

HISTORY

The Brick Lane Jamme Masjid Trust (London) Limited, 59 Brick Lane, London, E1 6QL, constructed as a French Protestant church in 1743, through use as a Methodist Chapel, to conversion to the Machzeike Hadass Great Synagogue in 1898, and then to a mosque, the Jamme Masjid, in 1976. The buildings are grade II listed and include, also constructed in 1743, cellars originally for commercial storage, now part of the prayer hall of the mosque, and an adjoining schoolhouse and offices.

The building that houses this Mosque previously housed the Spitalfields Great Synagogue, and was built originally in 1743 as a French Protestant Church. An adjoining building of the same date was built as a school. Both these buildings, taken together, are statutorily listed as a single building of special architectural or historic interest, grade II. Any alterations affecting the fabric or setting of the building therefore require listed building consent, in addition to planning consent. The grade II listing means that the local planning authority, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, must obtain the advice of English Heritage as to listed building consent. In addition the building is in the Fournier Street Conservation Area, as designated by the local planning authority.

The listed building comprises two distinct structures, the main building to the south, formerly the church and synagogue, and now the prayer hall of the Mosque, with its chief front facing on to Fournier Street, and an adjoining building arranged to the north along Brick Lane, with its entrance at Brick Lane.

The main frontage of Building 1 on Fournier Street is about 24m long, and the frontage on Brick Lane is about 17m long. Building 2 fronts on to Brick Lane for a further distance to the north of 11m. A space at the rear between the two ranges of buildings extends to the west of Building 1 by a further 5-6m, but lies behind another building on the Fournier Street frontage to the west of Building 1. The latter building, a terraced house 37 Fournier Street, was constructed shortly after Buildings 1 and 2, and was connected with them, originally forming a vestry house. Since 1923 this has been in separate ownership, and is not connected with the Mosque although it, too, is a listed building. Building 1 contains a basement, ground and 1st floors, and a 2nd floor constructed on the roof space, while Building 2 contains a basement, ground, 1st and 2nd floors, and a 3rd floor in the roof space approximately at the same level as the other roof space.

The complete building was listed in 1950, and the listing description (which follows), written when the building housed the Great Synagogue, serves only for identification and concentrates on the exterior. In 1976 the site became a mosque, the Jamme Masjid, and minor alterations were made to the interior. The pews and other non-structural fittings were removed, the opening in the centre of the gallery was reduced in size, made octagonal and moved eastwards, while retaining the columns on the ground floor supporting the gallery, a partition wall was inserted around the western end of the ground floor, and a qibla was constructed on the ground floor under the south-east corner or the

gallery. The northern and central vaults were also converted to prayer halls. Rooms adjacent to the prayer halls were adapted for washing: two rooms on the ground floor of Building 2, including a space formerly in the yard to the rear, and the southern vault in Building 1.

The community worked tirelessly to raise the funds to buy the former synagogue and grace of Allah all mighty succeeded in raising the necessary funds to acquire the mosque free-hold and refurbish. In 1979 the Mosque incorporated in to a limited by guarantee company – The London Jamme Masjid Trust Limited and subsequently registered with Charity Commission.

The community worked tirelessly to make the Mosque as it is today. Unfortunately mosque regulatory matters were not in order until recently, the present board of directors took action to bring all matters up to date.

In addition to that we were not compliant with fire regulations and the London Fire Brigade closed the upper floors until the works were carried out.

The board of directors initiated two front actions to resolve the impending issues of fire regulations and regularising the matters with Companies house and Charity Commission.

The board, with the help of London Borough of Tower Hamlets, councillors, and council leader at the time Councillor Helal Uddin Abbas and his team, worked with us to obtain the necessary planning permission.

With the agreement of the Members, Companies House, and Charity Commission the Mosque was transferred to a new company with the same aims and value to bring all matters up to date and save money in respect of legal costs.

The Brick Lane Jamme Masjid Trust (London) Limited, a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered with Charity Commission, is now the legal owner and operator of the Mosque.