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ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT   Most of the 1800 mosques in Britain today have been formed through the conversion and adaptation of existing buildings; some 200 are purpose built. With the larger adaptations and purpose-built mosques, Muslim communities have attempted to represent their identities in the West architecturally. This has commonly been through the replication of easily identifiable architectural elements drawn liberally from the history of Islamic religious architecture, elements such as domes, minarets, arches and arabesque decoration. The result is a British Muslim architecture largely designed by mosque committees and characterized by the replication and reinterpretation of traditional and historic Islamic architectural forms. In this essay I explore how the symbolic meaning of the mosque created by mosque committees is challenged by the design process and ideologies of the professionally trained architect. Referring to a specific mosque design project, I explore how the mosque client and the design professional relate to and deploy Islamic architectural symbols and interpret their cultural meanings.

Introduction

Britain's Muslim population is one of the fastest growing religious denominations in the country, having risen from 2.7 million in the 2011 census to 3.9 million in 2021. Whilst there are records of a Muslim presence in Britain going back centuries, the first settled communities emerged in the early twentieth century when sailors working on imperial shipping routes from Bengal, Yemen and Somalia started settling in the port towns where they docked. Muslim communities emerged in Cardiff, South Shields and East London and started to establish the country's first mosques. These were prayer rooms in lodging houses or other converted premises, such as the Hilda Arms pub in South Shields, re-used as a mosque in 1936, and were followed by purpose-built mosques such as the Peel Street Mosque of 1946 in Cardiff. Although these were not Britain's first mosques, those being a mosque in Woking built in 1889 and a house converted to a mosque in Liverpool in the same year, they were nevertheless the first mosques established by migrant and diasporic Muslim communities. Such mosques numbered only a handful by the Second World War, but after the war, and with the partition of India and creation of Pakistan and later Bangladesh, Muslim migration from South Asia to Britain rapidly increased along with wider migration from the new Commonwealth nations.

It was from these new Muslim communities that a wave of postwar mosques started to emerge, starting in the early 1960s. These communities were engaged in a process of reproducing their traditional social and cultural worlds, a process which was not restricted to South Asian settlers;[1] a study of Yemenis in Britain described them as forming an "'urban village'... living within its own socially, linguistically and ethnically defined borders."[2] Communal structures from communities' places of origin were replicated in their new environments. For example, the Muslims of Bharuch, Gujarat, already lived in India in considerably self-contained enclaves, a pattern which was repeated, and indeed intensified, in northern English towns such as Blackburn, with chain migration reproducing village and kin networks. It was the arrival of families in the 1960s that changed the nature of these early settler communities. Prior to this, "Indians, Yemenis and Turkish Cypriots [had] lived together in boarding houses ... sharing more or less the same religious facilities."[3] The reuniting of families led to the gradual separation of Muslim migrants to form "ethnic settlements," and it was from within these distinct cultural and ethnic groupings that institutions started to form. The size and concentration of these emergent Muslim communities enabled them to "generate and sustain institutional and economic infrastructure that embodied and perpetuated specific religious and cultural norms."[4]

What emerged at the end of the 1970s was a "patchwork of communities," many of which established their own mosques onto which they impressed their particular national, ethnic, linguistic and doctrinal character.[5] These mosques "were primarily concerned with the promotion

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of worship and religious life, the encouragement of 'fraternal' links in Muslim communities, the provision of assistance and moral support for individuals … and the improvement of social, cultural and educational conditions … ."[6] If postwar mosques started appearing from the early 1960s, by the 1980s they were making their presence felt across Britain's urban landscape through their visual impact. They were mostly formed through the adaptation of existing buildings, as these were more readily available to new Muslim communities who were organizing and financing their own social infrastructures. Mosques started emerging as adaptations of former pubs, warehouses, cinemas, banks, libraries as well as many in converted houses.

The postwar mosques were being made in an iterative and ad hoc fashion by the migrant communities who were using them. When these communities were able to introduce architectural expression, they often turned to architectural references from historic Islamic sources, adapted to fit their new contexts. Whilst some of these imported Islamic architectural references could be traced back to a specific historical origin, such a lineage was not always clear. In many if not most cases, the Islamic architectural references replicated on postwar mosques were generic approximations of historic Islamic architecture from places where Muslim empires once ruled.

By the end of the twentieth century the mosque landscape in Britain was composed of mostly adapted buildings, ranging from houses to cinemas, former places of worship, warehouses, public houses, shops plus many more. Practically any building type could be, and was, adapted to create the mosque. Although postwar purpose-built mosques had started to emerge from the late 1960s, they were few in number until the 1990s. The 1990s also saw examples of purpose-built mosques whose architecture was more firmly rooted in Islamic historical sources, and could be described as revivalist, attempting to replicate as far as possible an historic image of an Islamic past or golden age.

This revivalist tendency could be seen to echo the first representations of the mosque in Britain, in which a 1761 "mosque folly" at Kew Gardens and the 1889 first purpose-built mosque in Woking, Southeast England were both expressions of a European fantasy of the "East" as an exotic and flamboyant place. These examples mark the early and late periods of a cultural practice that saw literature, painting and architecture deployed in the construction of the "persona" of the Muslim world as it was being newly experienced. Later termed Orientalism, part of this practice was the replication of the Muslim world architecturally through historicized and romanticized reconstructions of Islamic history. The results appeared in buildings such as the Brighton Pavilion by John Nash (1815), painter Frederic Leighton's Arab Hall designed by architect George Aitchison (1866), along with other examples across northern Europe. For postwar Muslim diasporas in Britain, the mosque, and its design, exists somewhere between a continuation of and a reaction

against the colonial control of the subject or minority population through this Orientalizing vision.

The Cultural Logic of Mosque Design

My own architectural practice started in Bethnal Green in East London in the early 2000s as a small general practice in a multi-ethnic part of the inner city, serving a largely ethnic minority clientele of small developers, householders, businesses and community organizations. Very soon we were approached by mosque communities across East London, it being an area with a high Muslim population and historically a "landing point," a place where migrants to London and the UK would first settle. The mosque projects varied in scale and scope, from extending, adapting and rebuilding an existing building to purpose-built mosques. From the outset, I wanted to move away from the historicist turn in UK mosques and the way they tended to deploy domes, minarets and arches in order to signify their religious function. These standard forms were rooted in Muslim architectural history but I felt that they were being translated into generic motifs, made from synthetic materials such as glass-reinforced plastic, and devoid of their historical specificity when transplanted into the UK. I perceived this as a hollowing out of meaning of an architectural tradition and I pursued instead an architecture that I felt could reflect the contemporary Muslim condition, which for me meant one of migration, "diasporization" and hybridity.

My understanding of this situation is based on my own lived experience as a second-generation migrant, as well as on my research into the mosque in Britain, through which I found that mosques are essentially a community-led endeavor, are mostly adaptations of existing buildings and are built in an iterative manner, often community-designed, over a period of time. I have experienced the making of mosques by migrant Muslim communities from the initial stages – starting with prayer in the living rooms of houses and religious education on dining room tables. This informs my perception of the diasporic condition as one of continuous and incremental cultural, religious and identity reconstruction.

For me this is a reconstruction of cultural identity across time, geography and historical events, namely colonization, displacement, migration, and the violent experience of racism and being Othered within the new place of settlement. The psychic condition that the migrant experience gives rise to is explored by the Indian-American psychoanalyst Salman Akhter. He lists a number of attitudes and fantasies that the migrant adopts. First there is the attitude of repudiation, a sensory denial of being in the new place. Then there is the fantasy of return, which is continuously delayed until in most cases it is abandoned. After this comes the fantasy of replication: that if return is not possible then the migrant will remake their lost homeland in the new place. Such replication is a way for the migrant to deny loss and minimize the

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laceration of the self that they have suffered. Objects that are used in this process of replication take on a shamanic and totemic significance, onto which are transferred the traumas of dislocation and the loss of that environment that previously emplaced the person in the world.[7]

My endeavor is for the architecture of the mosque to serve as an instrument through which to reimagine and reconstruct – but not to attempt to replicate – historical and cultural trajectories that have been interrupted. It is to reflect, and perhaps start to heal, the psychic fallout of migration by giving it a voice. For me, the reconstruction of cultural histories and past lives by diasporas is always partial and incomplete as it cannot be a reinstatement of the past. The process of reconstructing must instead negotiate a real and imagined past and a new present, and this negotiation changes both the diaspora and the host. The diaspora is thus in a condition of reconstruction and invention, continuously and simultaneously doing both, and it is in this ever-shifting dialogue that, for me, the British mosque exists.

I pursued these ideas through a number of mosque projects through the 2000s. One of these was a 2008 project in Camberwell in South London to redevelop a former 1960s public house into a mosque (Figure 1). The building was to be remodeled internally and an extra floor

Figure 1
Camberwell Mosque, London, proposed elevation. Makespace Architects, 2008.

added, with a new façade enveloping the whole ensemble to give it a new architectural meaning. To design this façade, I referred to a slim book of Islamic geometric patterns by Robert Field, first published in 1998.[8] This book, one of several visual references for Islamic patternwork that I kept to hand in the office, followed in a long tradition of European visual guides to Islamic art and architecture presented in books, engravings, paintings and so on which were perhaps most popular in the nineteenth century when the fashion for representations of the Muslim world was at its zenith. From this book I selected a thirteenth-century Persian eight-pointed star pattern which the author had sourced from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. There was a simplicity and "rationality" to this pattern which I felt could be read in multiple ways – as an Islamic pattern but also as a non-culturally specific decorative tile. I felt that this pattern was situated on the edge of being recognizably Islamic in the commonly understood Oriental or Arabesque sense, and it could also be read as a "modern" geometric form. I therefore developed the façade design from this Islamic pattern, situated as I felt it was between cultural categories, a pattern with which the whole building was to be clad and given a new unified architectural and urban meaning.

The Camberwell project remained unbuilt. The first of my built mosque projects was the Shahporan Mosque on Hackney Road in East London, completed in 2014 (Figure 2). This project involved the

Figure 2
Shahporan Mosque, Hackney Road, East London. Makespace Architects, 2014. Photograph of Treadway Street elevation by the author.

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refurbishment of the existing mosque which was in a converted Georgian terraced house, plus a new 3-storey addition to its rear which fronts onto a side road. The house was being used as an office before it became the mosque in the 1990s, having been acquired by the local Bangladeshi Muslim community. In its previous history it had been a lock-making office with attached workshop – the historic signage belonging to this locksmith remained carved in relief in the flank wall of the house, and was to be reinstated as part of our refurbishment works.

For the new 3-storey building, which was to be built on the site of the former workshop which had been adapted to serve as the prayer hall, I sourced again an eight-pointed star Persian tile pattern from Robert Field's pattern book, although this time I used a variation of it which came from a similarly-dated Seljuk palace in Turkey, also on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum. I used this as the basis for the design of a new façade. I scaled the pattern up so that only part of it formed the façade design; it could not be read as a repeatable pattern continuing *ad infinitum*, usually a hallmark of Islamic patternwork. Instead, the building presents a fragment of the overall pattern; the rest of it needs to be imagined as occurring outside of the frame of the building. Rather than a literal and historic replication of a complete Islamic pattern, which for me is a futile attempt at reviving a temporally and geographically distant past, I instead pursued an abstracted and somewhat fragmented recreation of it. For me, this was a crucial way of representing what I understood as the diasporic experience, where cultures, histories and traditions were being reassembled and reconstructed, resulting in partial restorations mixed with new contexts, and from which an emergent architectural language would result.

The priority for my clients, who were migrants from the Sylhet region, was to create as large a mosque as possible to accommodate the already overspilling and growing congregation. They were concerned primarily with volume, and less with the architectural language. Consequently, I had a fairly free reign with the design, with the client saying that it was my area of expertise. There was therefore very little if any client discussion about the architectural language that I was proposing. When it was finally built, the mosque committee was pleased with the result, and particularly that it gave them a distinctive presence in the local area with much favorable interest from the wider non-Muslim community.

I deployed a similar approach to Islamic pattern and contemporary abstraction in the mosque I designed in Aberdeen, the Alhikmah Mosque, completed in 2017 (Figure 3). Through the design stage for this project I was exploring how existing geometric patterns from the canon of Islamic design and architecture could be referenced and adapted to generate a new visual language. I chose an historic Islamic geometric pattern which was cast in concrete to create cladding panels and these formed the main feature of the front façade. Ceramic tiles were individually artist-designed

and placed in the center of each panel, thereby setting up a dialogue between the historic pattern and a contemporary interpretation. The rest of the façade was made up with off-the-shelf concrete cladding panels and granite blockwork to relate the building to the street and city, which is traditionally built in granite. In this way the architecture of the mosque became a site where the historic and contemporary, and local and global, could negotiate new compositions and relationships, and so through this interplay generate new cultural meanings.

      The client for Alhikmah Mosque in Aberdeen had specifically sought me out after seeing the Shahporan Mosque on Hackney Road. He was a successful Aberdeen businessman who wanted to build a new mosque as the existing mosque – a series of interconnected adapted buildings – was becoming too small, inadequate for a growing and cosmopolitan Muslim community. This mosque project was patron-led, rather than led by a mosque committee. Mosque committees are usually minded to keep their congregation placated, which generally results in a conservative approach to mosque design. Here, the patron was able to pursue a more singular architectural vision, for a mosque that spoke a contemporary language and reflected a British Muslim identity.

Figure 3
Alhikmah Mosque, Nelson Street, Aberdeen. Makespace Architects, 2017. Photograph by the author.

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Designing the Multi-Cultural Minaret

It was through one of my early mosque projects that the narrative for this
article developed. In 2004 the Baitul Amman Mosque in Bethnal Green
was operating out of a series of temporary cabins; it sought to redevelop
these into a purpose-built mosque. I was duly appointed as architect for
this project, and my ambition was that the new mosque should be a
modern building, a contemporary interpretation of traditional Muslim
architecture that delivered a new architectural language reflecting a
mixture of cultures and traditions, as was my approach. I sat with the
mosque committee on a number of occasions. As I made my case for this
architectural vision, with drawings and diagrams, the committee
chairman, Mr. Abdul Kadir, thoughtfully turned to me, and softly said,
"brother, we don't want a multi-cultural minaret, like the one at Brick
Lane, we want an *Islamic* minaret."

The chairman was referring to the 29-meter minaret that was
added to the nearby Brick Lane Mosque in 2009. The Brick Lane Mosque
was established in 1976 by the local Bangladeshi community in
Spitalfields, East London, in a building that was built in 1743 as a
Huguenot church, which then became a Methodist chapel, then a
Synagogue, until its current iteration as a mosque.[9] The minaret,
designed by London practice DGA Architects, is a series of stainless-steel
cylindrical volumes wrapped with arabesque fretwork which glow with
changing-colored lights at night. The minaret stands slightly apart from
the historic building on its own stone plinth. As much as it is a marker of
the building's Islamic use, it also serves as a piece of street sculpture

Figure 4
Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green, London, elevation on Braintree Street. First design proposal with arches sketched during
meeting with mosque committee. Makespace Architects, 2010.

symbolizing a historically multi-cultural area currently branded as BanglaTown to reflect its recent phase of Bangladeshi migration and settlement. The Brick Lane Mosque building itself, with its religious reuse over 250 years, has become synonymous with cultural change and coexistence and has come be seen as the architectural embodiment of a multicultural city.

The mosque chairman, then, was rejecting this multicultural minaret for a more explicitly understood Islamic minaret. The process that followed involved the passing back and forth of design and counter-design between myself, as the architect with a vision of Muslim identities in diasporic transition, and the mosque committee, a diasporic Bangladeshi community with a vision of a clearly locatable Islamic past. In my proposals, recognizable Islamic motifs were abstracted and applied in fragments combined with contemporary modernist-inspired architectural form. The mosque committee reviewed these designs and made suggestions as to how they could be made "more Islamic" through, for example, the introduction of arches along the façade, to disrupt my modernist rationality. These were sketched over the drawing that I presented in a design meeting with the committee (Figure 4).

Figure 5
Arched design for Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green. Makespace Architects, 2010.

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My aim was to avoid both pastiche and the literal replication of historical reference, as per my modernist training. I struggled, therefore, to incorporate the mosque committee's desires into an architectural language that would remain, as far as I was concerned, credible – that is to say, not attempting historical replication. I presented further options (Figure 5). Patiently the mosque committee continued to put their case forward, showing me examples of the type of building they were thinking of through other UK examples where traditional domes and minarets had been recreated as closely as possible. I continued to edge toward what I thought might be an acceptable compromise, and the mosque committee continued to articulate their ideas, this time through a sketch by the daughter of one of the committee members of how the mosque should look on the site (Figure 6).

The mosque committee treated me with a mixture of support and exasperation through the design process, perhaps unable to decide whether I was unschooled in Muslim architecture and needed to be made aware, or simply incompetent. Eventually, we reached a proposal that we were able to agree on. The tropes of traditional Islamic architecture, with arched bays, a dome and minaret, were recognizable and unadulterated enough for the
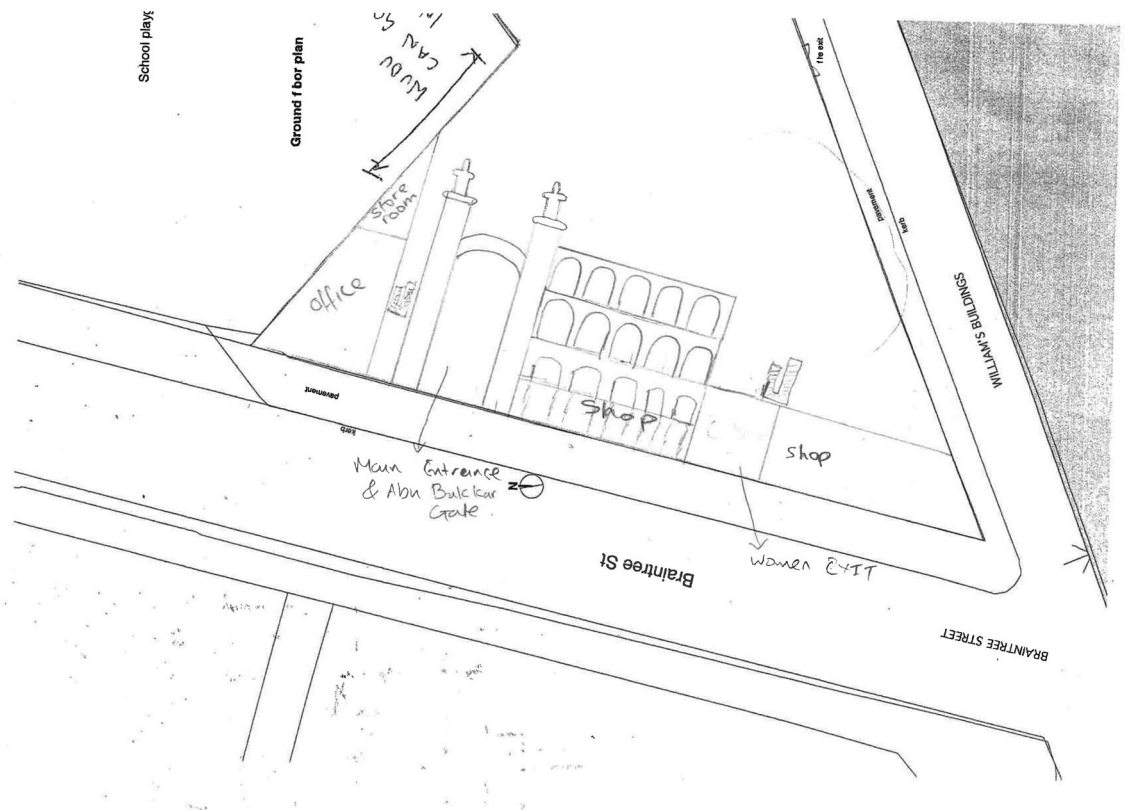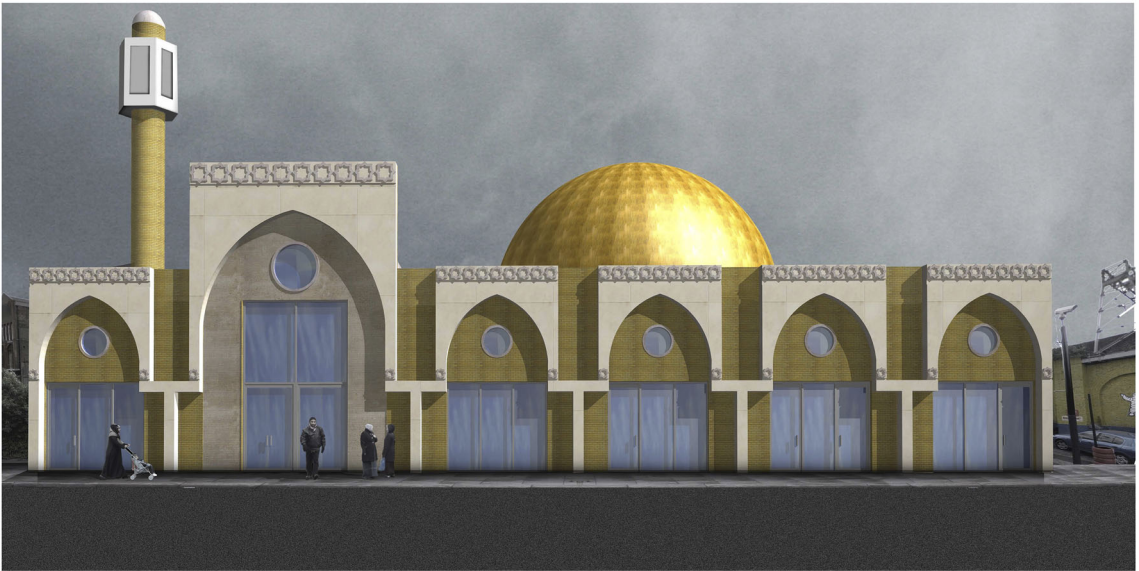

Figure 6
Sketch by the daughter of one of the mosque committee members, Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green, London, 2010.

mosque committee to accept (Figure 7). Whilst I was unconvinced by the dome and minaret, the pointed arches and material treatment of the façade that emerged offered enough distance from any specific historic precedent and so introduced the hand and enquiry of the designer to produce, to my mind, a credible architectural proposition (Figure 8).

Designs were prepared, planning permission obtained fairly quickly, and building work commenced. Early on the mosque committee realized that there would not be enough money to build the dome and minaret, and these were therefore omitted in the final construction. In 2018, after a protracted and intermittent construction period due to the need to raise funds, the mosque opened. It was still incomplete; the
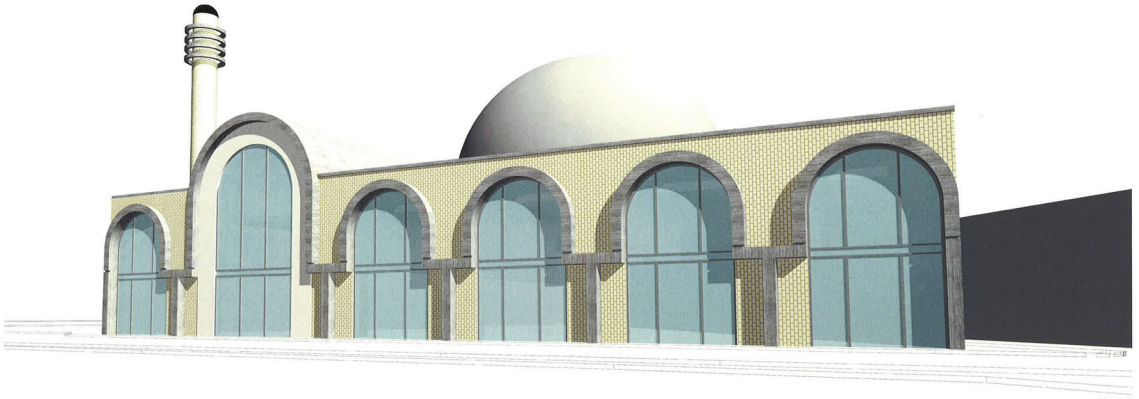
Figure 7
Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green. First design option with dome and minaret. Makespace Architects, 2010.

Figure 8
Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green. Second design option with dome and minaret, Makespace Architects, 2011.

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intention was for building work to continue whilst the mosque was occupied – a practicable arrangement as work could be completed as funds became available. To date the mosque is functioning but is still incomplete. The facade is rendered and is without the intended decorative cladding that would secure its Islamic character. The dome and minaret are, and will probably remain, unrealized (Figure 9).

Modernity, Multiculturalism, Assimilation and Erasure

Is the mosque committee chairman's rejection of the multicultural minaret an assertion of an Islamic identity, an act of self-determination and self-identification? Or is it one of desired segregation or "separatism," as it might seem at face value? The anthropologist James Clifford makes reference to William Safran's point that one of the characteristics of diasporas is that they "believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host country;" they therefore develop an ability to "recreate a culture in diverse locations."[10] Clifford suggests that while "diaspora consciousness" is constituted negatively, through the experience of discrimination and exclusion, it is also produced positively, "through identification with world historical cultural/political forces" which can offer

Figure 9
Baitul Amman Mosque, Bethnal Green in 2024. Photograph by the author.

a sense of attachment elsewhere, through transnational, global connections.[11] The mosque in Britain can therefore be understood as a vehicle through which diaspora communities attempt to identify and connect with historical and global Muslim cultures, placing them in a cultural space that is simultaneously historic and contemporary.[12]

Clifford also places "diaspora consciousness" in relation to a "host" country that sees itself as multicultural.[13] As UK state policy originating in the 1980s, multiculturalism was intended to enable minority communities to maintain their distinctive cultural practices and identities. By the 2010s it was being rejected by mainstream politicians on the right, who instead advocated for a more hegemonic idea of Britishness into which everyone was required to assimilate. In this campaign for a unified Britishness, the Conservative government, aided by the mainstream media, sought to amplify then ring-fence their idea of "British values," "Britishness" and the good citizen, which they then instrumentalized to ostracize those they could point to as failing to abide by these values. Those who were ostracized were commonly from Britain's Muslim population, variously described as fifth columnists, disloyal or radicalized.[14] This was a process of Othering which, as George Kassimeris and Leonie Jackson have made clear, was disproportionately focused on British Muslims. Indeed, the right-wing English Defence League's anti-Muslim rhetoric has been described as a "rational Islamophobia," a "socially acceptable form" of racism that Kassimeris and Jackson point out is "also common among the media, politicians and intellectuals."[15]

Through such racist formulations the mosque was cast as alien and foreign, representing a culture out of step with Britishness, with democratic values and unable to exist alongside or within a liberal secular nation. In what appears a self-infliction, the Muslim peer Baroness Sayeeda Warsi argued in 2015 for a "quintessentially British form of Islam." She opined on mosque design, saying that there was "no need for a minaret, no need for a mosque to look like it doesn't fit into its environment. It doesn't need to be like that. I would love for there to be English-designed mosques."[16]

There is, it seems, a hegemonic pressure from a dominant White orthodoxy to assimilate minorities into its vision and understanding of the world. This is identified by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang as one of the processes of a White desire to erase the "native" and to "resolve the colonial situation … through the absolute and total destruction or assimilation of original inhabitants."[17] Whilst Tuck and Yang write about colonial regimes abroad, I would argue that the colonizer/colonized dynamic continues in the post-colonial condition where the "native" has now re-settled in the colonial homeland and so continues to be subject to coloniality and its regimes of assimilation and erasure. Multiculturalism, when looked at through this lens, is one such assimilationist strategy, in which the "good multicultural citizen" subsumes their identity and politics into a government and media constructed definition of the "multicultural

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Briton." The multicultural minaret, therefore, becomes a visual symbol of that dominant and totalizing cultural vision which the mosque chairman, in his demand for an Islamic minaret, perhaps instinctively sought to resist.

In *Race and Modern Architecture*, Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis and Mabel O. Wilson articulate how modernity is, as they say, a product of the intertwined forces of capitalism, slavery, and empire. Ideologies of European scientific progress and rationalism were put into service in the construction of racial difference and informed architectural thought. Architecture responded with historicist frameworks that stressed development in time and produced what they call hierarchical linear chronologies that place non-White human groups at an earlier, lower stage of cultural development while representing White European and American populations and their cultural outfits as the most advanced edge of civilization and progress.

The privileging of modern architecture required the positioning other building traditions as non-modern, vernacular or primitive. Modernism then served as a philosophical, technical, stylistic and esthetic movement promoted through educational and professional institutions – institutions through which I had been trained, and which now placed me in opposition to the esthetic desires of the mosque community. If my multicultural minaret and abstraction of Islamic references was the embodiment of the modernist project, then this is what the mosque committee had to resist if they were to maintain control over their self-image and identity, just as community-designed mosques across Britain had done. Criticism, therefore, of the historicist, revivalist or "Islamic" mosque in Britain, criticism which I was embodying, has its roots in the architectural ideologies of modernity and progress versus tradition and backwardness.

Conclusion

The mosque in Britain is caught between discourses of historicism and contemporaneity and is a vehicle through which debates of regressive versus progressive are played out in architectural form. Historicist and revivalist mosque design has been much critiqued in recent scholarship. The architectural historian Nebahat Avcioglu, for example, sees such mosques as serving to fix Islam firmly in the past, and present Muslim culture as "either unchangingly distinct from the 'West' or identical everywhere in the 'East'." She laments that "even the most recently built mosques have failed to produce an alternative representation."[18] Avcioglu cites Gayatri Spivak to argue that post-colonial mosques in the West are "unable to negotiate their identity outside the context of a colonial discourse," resulting in "displaced notions and uncanny repetitions of colonial styles."[19]

This narrative straightjacket that the post-colonial subject finds themselves in is the focus of much of Edward Said's work. He writes, "From the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one

thing the Orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist's work."[20] I would argue that this contest over the representation of the colonial subject, now the diasporic and subaltern Other, is embedded in the debate concerning the multicultural versus the Islamic minaret. The "multicultural," in this version, is a western construction of the Other which has been sanitized and domesticated to live compliantly within a Eurocentric logic, a logic in which the western world and its colonial legacy maintain political and cultural domination. As Gayatri Spivak describes, these are post-colonial strategies that continue the colonial cultural order by serving to "reinscribe, co-opt and rehearse neo-colonial imperatives of political domination, economic exploitation and cultural erasure."[21]

The mosque committee chairman, through his rejection of the multicultural, is resisting the positioning of himself and his community according to a dominant state-endorsed logic. Instead, the chairman, through his assertion of the "Islamic," seeks a distinct identity that he is in control of, and by which he would like to be identified. So who controls the image of the mosque and its users – is it myself, as a product of the architectural academy, or the mosque committee as the designers and builders of their building? Between the multicultural minaret and the Islamic minaret are a series of overlapping discourses revolving around who is in control of the discursive formations through which identities of post-colonial diasporas are made and articulated. The mosque committee chairman, through his rejection of this dominant architectural agenda, raises the question of whether the "Islamic" mosque in Britain, marginalized by the artistic academy as being of no value in architectural culture, actually represents one of the most successful and determined forms of cultural resistance to the continued cultural hegemony of post-colonial formations. If this is true, then the "Islamic" mosque is in fact one of the most politicized, and culturally significant, types of architecture in late twentieth-century Britain.

Shahed Saleem is an architect, author and Reader in Architecture at the University of Westminster. His research and practice explore the architecture of diaspora communities, in particular their relationship to heritage and belonging. Saleem co-curated the V&A Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2021 and his book *The British Mosque* was published in 2018 by Historic England. His design work was nominated for the V&A Jameel Prize 2013 and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2016. His research work won a RIBA President's Medal for Research commendation in 2020 and was nominated for the Historic England Angel Award and the SAHGB Colvin Prize in 2019.

Notes

1. Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity Among British Muslims* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002),18.
2. ibid., 19.
3. ibid.
4. Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within, Muslims in Britain since 1800* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004), 343.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Salman Akhtar, *The Trauma of Geophysical Dislocation,* 2008, a lecture. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbdGHtWBwnc&t=1841s (accessed May 2022).
8. Robert Field, *Geometric Patterns from Islamic Art and Architecture* (Saint Albans, UK: Tarquin, 1998).
9. See Rebekah Coffman, "59 Brick Lane: A History of Adaptive Reuse," in this issue, pp. 728–752.
10. James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 3, August 1994, 304 (quoting William Safran) and 306 (paraphrasing Amitav Ghosh).
11. Ibid., 312.
12. Clifford calls this "discrepant temporality," in which "the copresence of 'here' and 'there' is articulated with an antiteleological … temporality. Linear history is broken … ." Ibid., 317 and 318.
13. Ibid., 313.
14. See, for instance, Rowena Mason, "Nigel Farage: British Muslim 'fifth column' fuels fear of immigration," *The Guardian*, March 12, 2015.
15. George Kassimeris and Leonie Jackson, "The English Defence League's 'Rational Islamophobia' is a Racist Discourse, But It Is Not Confined to the EDL". Available

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16. Liz Dodd, "Islam should have a 'quintessentially British' version with minoret-less mosques and no burqas, Warsi says", in *The Tablet*, December 11, 2015 (n.p.). Available online: https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/2898/islam-should-have-a-quintessentially-british-version-with-minoret-less-mosques-and-no-burqas-warsi-says (accessed June 2019).
17. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1: 9.
18. Nebahat Avcioglu, "Identity as Form: The Mosque in the West," in *Cultural Analysis*, vol. 6 (2007): 99.
19. Ibid.: 93. Avcioglu is referring to Gayatri Spivak's "Who Claims Alterity?", *Remaking History: Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture 4*, eds. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989), 269–292.
20. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 2014 [1978]), 283.
21. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

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