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| Name of project/group |
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| Middle Street Synagogue restoration |
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| Type of project |
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| Social action\Opening up public services |
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| Location |
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| Brighton, South West |
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| What was involved |
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A grade II* Synagogue. Designed by Thomas Lainson and built by Messrs Cheeseman, for the Brighton Hebrew Congregation between 1874-5. The exterior, which was executed in pale Sussex brick by the builders George Cheesman and son, is in an eclectic blend of Italian Renaissance and Neo-Byzantine Revival Styles. The interior is spectacular: *"Nothing prepares the visitor for the sumptuousness of Middle Street's interior"*, Dr Sharman Kadish, Director of Jewish Heritage UK.

Restoration of the Synagogue commenced at end of 2008 and continued through first half of 2009. The initial phase funded by English Heritage stabilised the fabric of the building. The second phase restored the magnificent High Victorian interior.

Aside from the financial and professional support offered by English Heritage, the Synagogue engaged with members of the local community (both congregational and wider) for their thoughts on restoring the building and what help they could provide. In addition professional help was received from local members in the construction industry.

The Synagogue has a core group of committed volunteers who operate open days and visits by other organisations (e.g. schools) under the oversight of the Board who intend on establishing a Heritage Committee. Special bookings are made through the synagogue office.

Members were involved with the fundraising and preserving the history of the building and its uses by the community.



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| Achievements |
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The Synagogue has been made structurally sound and its interior restored to its former glory. There has been an increase in income as in addition to visits, weddings are beginning to be held in the Synagogue.

Members of the Synagogue have become more aware of the requirements for maintaining structures and the costs associated with them. They are also becoming involved with planning

future activities to sustain the development.



Future plans

The Synagogue is continuing to hold open days, community events and taking bookings for personal celebrations such as weddings and anniversaries.



Lessons Learnt

Members of the Synagogue consider that it would have been helpful to have obtained strategic advice beyond simple redevelopment to assist in making any restored historical building sustainable both in terms of use and financially.

Project contact

<http://www.bhhc-shul.org/middlestreet.html>

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