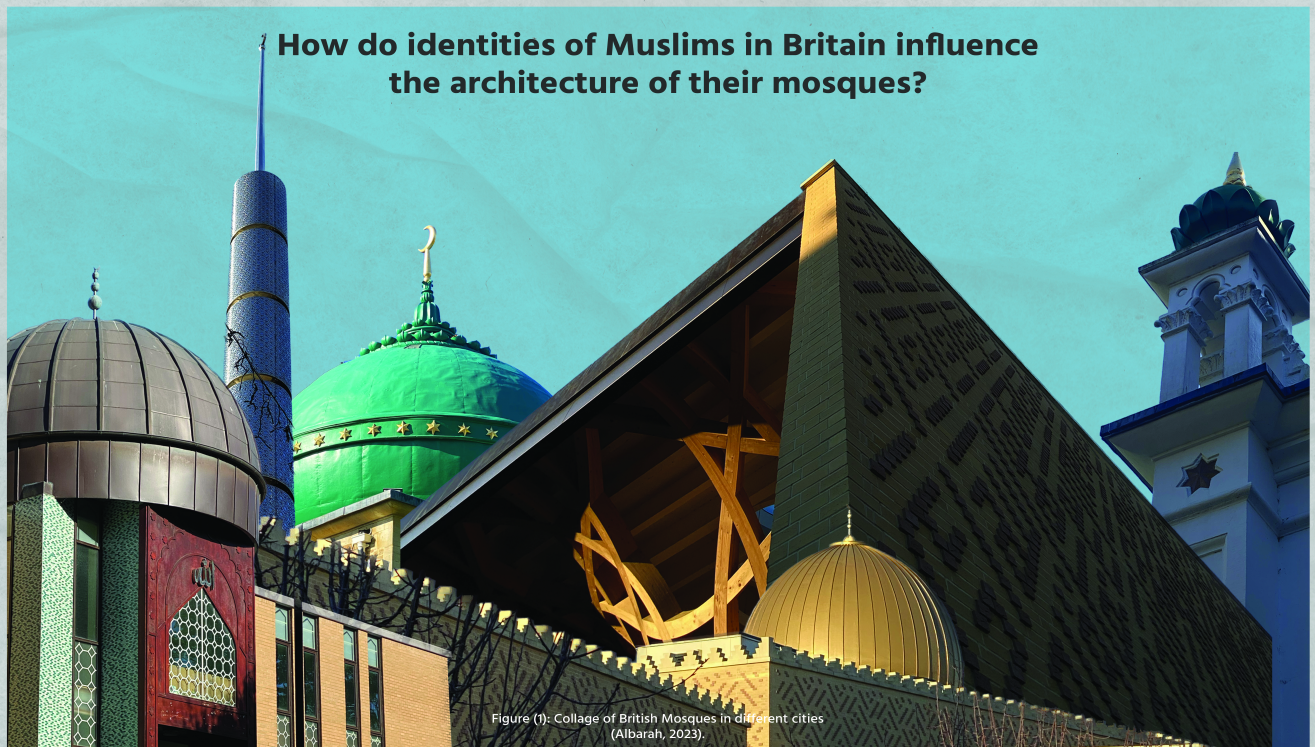


Mosques of Britain

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How do identities of Muslims in Britain influence the architecture of their mosques?

Figure (1): Collage of British Mosques in different cities (Albarah, 2023).

Identity and Space



Figure (2): American Anthropologist Clifford Geertz [1926-2006] (Institute for Advanced Study, No date)

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz is well known for his unique approach of anthropology. He believed that architecture is more than bricks and cements, yet it's a symbol of identity, culture, and shared beliefs. He argued that, the core meaning of architecture lays beyond the surface shell of any physical structure. He believed that the way a community of people shape their architecture says a lot about their core values and beliefs. It reveals to other communities how they see themselves and how they express their identity in their surroundings and urban fabric. He wrote about the relationship between architecture and identity. He also believed that architecture can be used as a powerful tool to express culture and identity. And it is a way of communication between different nations, by understanding the symbolism and identity through their architecture.



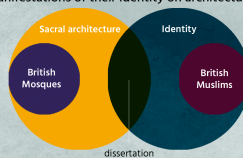
Figure (3): French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu [1930-2002] (Brown University, No date).

Pierre Bourdieu is known for his **Theory of Practice**, which investigates the important role of the social structure and its effect on individual behaviour. In architecture, Bourdieu believed that economical and social aspects shapes the structure of a community, which in result will affect the social and economical positions of individuals. These dynamics changes in a society affect architecture in the first place (Bourdieu, 1977).

Bourdieu emphasised the importance role of these complicated relations between one single society, that it motivates the way they use buildings and spaces. Finally, he believed that all aspects of architecture; design, building materials, and styles, are all a reflection of the identity and cultural background. He believed that these factors drive the behaviour of individuals according to their social class, and the dynamics of the community (Bourdieu, 1984).

Methodology

I used a multi-disciplinary and combined strategies. The two main scopes of research in my methodology laying into two different categories: **Ethnographic Research** (to understand different identities of British muslims) and **Spatial Research** (to explore the manifestations of their identity on architecture and space).



The first mosque in the UK (1889)

The **Shah Jahan Mosque** is the first purpose-built Mosque in the UK. Located 25 miles southwest of London, Woking Mosque is the only 'Grade I listed mosque' in the United Kingdom. The Mosque consists of a large central dome on top of a square base with two small sections going outwards from the sides of the mosques, has central cubic space and is highly ornamental on the inside and outside. It has one big central onion dome and is surrounded by gardens all the way around with a small central fountain in front of it.



Figure (4): Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking (Albarah, 2022).

Cambridge Central Mosque (2019)

Cambridge Central Mosque is the first purpose-built Mosque in Cambridge and considered the first eco-friendly mosque in Europe. Designed by **Marks Barfield**, designer of 'London Eye' along with the UK's leading Islamic garden designer **Emma Clark**, the mosque won **RIBA Stirling Prize 2021**. Most of the architectural complexity of the mosque is on the inside rather than the outside. The mosque's wooden columns are the most notable feature of the mosque's interior and are placed in a grid.

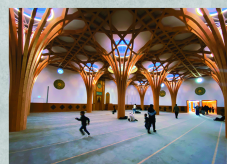
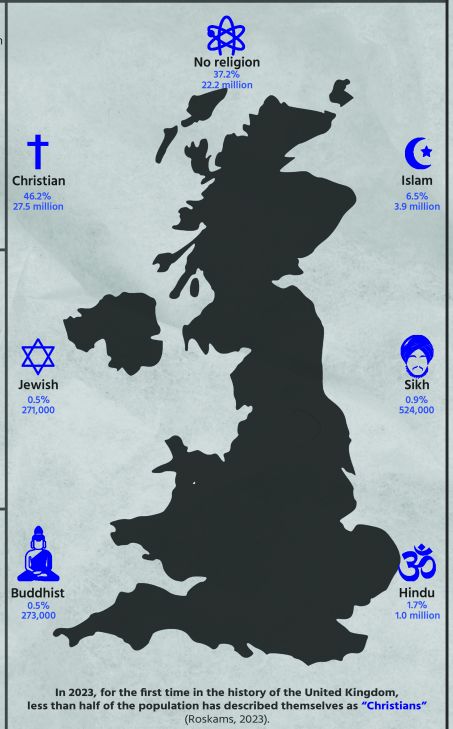
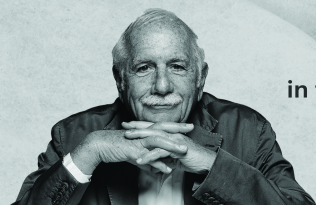


Figure (5): Cambridge Central Mosque (Albarah, 2022).



Portfolio



"The identity of a society finds its expression in the physical environment; architecture is the most visible manifestation of that identity."

– Moshe Safdie.

Dissertation

