

GARNETHILL SYNAGOGUE *consecrated in 1879*

This building, Scotland's first purpose built Synagogue, was built to house the Glasgow Hebrew Congregation, which had existed since 1823.

The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Benjamin Simons in March 1877, and the completed building was consecrated by Rabbi Dr. Hermann Adler (a future Chief Rabbi), on the 9th September 1879, making it one of the UK's top ten historic Synagogues.



The building was designed by a local architect, John McLeod, in consultation with Nathan Joseph, a London Jewish Architect, and it contains elements of Moorish, Romanesque and Gothic styles, with some Byzantine features. It is often described as the "Mother Synagogue of Glasgow".

The main entrance doorway is 8 feet wide. Carved in the stone above in Hebrew, is Deuteronomy Ch32, V12. The English translation is THE LORD ALONE DID LEAD HIM AND THERE WAS NO STRANGE GOD WITH HIM. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters used in this verse adds up to the date of the foundation of the building.



The Prayer Hall has seating for approximately 500 worshippers. There is a Ladies Gallery, as Orthodox Judaism requires men and women to be seated separately. The services are conducted by the Reader or Cantor from the Reader's Desk on a central raised platform (The Bimah), here made of polished oak.



The focal point of the Synagogue is the Holy Ark (Aron Kodesh), set in an apse in the Eastern Wall, facing Jerusalem. The Ark houses the Torah Scrolls in which the Five Books of Moses are hand written on parchment. The domed window above the Ark has a panel on which are written the first two Hebrew words of each of the Ten Commandments.



Above the Ark is the Eternal (Everlasting) Lamp (Ner Tamid), placed there in remembrance of the light of the Temple.

Sermons are delivered from the Pulpit on which is inscribed the names of some former distinguished lay leaders of the Congregation.

The Synagogue was extensively restored in 1998 (Architect – W.I. Munro, Kilmarnock), and was re-dedicated by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Jonathan Sacks (now Lord Sacks). It is designated a grade 'A' listed building.

Photographs by Monique Campbell