2010. On the other hand, the number of synagogues that host only occasional services or cannot raise a *Minyan* on an ordinary *Shabbat* increased from 1 to 7 (3% to 18%).

Congregations were asked to give attendance figures for key services, ranging from a normal *Shabbat* morning to the autumn High Holydays of *Rosh HaShanah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) when attendances are at their greatest. The *Shabbat* morning figures were used in Table 3A.

Table 3A: Average Attendance at Services in 2015

Number of People (M&F)	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
0-9	4	11%
10-20	8	21%
20-50	10	26%
50-100	5	13%
100-200	4	11%
200-250	2	5%
No Return/Closed/N/A	5	13%
TOTAL SAMPLE	38	100%

Whilst use of the building may be frequent, most commonly weekly, the number of users is, for the most part, quite small. Over one half (58%) of synagogues attract weekly congregations of less than 50 people, men and women. This percentage shows a slight increase over 2010, as shown in Table 3B.

Table 3B: Average Attendance at Services in 2010

Number of People (M&F)	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
0-9	2	6%
10-20	6	16%
20-50	11	29%
50-100	6	16%
100-200	2	6%
200-250	4	11%
No Return/Closed	6	16%
TOTAL SAMPLE	37	100%

At the 'top' end of the scale, only one historic synagogue attracts more than 250 worshippers to an ordinary *Shabbat* morning service. This is West London Synagogue (Reform) that draws members from all over London and for whom it is quite acceptable for them to drive to *Shul* [synagogue] on *Shabbat*. Its nearest rival, Golders Green (Orthodox), situated in one of the most populous Jewish neighbourhoods in the capital, can attract up to 250 to its various *Minyanim* on *Shabbat*. Several other big London synagogues (Orthodox) 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. This fact holds true in 2015 as it did five years ago.

At the other end of the spectrum, in 2015 twelve congregations were dipping below the viability level, fewer than 20 people (assuming that half of the congregation consists of men), as compared with 8 congregations in 2010, an increase of one third.

Twelve historic synagogues that attract fewer than 20 people to regular services must be regarded as potentially At Risk. This amounts to nearly one third of the synagogues surveyed.

The returns on membership size for the historic synagogues included in the 2nd QS are shown in Table 4A. Overall trends in terms of the growth and decline of membership of historic synagogues are shown in Table 5A. These statistics may be compared with Tables 4B and 5B from 2010.

Table 4A: Membership Size in 2015

Number of Households	Number of Synagogues	% of Synagogues
0-50	7	18%
50-100	6	16%
100-200	7	18%
200-500	9	24%
600-1000	1	3%
1000+	1	3%
Closed/No members	5	13%
No Return	2	5%
TOTAL SAMPLE	38	100%

Table 4B: Membership Size in 2010

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, although 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. Provincial congregations with few members feel burdened by 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.

Membership size, like weekly congregation size, has declined overall since these statistics were last compiled in 2010. Nationally, over half (52%) of the synagogues surveyed have 200 members (by fee-paying head of household) or under. This compares with 43% in 2010.

The number of synagogues that have 50 members or less has risen from 4 to 7, putting them within the danger zone regarding their ability to function. None of these are in London. Nor are they confined to the north of England: 2 buildings. Two are in the south east and two in the south west and the remaining one in Ireland (Cork).

The figures on membership look bleaker if we add in the non-participating sites (see above) that have already closed (i.e that now have neither members nor congregants): 7. This doubles the statistic for potential redundancy.

Synagogues with 200-500 members – the largest category, nearly one third of our sample – may not be immune from closure, at least in London, as the case of Hackney demonstrated. Included in the 1st QS, this synagogue had an estimated 450 members when it closed its doors in July 2009.

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

Table 5A: Trends in Synagogue Membership in 2015

	<i>Growing</i>	<i>Static</i>	<i>Shrinking</i>	<i>Not Applicable/ No Return</i>	
London*	8	5	0	1*	14
%	57%	36%	0%	7%	
Regions	3	6	12	3*	24
%	12.5%	25%	50%	12.5%	
TOTALS	11	11	12	4	38
%	29%	29%	31%	11%	100%

* 1 'No return' in London; 3 'No Returns' in Regions

Table 5B: Trends in Synagogue Membership in 2010

	<i>Growing</i>	<i>Static</i>	<i>Shrinking</i>	<i>Not Applicable/ No Return</i>	
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
<i>Percent</i>	27%	22%	38%	13%	100%

* Including Elstree, Herts.

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

Against this, some historic synagogues are gaining members in London, significantly including several that have been the subject of recent restoration projects, including Sandys Row and Golders Green. Other synagogues that have been repaired, both in London and in the regions, are now holding their own in terms of membership. These include Congregation of Jacob in the East End of London, Leicester and Glasgow, while Exeter and Bristol in the West Country and, most significantly, Birmingham (Singers Hill) are now actually growing (see case studies), bucking the expected trend compared with five years ago.

Eleven historic synagogues are experiencing a growth in membership. Three others in our sample have successfully found alternative roles while still retaining a strong Jewish religious and/or cultural connection. Growing membership combined with additional culturally sensitive uses (occasional services, concerts, events, exhibitions) improves the chances of long term sustainability when combined with maintenance and repair of an historic synagogue.

Almost two-thirds of synagogues in the sample do not support a *Heder* (religion school) for the children of the community. The proportion of synagogues in the regions without a *Heder* is much higher than in London: 29% compared with 50%, and class size is likely to be small. Provincial synagogues are disproportionately deficient in the area of educational provision for the young. These statistics are testimony to the rising age profile of the congregations surveyed.

On the other hand, three historic synagogues have or are in the process of restarting a *Heder*: Bristol and Exeter in the West, and Birmingham (Singers Hill), which now has a nursery, indicative of a revival.

As in 2010, all but one 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 three Ashkenazi congregations now remaining on a regular visiting basis. The percentage of provincial congregations who 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, has increased from 57% in 2010 to 63% in 2015. Only four synagogues, two in the English regions (Exeter and Nottingham) and

two in Scotland (Edinburgh and Glasgow) have a Jewish university chaplain based locally who actually uses their buildings for student events, while the former South Manchester Synagogue, Wilbraham Road, Fallowfield, has been converted into a dedicated student centre, being conveniently located close to the university campuses (see case study in *Synagogues at Risk* report (2010), pp. 17-18). The overall percentage benefiting from the activities of a student chaplain has fallen from 16% to 11%.

The number of respondent synagogues that lack a caretaker or other personnel (including the rabbi) living on site has gone up since 2010, from 28 to 31 (from 76% to 84%.) This is despite the fact that many of the older ones were built with accommodation for staff. An on-site caretaker is now a rarity, dispensed with usually on the grounds of cost. In some cases ancillary accommodation has become dilapidated – 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’.

Over half of historic synagogues now participate in at least one annual open day for the general public, most commonly Heritage Open Days in September. An impressive 34 out of the sample of 38 open up for tourist, educational and cultural visitors, especially school groups. Tiny congregations housed in the sole synagogue in a given town, and those historic synagogues situated in the centres of large cities, do particularly well in this respect, notching up hundreds or even several thousand visitors per annum.

Summary Findings

Tables 6A-D

All Results

Total: 38	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Bad
Full time	4	5	1	0
Frequent	5	12	3	0
Regular	0	1	1	0
Occasional	1	1	4	0
Not in Use	0	0	0	0

Notes

The total of 4 synagogues rated Good/Full time are all in London. Hampstead is estimated to be included here although no completed ‘Usage’ return was received.

The total of 5 synagogues rated Fair/Full time includes the former Manchester Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, which is now in full time use as the Manchester Jewish Museum, and where occasional weddings are held.

The results exclude 7 synagogues that declined to participate in the survey and to which access was not granted. Five of these are currently closed and at least 3 of them are presumed to be in very bad condition. The ‘zero’ results for ‘Not in use/Very Bad’ excluded these buildings.

Listed Synagogues in Use for Worship

Total: 32	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Bad
Full time	4	4	1	0
Frequent	4	12	1	0
Regular	0	1	1	0
Occasional	1	1	2	0
Not in Use	0	0	0	0

London only (including Elstree)

Total: 14	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Bad
Full time	4	2	0	0
Frequent	3	4	1	0
Regular	0	0	0	0
Occasional	0	0	0	0
Not in Use	0	0	0	0

Outside London (excluding Elstree)

Total: 24	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Bad
Full time	0	3	1	0
Frequent	2	8	2	0
Regular	0	1	1	0
Occasional	1	1	4	0
Not in Use	0	0	0	0

Historic synagogues in London are overall in a better shape than they were five years ago. Only one building, unlisted, can be regarded as At Risk in terms of the poor state of its fabric and the low level of usage for worship. Several synagogues have greatly improved their prospects thanks to a combination of repair work and healthy usage, notably Sandys Row and Bobov New in east London and New West End and Golders Green in west and north-west London. All of these buildings have been in receipt of publicly funded repair grants. The importance of this funding is thus demonstrated.

Nationwide, the picture is less rosy. However, many historic synagogues are managing to keep going despite the small size of their congregations. This may be attributed to the commitment and enthusiasm of individuals, outside guidance and encouragement from Jewish Heritage and the ability to access funding. Good examples are all four West Country synagogues, Plymouth, Exeter, Cheltenham and Bristol. Since 2010 Leicester has both averted closure and received a repair grant. Birmingham’s flagship Singer’s Hill is the biggest success story, having undergone repairs funded by the congregation in the winter of 2014-15 and is now home to a community that is growing once again.

The condition of nearly a quarter (24%) of synagogues in the survey (and of 18% of Listed synagogues) is a cause for concern. The percentage of Listed synagogues at possible risk has dropped from 28% to 18% since 2010.

The condition of highly graded Victorian synagogues is especially worrying. Liverpool’s Princes Road is in a stable condition but needs pro-active attention to arrest serious erosion of its fabric. The same applies to Brighton’s Middle Street (Grade II*) that is now a candidate for the Heritage At Risk Register. Bradford (Grade II*) is currently on the Register and requires urgent works to its delicate fabric. A Repair Grant has been awarded but the 2nd QS uncovered serious problems that may not yet have been addressed.

Early twentieth century synagogues, including a handful that are not Listed, remain the most vulnerable category. Most, but not all, of these, are located in the North of England.



Birmingham



London, Golders Green



Bournemouth



Bradford



Brighton



Blackpool



Leicester

Case Studies

2010 CASE STUDIES: BRIEF UPDATE

In 2010 seven buildings were selected as case studies: two in London; four in the North West (1 in Liverpool; 3 in Manchester) and 1 in the North East (Sunderland). All the buildings dated from the Edwardian and interwar periods, with the exception of Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue, that moved into a converted Victorian building in the year 2000.

LONDON

New Synagogue, Stamford Hill, N16, Grade II

Up from a 'Fair' to a 'Good' rating since 2010. It is generally well maintained and well used by a growing congregation from the Bobov Hasidic community.

Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue, 1 Victory Road, Hermon Hill, E11, Grade II*

Up from a 'Fair' to a 'Good' rating and experiencing a steady growth in membership.

LIVERPOOL

Greenbank Drive Synagogue, Sefton Park, Grade II*

Remains closed and unused since 2008. Surveyed for SAR 2010, but access denied for the purposes of 2nd QS 2015. Scored the lowest rating on Usage and presumed to be deteriorating. Remains At Risk.

MANCHESTER

Withington Congregation of Spanish & Portuguese Jews

8 Queenston Road, West Didsbury, M20, Grade II

Stabilised despite the progress of plans to build a new Sephardi synagogue further out in Hale Barns, Cheshire. Bolstered by the sale and demolition of the unlisted Sha'are Sedek around the corner in Lansdowne Road. This has brought in new members as well as funds. However, a comprehensive list of repairs remains to be carried out.

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

Stabilised thanks to the adaptation for use as a Jewish student centre. However, the original intention of building student accommodation on the site of the demolished communal hall has not come to fruition. Manchester's universities are not currently popular with Jewish students, due to unpredictable factors beyond anyone's control. The closure of the residential Hillel House on the campus has not resulted in greater numbers frequenting Wilbraham Road.

Higher Crumpsall Synagogue, Bury Old Road, Salford, M8, Grade II

No change since 2010. Continues to suffer from poor management. Cosmetic repairs have been carried out but underlying problems (eg monitoring structural movement in the east wall) have been ignored, against the advice of professionals, and maintenance continues to be neglected. The huge potential for regeneration of this building remains, it being situated within a populous Jewish neighbourhood.

SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Synagogue, Ryhope Road, Grade II

No change. Remains redundant, vulnerable and deteriorating. The owner successfully converted the neighbouring schoolhouse into two flats, but neither he, nor Sunderland City Council, appears to have made any serious efforts to identify a new user for the worship space despite the mediating role played by Jewish Heritage. Access denied to the 2nd QS. Severely At Risk.

CASE STUDIES 2015

1. LONDON

Golders Green Synagogue, 41 Dunstan Road, NW11, Grade II

Architectural Significance A polite red brick neo-Georgian facade that blends in discreetly with the surrounding suburban houses in a neighbourhood that is still very popular with better-off London Jews. Yet it masks transitional building technology. Digby Solomon's (of Lewis Solomon & Son) original portion (1920-1) utilised steel construction but retained the column supports under the gallery, which Ernest Joseph (Messrs. Joseph 1927) afterwards painted black to reduce their visibility. Joseph's second phase created a T-shaped, almost cruciform, plan and he added the circular ceiling lantern and Portland stone Tuscan porch. The interior features Joseph's imposing semi-circular pulpit in front of the Ark, flanked by a pair of swish red-veined Sienna marble stairs, and much interesting stained glass.

The Challenge When Joseph extended the building through the Ark wall he nearly doubled the capacity to almost 1,000 seats. Prevailing Orthodox preference for small informal worship spaces made Golders Green look old-fashioned. Alternative services held in other rooms on the large site meant that numbers in the main *Minyan* slumped.

The Solution In 2007 the neglected synagogue was saved from sale, demolition and replacement by lucrative flats, thanks to a Grade II Listing, apparently on the initiative of a member of the congregation dissatisfied with the development scheme. An English Heritage/Heritage Lottery Fund Repair Grant for the roof followed in 2011. In 2012 *The Times*¹⁴ reported that the congregation had itself raised £1 million for the repair project.

Some pews have been removed from the rear of the prayer hall and (reversible) partitions installed to sub-divide the space to create a *Bet Midrash*, children's and *kiddush* area. The women have been brought downstairs to sit in rows parallel with the long north wall on one side of the Ark. Issues remain to be solved especially regarding the acoustics in the unwieldy vaulted space, and future uses for the gallery that is badly in need of redecoration. Nevertheless, the community is to be commended for their courageous bid to render this large synagogue fashionable once again in London's premier Jewish neighbourhood that has become increasingly dominated by Hasidic-style *shtieblekh*.

A canny move was the demolition of the aging ancillary halls by R.J. Hersch (1939) and Ivor Warner (1958) to make way for the new-build Rimon Jewish Primary School (c2014).

¹⁴ *The Times* 16 May 2012

Recent changes in the law linking places in faith schools with 'church' attendance has attracted new, young families to join Golders Green Synagogue. The result has been a net increase in membership, and a falling age profile, for the first time in many years.

In contrast with 2010, access was granted by Golders Green for the 2nd QS.

2. BIRMINGHAM

Singers Hill Synagogue, Blucher Street Birmingham, Grade II*

Architectural Significance Birmingham boasts the oldest active 'cathedral synagogue' in Britain, now over 150 years old. Singers Hill Synagogue was designed by leading municipal architect Henry R Yeoville Thomason in 1855-6. He was also responsible for Birmingham's Council House and Art Gallery. The banqueting hall in particular has a grand Italianate interior, which, with its barrel-vaulted ceiling and superimposed order of gilded Corinthian columns, is very reminiscent of Singers Hill Synagogue. Singers Hill retains its original and most splendid ornamental gas chandeliers, and possesses figurative stained glass made in the 1960s by Hardman Studios of Birmingham, famed for their association with Pugin.

The Challenge Twenty, even ten years ago, Singers Hill was written off by many as having no future. It was situated in a declining inner-city post-industrial neighbourhood and was rapidly losing members to the suburban 1960s Central Synagogue in Pershore Road, Edgbaston. Birmingham Jewry has dwindled to about 2,200 people, one third of its former strength.

Back in the Millennium year 2000, barely 20 visitors showed up at Singers Hill on the very first European Jewish Heritage Day that took place in the UK. Over the years, Jewish Heritage UK campaigned hard to prevent closure and encouraged the minority of stalwarts who cared about their building to undertake essential repairs.

The Solution Today, the immediate vicinity, conveniently situated close to New Street Station, has been regenerated, thanks largely to the nearby Mail Box development, the 1960s Royal Mail sorting office, now painted bright red and converted into an attractive complex of shops and restaurants. New apartments have sprung up around the synagogue and the neighbouring Severn Street School, the first Nonconformist Christian school in Birmingham, once a Building At Risk that has been transformed into upmarket apartments named 'Scholars' Gate'.

Meanwhile, contrary to predictions, in 2013 Pershore Road downsized by demolishing their 1960s synagogue and moving into the communal hall. By contrast, Singers Hill, thanks in part to a dynamic young rabbinical couple, has been attracting new members. In the winter of 2014-15, after the 2nd QS site visit, the synagogue's interior was repaired and completely redecorated almost entirely at the congregation's own expense. No public funding was involved. The building was officially rededicated by the Chief Rabbi in March 2015. Thus, Singers Hill Synagogue has regained its position as the flagship of Birmingham's tiny Jewish community, an example to be emulated elsewhere.

3. BRADFORD

Bradford Synagogue, 7A Bowland Street, Manningham, Grade II*

Architectural Significance The second oldest surviving Reform Synagogue in the UK, built ten years after the ‘cathedral’ of Reform in Britain, West London, Upper Berkeley Street (Grade II). A little-known small-scale provincial example of ‘oriental style’ fashionable for synagogue architecture in the late 19th century. A unique building in the repertoire of West Yorkshire church builders, the Healey Bros. (1880-1), it is an eclectic mix of Moorish, Mamluk and Moghul styles, featuring ogee and horseshoe arches, *ablaq* stripy brickwork, *mashrabiya* lattice work, and cresting on the roofline. The Ark is unique, a mixture of Indian and Islamic forms.

German-born Jews played an important role in the development of Bradford’s woollen trade. Jacob Moser (1839-1922), a founder of the Reform congregation and ardent early Zionist, became mayor of Bradford. This little synagogue is a very important part of the multi-cultural heritage of Bradford and West Yorkshire. It is now situated, appropriately, in the heart of Muslim Manningham.

The Challenge The Bradford Jewish community has never been large and today is run by a handful of elderly and very dedicated people. They successfully weathered a financial crisis in 2009 when they had only enough funds to maintain the synagogue for another twelve months and began talks with Bradford City Council with a view to selling the building. The 2nd QS discovered a fungal outbreak characteristic of dry rot in the basement which, if, together with roof leaks, is not treated urgently, could potentially result in irreversible damage to the delicate joinery and decorative detail of this unique building. This would be a great loss to both Anglo-Jewry’s and Yorkshire’s architectural heritage. The painter William Rothenstein’s family were members of the Bowland Street synagogue.

The Solution Some younger people with enthusiasm for keeping the building functioning have emerged and the older members have worked hard to establish close links with Bradford City Council and local churches and mosques. Two Early Day Motions in support of keeping the building open were presented in Parliament in 2009 and 2013 (the latter by former Manningham MP George Galloway). At the same time the Bradford Council of Mosques raised £2,500 towards the roof repair, an example of good community relations that received wide publicity.

In 2009 Jewish Heritage stepped in and made a successful application to upgrade the synagogue from Grade II to II*. It was subsequently added to the Heritage At Risk Register. In 2013 a RGPOW grant of £103,000 was awarded, but has not yet been implemented.

Bowland Street has the potential to act as a focal point for Reform-minded Jews scattered throughout Yorkshire. Closer links and reciprocal visits between Bradford and the much larger (modern) Sinai Reform Synagogue in nearby Leeds would also be desirable.

THREE SEASIDE SHULS

4. BRIGHTON

Middle Street Synagogue, 66 Middle Street, Brighton, Grade II*

Architectural Significance Middle Street Synagogue is one of a very select group of Victorian ‘cathedral synagogues’ left in Britain. A low-key Italian Romanesque façade, built of high quality materials, hides a very sumptuous interior that retains most of its original fixtures and fittings, including the stained glass windows installed between 1877 and 1912. Rothschilds and Sassoons were past patrons of this synagogue that was built for the fashionable elite of London Jewry who took their holidays on the South Coast.

The Challenge This is a classic case of a magnificent Victorian synagogue marooned in the city centre when the Jewish community decamped to the suburbs. Middle Street has become an adjunct of the Brighton & Hove Hebrew Congregation (BHHC), housed in the West Hove Synagogue (Alec Feldman & Partners 1958-61) in Church Road, Hove. Consequently, the historic synagogue has been struggling for at least two decades against redundancy and is now used only for occasional services such as civic events and weddings and on Heritage Open Days. Despite grant aid totalling some £450,000 during the 2000s, the fabric is again in poor condition. The stonework suffers erosion because of its proximity to the sea (sea salt) and the synagogue is built on a bed of shingle. This is a building that requires constant maintenance that has apparently not been carried out. The 2nd QS discovered water seeping into the east wall by the Ark, a matter of particular concern.

The Solution The first step we have recommended would be the creation of a Middle Street Charitable Trust and Limited Company, entirely separate from BHHC New Church Road. A precedent for this exists at Glasgow’s Garnethill Synagogue where a Preservation Trust has already been established with strong encouragement from Jewish Heritage. The aim is to make the Trust self-financing in the long-term. Establishing a Trust would entail reaching agreement with BHHC New Church Road to transfer the majority of the balance of the proceeds from the sale of Middle Street’s curtilage (see next paragraph) to the Trust, in return for surrendering responsibility for repair and maintenance of the historic building or for fundraising for it.

In c2010 the caretaker’s house and hall at the rear of the enclosed site was sold leasehold to the Hillel Foundation for use as a student centre. We have recommended a holistic approach whereby resources are shared between the synagogue and the centre, including the caretaker, chaplain(s) and even the students themselves who should be using the historic space for services. Rental income from the flat(s) or hire of the space for events could provide income for the synagogue. As yet, this scenario has not yet been fully realised.

In the 2000s Brighton has undergone urban regeneration and the neighbourhood around the synagogue – and close to the seafront – has revived. Brighton is buzzing and the property market is buoyant. The location of Middle Street is naturally attractive to students who like to be at the centre of things (Brighton’s universities are out-of-town

campuses). In addition, considerable progress has been made in putting Middle Street on the tourist map through participation in the various Heritage Open Days and the Brighton Festival¹⁵. It is now a popular attraction for visitors.

With some imagination, strategic planning and cooperation between the various stakeholders, there is no reason why Middle Street should not have a sustainable future.

Bournemouth and Blackpool Synagogues (see below) represent the last gasp of 'Edwardian Orientalism' in British Jewry's favourite holiday towns.

5. BOURNEMOUTH

Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation, Wootton Gardens

Recommended by English Heritage for Listing in 2010

Architectural Significance A distinctive redbrick building whose long east wall closes the street. The curvy roofline punctuating the buttressed bays is quite *art nouveau*, while the pair of roof lanterns are typical of public buildings of the early 20th century. It has an attractive interlocking mullioned window arcade under the squat little tower with its square leaded dome, which marked the original entrance, at the far (north) end. The designer, George Joseph Lawson (of Lawson & Reynolds) was a successful local builder and developer, former Liberal mayor of Bournemouth, committed Congregationalist and active temperance campaigner. Cleverly enlarged in 1957-62 (A. E. Green & M. G. Cross) by the addition of three matching bays at the Ark end (south): you can hardly see the join. The new entrance at the other end (north) is an unwelcome intrusion.

The Challenge In response to reports back in 2008 that the congregation in Bournemouth was looking to sell up and abandon their historic building for a more convenient location in the suburbs, in a rare move, Jewish Heritage applied for Listing. After a delay of 18 months, the application was rejected. Freedom of Information requests on both sides revealed that the Secretary of State at the time, Margaret Hodge, overrode the advice of English Heritage due to vigorous lobbying by an alliance of congregants and local councillors (some of whom were the same people) backed up by very prominent communal figures. The synagogue stood in the path of a potentially lucrative local development plan, temporarily put on hold by the economic downturn.

Bournemouth Synagogue managed to celebrate its centenary in 2011. It continues to hold regular services despite the complaints of some congregants about the location in what is increasingly seen as an unsavoury town centre, especially on a Friday night. Completely unprotected – even a Local Listing was blocked – this charming building would be an asset to any town, but must be regarded as At Risk once the economy picks up. Access was again denied to the 2nd QS, as it had been in 2010.

¹⁵ Middle Street is the lead site in the Southern Region and at the centre of the Brighton Jewish Heritage Trail in Sharman Kadish, *Jewish Heritage in Britain and Ireland* (2006, 2nd edition 2015) (English Heritage/Historic England) and is also prominently featured in full colour in the Brighton city guide in the *Pevsner Architectural Guides* series (Yale University Press).

The Solution An 'enabling development' scheme (perhaps holiday apartments and/or warden controlled flats) on the rest of this roomy town centre site that includes a 1970s hall, could generate revenue for the historic synagogue itself. It could also provide additional worshippers. The *Mikveh* (1976) should be retained. Alternative Friday night services could easily be held in distant members' houses thus avoiding the unnecessary expense of a suburban rebuild. Jewish holidaymakers, including the strictly Orthodox, should be encouraged to use the synagogue rather than holding services in hotel lobbies. As in many other towns, the outreach Hasidic organisation Chabad-Lubavitch has acquired separate premises in Bournemouth, rather than sharing real estate resources with the mainstream community on the site of the historic synagogue.

The issue of Listing should be revisited. After all, English Heritage's expert opinion was a great compliment to the architectural quality and historical significance of Bournemouth Synagogue in Anglo-Jewry's favourite holiday town.

6. BLACKPOOL

Blackpool Hebrew Congregation, Leamington Road, Grade II

Architectural Significance The North's answer to Bournemouth. A jolly red Accrington brick, stone and terracotta seaside synagogue with hexagonal lead-covered cupola and quite *art nouveau* curves to the roofline on the exposed long wall. Also designed by a local worthy, Robert Butcher Mather, a staunch Catholic and Conservative former Mayor of Blackpool. Situated not ten minutes walk from Blackpool's North Pier, this was once the smart end of town. The solidly-built middle-class Edwardian houses, and Blackpool's Old Grammar School (Rotts Son & Hennings, 1904-5, Grade II) (currently used by the Salvation Army), across the road, together with the synagogue, are included within the recently declared Raikes Hall Conservation Area. The synagogue's pretty interior has lots of colourful stained glass that adds to the warmth of the space.

The Challenge Four years short of its Centenary, in 2012 the dwindling congregation sold their synagogue privately to a local builder on the eve of a public auction that might have attracted bids from both strictly Orthodox developers in Manchester and cultural providers in Blackpool. The congregation decamped to St. Anne's taking the proceeds with them. Two attempts failed to get through a Planning Application to build apartments on the site of and behind the communal hall, separated from the defunct synagogue by a proposed concrete wall. Meanwhile, the synagogue itself was put back onto the open market. It remains vacant and increasingly neglected. It was added to the English Heritage *Heritage at Risk* Register in 2011.

The Solution In common with other Heritage stakeholders, Jewish Heritage opposed the hiving off of the curtilage from the synagogue as likely to damage its future viability. An enabling development in which the worship space remains in use would be far preferable, allowing for a bid to the HLF under the Repair Grant for Listed Places of Worship Scheme. Meanwhile, the local Blackpool Reform community currently operates out of a nondescript modern building around the corner in Raikes Parade. They have shown interest in using the landmark Leamington Road synagogue, a move that would be welcomed by Blackpool City Council.

APPENDIX I – LIST OF SYNAGOGUES IN THE SURVEY 2015

HE/HS Region	Name	Grade	In Use**
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	Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue	II	YES
London	New London Synagogue	II	YES
London	New Synagogue	II	YES
London	Sukkat Shalom Synagogue	II*	YES
London	Sandys Row Synagogue	II	YES
London	Fieldgate Street Synagogue	Unlisted	No
London	East London Central Synagogue	Unlisted	YES
London	Congregation of Jacob Synagogue	Unlisted	YES
South East	Liberal Synagogue Elstree	II	YES
South East	Reading Synagogue	II	YES
South East	Brighton Middle Street Synagogue	II*	YES
South East	Chatham Memorial Synagogue	II*	YES
South East	Ramsgate Montefiore Synagogue	II*	YES
South East	Canterbury Old Synagogue	II	No
South East	Margate Synagogue	Unlisted	YES
South West	Bristol Synagogue	II	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
South West	Portsmouth & Southsea Synagogue	Unlisted	YES
East Midlands	Leicester Hebrew Congregation	II	YES
East Midlands	Nottingham Hebrew Congregation	II	YES
West Midlands	Birmingham, Singers Hill Synagogue	II*	YES
West Midlands	Coventry Synagogue	II	No
North West	Manchester, Withington Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue	II	YES
North West	(Old) South Manchester Synagogue	II	Partly
North West	Manchester Jewish Museum	II*	No
North West	Higher Crumpsall Synagogue	II	YES
North West	Blackpool Synagogue	II	No
North West	Princes Road Synagogue	I	YES
North West	Greenbank Drive Synagogue	II*	No
North West	Southport Synagogue	Unlisted	YES
Yorks & Humber	Grimsby Synagogue	II	YES
Yorks & Humber	Bradford Synagogue	II*	YES
North East	Sunderland Synagogue	II	No
Scotland	Glasgow, Garnethill Synagogue	A	YES
Scotland	Edinburgh Synagogue	B	YES
Ireland	Cork Synagogue	Unlisted	YES

**As synagogue

TOTAL 45
TOTAL RESPONDENTS 38

APPENDIX 2 –

LIST OF GRANTS OFFERED TO SYNAGOGUES UNDER THE REPAIR GRANTS SCHEMES FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP

Year of Stage 1 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
2011	London, Golders Green	111,000
2012	Leicester	¹ 43,000
2013	Bradford	103,000
2015	Cheltenham	² 11,500
2015	Manchester Jewish Museum	³ 426,900
TOTAL		1,964,400

¹ A further grant of £81,700 was announced in July 2015.

² 11,500 came from the Roof Repair Fund which was established under the auspices of the HLF sister fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The repair grant scheme was originally operated jointly by English Heritage and the HLF and subsequently solely by the HLF.

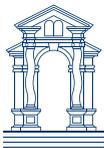
³ Stage I Development Grant May 2015, with view to full grant of £2.8m.

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