THE ADAPTATION OF ISLAMIC CULTURE IN A WESTERN SOCIETY

“Building a Contemporary Mosque in Auckland”

By

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"In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful"
DEDICATION

To my family, friends and respected supervisors.

Your bolstering, endless words of encouragement, have made this process possible, and taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my deceased father, Mohammad Raza Rashid, who taught me that no challenge is too big if done with the right intentions.

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1.0 Preface

As-Salamu Alaykum is a common greeting among the Muslims which means peace be with you. Ironically, from the Western perspective, it seems rather difficult to find the word ‘peace’ in Islam. In fact, “It is no secret that Islam is the most poorly understood and most feared major religion in the Western World” \(^1\); hence the development of Islamophobia. Islamophobia means prejudice with racist associations against Muslims. Islam is terrorised by minorities that misuse Islam as a tool to justify their wrong doings and cause great conflicts and tensions. Unfortunately, the negative lights of Islam overshadow the positive lights, generating endless misconceptions and negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. This, subsequently, leads to social crisis such as prejudice with racist associations, discrimination and disharmony. Therefore, this develops an antagonistic relationship between Muslims and the West.

Why is there a negative construction of Islam in the West? One may ask, should not a religion bring peace, harmony and happiness to humanity? On the contrary, there seems to be a more negative implication tagged to ‘it’ than positive ones (or at least what has been propagated in the mainstream media). Muslims in the West are vulnerable to stereotyping, misconception and alterity\(^2\). In addition to that, Muslims are also faced with the rejection of Mosque building in the West.

The rejection of Mosque building is a manifestation of Islamophobia.

I am intrigued by this contemporary social phenomenon. I question how Islamophobia can affect society and how can architecture be an antidote to Islamophobia. I think it is important to start asking these vital questions as a catalyst for a peaceful and brighter future.

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\(^2\) Alterity is a philosophical term meaning “otherness”
2.0 ABSTRACT

Though it is from the East that the sun rises, showing itself bold and bright without a veil, it burns and blazes with inward fire only when it escapes from the shackles of east and west... *3 - Muhammad Iqbal

The Mosque 4, Masjid (from Arabic) is the most important institution of the Muslim world, also the predominant built form of Islamic architecture.

We can clearly identify that the unique form of the Mosque, is derived from the essence of Islam itself, purity, simplicity and humbleness. The breakage of this essence is what has led to what we identify as the 'crisis'. The crisis is referring to the institutional/spatial organisation and architecture of the Mosque. 5

Nowadays we find a tendency for the Mosque to be an architectural symbol catering mostly for the religious rights of the Muslim world, rather than catering for the everyday Muslim way of life.

The Mosque in non-Muslim, Western Countries (in this instance New Zealand) needs to begin with understanding it as in institution in built form, and its meaning and purpose in a diverse and changing society, through development of a conceptual architectural framework.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the possibility of designing an Islamic Centre that encourages the integration of Muslims and non-Muslims in a western context, in addition to provide a tangible solution to the Mosque 'crisis', which caters for the day to day activities of the community.

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4 Here and throughout the thesis, the term Mosque is understood not merely as a single built form, but a multivalent institution where the act of prayer is the main part of it, together with social, culture, educational and other activities related to the society.
5 Mohamad Tajuddin Haji Mohamad Rasdi, 'The Mosque as Community Development Centre' Johor: Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 1998, 17-30
Islam’s Predicament

Islam is a religion which is highly misapprehended. There is more negative connotation to this religion than many other religions. Often the West associates the word Islam with terrorist, fundamentalist, extremist, fanatics, etc. This proves the severe lack of understanding and respect to Islam which subsequently causes great conflict and tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. Why is this happening? Could this be “the clash of civilization” (introduced by Samuel P. Huntington) where the people’s religion and culture becomes the primary source of conflict in the Post-cold War world.6

According to the British author, Karen Armstrong, Islam has been hijacked by minorities who use Islam as a tool to justify themselves. Armstrong claimed that these are acts of revolt against the imbalanced world. Therefore violence becomes an escape from these threats.7

Islam is under immense pressure from secularisation, globalisation and westernisation. Secularisation was introduced to separate religion and politics; and it is seen as enlightenment to liberate religion from the corruption of state affairs. This is to allow religion to be true to itself. In Islam, Muslims live to God’s will, which is prescribed in the historical scripture of the Qur’an. The last Prophet in Islam, Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him)8 was given the duty of building a truthful society by living in accordance to God’s will, Muslims were able to form a profound relationship with the Divine.

Today, the arrival of Islam and Muslims in the West produces many challenges. The issues of integration, anti-racism, ethnic pluralism and religious pluralism are central discourses for many Western countries. Strong social and political efforts are required to bridge the rift of multicultural society. Many may argue that there are opposing fundamental values between Islam and the West which possibly causes the essence of Islam’s antagonistic relationship with the West.

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6 Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order, New York, 1996, 85
7 Karen Armstrong, Islam: a short history, New York, 2000, 166
8 A phrase that practising Muslims often say after saying (or hearing) the name of a Prophet of Islam.
On one hand, there are many Western Islamic reformists who have emerged and pressed towards modernisation of Islam; yet there are many traditionalists who hold on tight to their specific cultures and traditions. Tariq Ramadan calls for contextualisation and adaptation of Islam in the West without drowning Islam in the West. His optimistic view of Islam in Western society is criticised by many; however seems to give so much light and promise.  

In New Zealand, Muslims are the most rapidly growing religious group with their population increasing six-fold between 1991 and 2006. Muslims now constitute about 1% of the population. This is 0.022% of the world Muslim population. It is vital to address these issues because controversies and misconceptions are continuously spreading. The Muslim population is seen to be growing and the conflicts and tensions between Islam and the West are continuously increasing. 

There are many significant events that happened and shaped the world today. In the Islamic world, there were many historical events that caused Islamophobia in the West. The wave of Islamophobia is highly dependent on global events, and the media which allow information to be readily available. Therefore, misconceptions and negative preconceptions are able to spread even faster and wider. 

During the September 11, 2001 crisis, many New Zealand Muslims were discriminated and abused because of the development of Islamophobia. It stemmed the delusion that all Muslims are Arabs – a racist assumption. 

The construction of Islamophobia continues to grow in society today. The local council’s rejection to Islam-related building developments and ethnic crimes are results of Islamophobia. For example, The French law on secularity and prominent religious symbols, within schools, bans the wearing of the Islamic headscarf (hijab). This is an example of Islamophobia. 

These controversies, reported via the media, are able to create more problems as they are not properly framed. However, the media is a vital medium to create awareness and make the crisis of Islamophobia more apparent. Therefore, it is important for mainstream media to be ethical in conveying sensitive messages to avoid negative preconceptions. 

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4.0 **The Mosque**

4.1 **What is a Mosque?**

'Mosque' is derived from the Arabic word *Masjid* meaning 'house of prostrations'. It is described as serving both as a house of worship for Muslims and as a symbol of Islam. In the beginning, some monotheistic religions are believed to have opposed the use of any religious building. "Hence, the more impressive the building, the greater the detestation." \(^{11}\)

Soon however, the religious leaders realised the importance of a religious building as a symbol and attraction to maintain, or to increase, the number of followers. Therefore, the greater their shrines are, the stronger the attractive power.

The Prophet Muhammad once said "The world is the Mosque". Muslims are able to perform their prayers in any clean space \(^{12}\) and at the same time, should acknowledge the physical direction towards the Holy Ka'aba. These are the only two fundamental requirements prescribed for the ritual of praying. Each prayer is established by simply the presence of a person and their profound connection to God, Allah. Essentially, one could argue that the Mosque is secondary to Muslims’ connection to Allah. So, why build Mosques? Mosques are designed and built as a space to allow Muslims to perform their prayers, both individually and collectively, in an appropriate environment.

In addition to providing a prayer hall for prayers and sermons, early Mosques were used to serve as hospitals, community centres, and education centres. The multifunctional aspect of a Mosque is an amplification of the notion of *Ummah* (community) in Islamic principles. Therefore, more than a religious building, the early Mosques played an important role in the community. The Mosque itself is not sacred, but a person converts a Mosque into a ‘Mosque’ whenever they perform their prayers.

So, why is the Mosque important to Muslims? The Mosque is a materialisation of faith and beliefs. Though, through time, Mosques are also seen as a manifestation of influence and a symbol of Islam. The Mosques promote collective strength and act as catalysts to develop community spirit (*Ummah*).


4.2 **MEANING, HISTORY AND FUNCTION**

In order to clarify the objectives of this thesis, with respect to the Mosque as meaning and institution, the following is a short summary of various Mosques developed over more than fourteen hundred years. These can be classified as: The Community Mosque, the **Madressa**, the **Musalla**, and the Memorial Mosque. 13

**There are three sacred Mosques in Islam:**

1 - **Al-Masdj Al-Haram** in Makka, Saudi Arabia - Where the Ka'aba14 is located.
2 - Al-Masjid al-Nabawi - The House/Mosque of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) in Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3 - Al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem, Israel.

These are also clearly mentioned in the Qur'an as holy places, and they represent special cases and meanings in the Islamic world.

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13 Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’, 9
14 It is the focal point towards which all Muslims face when praying.
The Community Mosque:
This thesis targets this form of a Mosque which is usually known as the Hussainya\(^{15}\) (from Arabic, Hussainya = House for Hussain). This Mosque generally represents Islam as a system of life, because besides the ritual prayers, it also serves the community.

The Madressa:
The Madressa has been built purely for educational purposes, for teaching the Qur’an, Hadiths\(^{16}\) and Islamic Law. This form of a Mosque functions quite similarly to the community Mosque but contains facilities for the accommodation of students and teachers and operates as regular educational institutions.

The Musalla:
The Musalla is a type of Mosque that is used solely for the purpose of prayers. The term is derived from the Arabic word Salat, which is the Muslim ritual prayer. In the modern urban lifestyle, in many Muslim countries, the Musalla is a room which is part of a building, such as an office or shopping complex, and its purpose is only for the performance of prayers.

The Memorial Mosque:
The memorial Mosque is the type which is established to recall any event during the time of the Prophet, honour a dead caliph, saint or scholar, and these Mosques only exist in particular places and are connected only with some groups of Islam.

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\(^{15}\) A place which is associated with Imam Hussain (a.s), grandson of our prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), a reviver of the religion of Islam. We call Hussainya a place which is combination of a Masjid for prayers and lecture hall where religious lectures are given.

\(^{16}\) Hadiths means ”communication of narration”. In the Islamic context this has come to denote the record of what the Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, did, or tacitly approved.

The main focus of this thesis is the Community Mosque, where the act of prayer is complemented by the needs of the society for the development of the community. This will also include a Madressa.

In order to understand the Community Mosque, its meaning, purpose and development, we will have to take a brief look into the history of its compositional development. This began with the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina, a prototype and generic Mosque which then influenced the development of the congregational Mosque spatially and temporally.

This analysis will be then synthesised back to derive concepts of the initial and eternal idea of the Mosque.
4.3 **A Brief History of Compositional Development of Traditional Mosques**

The development of the Mosque architecture began by using features from existing religious buildings before establishing its own architectural identity. The language of Mosque architecture is developed empirically through time. This architecture does not adhere to any specific guideline, as there are no particular architectural Mosque ideas stated in either the holy Qur’an or the Hadith. The wide spread of Islam to different places brought influences of local climate, building resources, cultures and traditions to its design. This contributed to the richness of regional Mosque designs.

Islam does not practice the placement of religious value on materials and hence Islam has no specific objects or symbols of devotion that are able to evoke emotion. Culturally, however, people have associated the symbols of a Crescent Moon and Star with Islam.

The act of taking off one’s shoes and performing ritual ablutions before entering a Mosque is merely an act of self-purification; it is not a suggestion of crossing-over from the secular to the sacred domain.  

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17 Frishman and Khan, *The Mosque History*.12
The following section identifies the common components of Mosque architecture:

**Portal**
The entrance portal is the doorstep between the urban commotion and the tranquil ambiance of the Mosque. The portal is typically grand and highly decorated. The portal possesses the physiological effect it being a gateway to the house of God, hence it gives a sense of formality and respect to a Mosque.

**Courtyard**
The courtyard is usually adjacent to the entrance and acts as a transition space between the prayer hall and the outside. It is a space for the community to interact (similar to an urban square in a modern city) and also serves as an extension to the prayer hall.

**The Ablution Fountain**
Traditionally the ablution fountain is located in the courtyard before the prayer hall to allow the Muslims to perform their ablutions ritual prior to entering the prayer hall. Usually, shoe storage facilities will be located nearby.

**Mihrab**
The Mihrab is a niche which is placed on a Qibla wall. In the prayer hall, Qibla is the wall facing Mecca. Usually the Mihrab and Qibla wall are the most adorned feature in the prayer hall.

**Minbar**
The Minbar is the pulpit that is always placed on the right side of the Mihrab (looking in elevation). It consists of a flight of stairs, with or without railings, leading to a small platform and usually crowned with a cupola-type roof. The origin of the Minbar is merely a few steps platform, first used by Prophet Muhammad as a platform for speech to accommodate the large crowd.

**Dome**
The dome is a common feature adopted in a Mosque design. It is typically placed directly above the prayer hall.

**Minaret**
The minaret is a tower-like element of a Mosque which is conventionally used to broadcast the Adhan (call for prayers). It is not a prescribed requirement of a Mosque; however it has traditionally served as a landmark and become a symbol of Islam.
4.4 Today’s Mosques

Today, Mosques are built all around the world. There is a lack of Mosque architectural discourse and formal documentation of Mosque typologies and common guidelines. Thus, Mosques are commonly designed with reference to existing ones. However, many contemporary architects are starting to explore and experiment with Mosque architecture with a Western perspective. The Mosques of today can be categorized into four typologies. These typologies are vague but nonetheless help us to identify different types of Mosques. These typologies are: 19

Vernacular/Traditional
This form of a Mosque has specific regional characteristics which are usually built with traditional techniques and materials. The majority of this type is built in rural areas.

Historicist
This form is referring to a particular historical style and the selected style will be the basis of the design. Besides one style, it can also be an agglomeration of historical styles which often turn out to be inept and unarticulated.

Contemporary Classic
This form is referential to historical styles with an original reinterpretation. These types of Mosques incorporate contemporary structures and innovative construction techniques.

Modern
The Mosque is a designed to portray the modern Muslims and is devoid of historical styles. It utilises the twentieth century style of architecture—modernism.

The development of contemporary Mosque architecture in Western countries is taking a shift in redefinition and reformation of Mosque building in the Western context (at least it has become more noticeable). The development of contemporary Mosques such as the conceptual design of Ground Zero Mosque in New York, the Cologne Mosque in Germany by Paul Bohm, A Green Mosque by Onat Oktem and Ziya Lmren, and the Great Mosque in Strasbourg, France by Zaha Hadid are great examples for redefining the roles and traditional forms of Mosques in the West; and avoiding mere mimicking of great traditional precedence Mosques. In addition, it is also a suggestion of progression and willingness to face change; hence combating the stereotype of Islam being monolithic.

4.5 Mosque Typologies

One of the first Congregational Mosques and one of the very first forms of Islamic architecture was the Mosque that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) built himself in Medina. This was situated next to the house where he settled after his Hijrah (emigration) to Medina from Makkah, in Saudi Arabia.

It was an open-air building with a raised platform for the purpose of recitation of the Qur’an. It was a square enclosure surrounded by walls of brick and stone. The simple structure was covered under the region where the Prophet led the prayers. This was constructed out of palm sticks and mud, and it was supported on columns made from the trunks of palm trees. The Mosque also served as a community centre, a religious school, and a court. 20 The first Mosque was inspired by the regional architecture of house types of the Arabic Peninsula, specifically from the city of Medina. 21

Moreover, this structure was used as a social, political and religious centre. There are Hadiths 22 which include the functions of a shelter, educational institution, a health care facility and a prison. Also celebrations and recreational activities were held near the Mosque. 23

Through time, the Mosque evolved and adapted to different regions, cultures and traditions. The Mosques that have been built prior to the Modern Movement in the twentieth century could be put into five categories: 24

![Figure 4-10 - Drawing of the Prophets Mosque](image)

![Figure 4-11 - Development of the Prophets Mosque over time](image)

21 Prochazka, 'Mosque', 33
22 "Hadith" means communication of narration. In the Islamic context has come to denote the record of what the prophet (p.b.u.h) said, did or tacitly approved
24 Frishman and Khan, 'The Mosque History'. 12
**Type 1** - The Hypostyle hall, is a hall with a flat roof supported by a series of repetitive columns. Typically found in Arabia, Spain and North Africa.

**Type 2** - The centralized dome that dominates the Mosque’s silhouette or a centralized pyramidal pitch roof. Typically found in Anatolia (between the Black and the Mediterranean seas).

**Type 3** - The Iwan, a vaulted hall placed on four sides; bi axially divides the space to form a central courtyard. Typically found in Central Asia and Iran.

**Type 4** - The triple dome Mosque with a large courtyard and extensive courtyard. Typically found in India subcontinent.

**Type 5** - The enclosed garden with series of pavilions set in it. Typically found in China.

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25 Images from Frishman and Khan, 'The Mosque History'.
4.6 **The Problems of Building a Mosque**

Often today, building a Mosque in the West provokes controversy. Often it is faced with many oppositions, rejections and even stirs a protest (for example: the rejection of the Cologne Mosque in Germany, the opposition of Abbey Miles Islamic Centre in London and Mosque refusal by Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Sydney). So, why are Mosque buildings constantly being rejected in the West? Are we not embracing multiculturalism and religious pluralism which makes Muslims entitled to equality and freedom of faith?

In Auckland, the Muslim communities are diverse in culture and ethnicities. Therefore, Mosques are to accommodate all ethnicity and cultures. Commonly, most proposed Mosque designs in the West impose a stereotypical image of a Mosque (with a dome and minaret). Too often, the Mosques are designed to resemble the strong culture and tradition from the place of origins (of a particular ethnicity), rather than referencing the religion in its context. Therefore, the local non-Muslim communities have trouble relating to the so called ‘foreign’ architectural style; some say that it is an exotic image imposed on the local context whereas others claim that it is unsuitable for the locale.

Another reason is because of the Mosques’ strong visual language and presence. Thus the experience of Islam in the building is too apparent or too imposing. With the misconceptions and negativities attached to Islam, the non-Muslims are afraid that the Mosques would be a breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalists, extremists or fanatical.

![Figure 4-17 - German Far Right Emerges from Shadows to Join Cologne Campaign against Mosques](image-url)
4.7 **Mosque in 'Crisis'**

**Views on Mosques**

The Mosque is the most predominant building in Islamic architecture and the most important institution of Islam. In this day and age, we find a tendency for the Mosque to be an architecture symbol, generally catering for the religious rights of the Muslim world. This henceforth brings the Mosque into serious criticism - discrediting it. This 'crisis' is complex and is related to the dynamic changes that Muslim society experienced over recent decades. Such changes also lead to different views on Mosques by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

A real criticism of this task started to be raised by Islamic scholars, who have called for a serious re-evaluation and reframing of the institution of a Mosque. This was performed by applying the model of the Prophet’s Mosque as the generic form and addressing consequently the present lifestyle of Muslims in the contemporary society.

In the day and age of today, the situation that the Mosque faces is described as a 'crisis' in both its institutional and spatial organisation and architecture. These social changes are the implication of the way of life in the West which separates the activities of life into secular and religious.

The world at present, is witnessing a revival of Islam as a complete way of life. The problem of the Mosque is strongly related to the present efforts of the Islamic resurgent’s movement to re-establish Islam as the way of life for the Muslims.

The 'crisis' of the Mosque therefore, has resulted from the existence of two different views about the Mosque, its meaning, purpose and role.

The first view is that the Mosque is a symbolic sanctuary and a sacred place, which should cater for the performance of prayer and recitation of the Qur’an.

The second view sees the Mosque as a centre for the development of the community.

1 - **The Mosques as a Sanctuary - as a House of God**

This view is a constricted interpretation of the Mosque as simply 'a House of God'. This suggests that the main purpose for the Mosque should be to symbolise the glory of Islam and provide a place and space for the performance of ritual prayer and meditation. Other functions are considered secondary. Surprisingly this view is maintained throughout history especially from patrons who built the Mosques. It is also the view of architectural historians.

2 - **The Mosque as a Centre for the Development of the Community**

The second view on Mosques is as an institution catering for the development of the Muslim community. This view stresses the relevance and importance of the multi-purpose and functional nature of the Prophet’s Mosque as a generic Mosque. This view is generally held by Muslim scholars, who proclaim that the meaning, purpose and role of the Mosque is much more than that of prayer and a symbol of Islam, but extends into the community development in all fields of daily life.

Within the initial view, the architect’s concern with regards to Mosque design seems to be to provide the most evocative forms as symbols of Islam and as places for meditation. The design of the best Mosque seems to be in association with the design of a reminiscent, exotic and symbolic monument.

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26 Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’, 17
27 Ibid. 19
28 Ibid. 23
29 Ibid. 26
Mosque Architectural 'Crisis'

This 'crisis', as described above, is directly linked to the views that exist about Mosques as institutions and their representation.

The problem of Mosque’s representation is a challenge, as its architectural form is an inspiration from legacies of the past, the premise of the present, and the inspired visions of talented individuals.

The architecture of a traditional Mosque has an extraordinary vocabulary and symbolism, which is unique to Islamic culture. The minaret, dome, gateway, and Mihrab are all key elements of Mosque architecture, even though most of these elements are latter additions and developments from the Prophets Mosque in Medina. This means that the continuity of key symbolic elements can be transformed without being degraded and can be retained, while voided of their content. 30

4.8 **Mosque in 'Crisis' - Discrediting the Mosque as a Representative Built Form**

Today, be it in the West or East, the Mosque faces a situation that has been appropriately described as a 'crisis' in both its function, organisation and representation.

The question that our work raises is "What could be the approach and method of solving the representative 'crisis' of the Mosque? What tangible elements of the past for inspiration exist?"

This thesis will treat the problem at the level of the Eternal Idea of the Mosque. The Eternal Idea means that the Mosque is not merely a sanctuary for the performance of ritual prayers, but rather a hub of the daily life of the Muslim community and their development (not solely cater for monumentality).

The possibilities to deal with the representation of the Mosque are in the understanding of its meaning and eternal ideas as an institution, space and built form. Through this we can reframe the Mosque representation and thus allow acceptance from people, whom have different cultures, traditions and attitudes.

30 Ibid. 17
5.0 **Defining the Initial Concept and the Eternal Idea of the Mosque**

5.1 **Initial Concept of the Mosque**

The dilemma of the Mosque can be solved only through a clear understanding of its origins and eternal idea.

The use of the traditions of the Prophet and his pious successors reveals an ideal conceptual framework for Mosque design in the scope of the present situations and needs of Muslim communities. The Prophet’s concept of the Mosque is important as it embodies the spirit of the ideal, Islamic way of life.

The Prophet’s Mosque was a simple structure and was used as a social, political and religious centre. Islamic sources, and the Mosque’s role throughout the centuries, suggest that the initial concept of the Mosque is as a socio-political and educational place. This conclusion is derived from the social implications of the Mosque as a place for congregation.

5.2 **The Eternal Idea of the Mosque**

The eternal idea of the Mosque is shown to be a reflection of the Prophet’s conception of the Mosque as a centre for the total development of the Muslim community in all aspects of life and not as a building mainly for the performance of ritual worship.  

5.3 **Synergic Idea of the Mosque**

The initial and eternal idea sets the basis for a tangible solution of the Mosque ‘crisis’, both as an institution and representative built form. From the initial and eternal idea of the Mosque, we concluded that the Mosque has a synergic meaning and purpose, bringing together the ritual of worship and activities related to the community. From this point the Mosque will be treated as a multivalent, multipurpose set of space that serves the development of the community.

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31 Ibid, 219

*Figure 5-1 - Artist Imagination Render of The Prophets Mosque*
5.4 THE APPROACH TO MOSQUE AS SYNERGIC SPACES

Concepts and Eternal Idea of the Mosque
The Mosque as synergic space treats the building’s set of space, function, use and purpose in relation to the needs of the present Muslim society, within a diverse context.

The synergic idea of the Mosque blends together:
- The Mosque as a space and place of worship
- The Mosque as a place of education
- The Mosque as a community centre

The approach will set conceptual design guidelines for the contemporary Mosque, based on the relationship between the eternal idea of the Mosque and the present needs of the Muslim society.

The conceptual framework for Mosque design does not just emphasize the function of prayer but treats this ritual as part of the many activities of the Mosque synergy. This concept liberates the designer to use any design strategy found in community centres, commercial complexes and recreation places which would open the doors for a constant use of the Mosque, by both Muslim and non-Muslim societies.

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Figure 5-2 - Diagram of the functions of a Mosque

Figure 5-3 - Diagram of the Mosque as a synergic space
6.0 MOSQUE DESIGN

6.1 DESIGNING A MOSQUE FOR TODAY

Today, a Mosque in the Western civilisation can be traditional or contemporary. Traditional Mosques are usually conservative and literal interpretations of historical precedent Mosques. Often the designs are imitated literally, regardless of context. To ‘pluck and place’ is fundamentally problematic as there is a lack of context and demonstrates an absence in Mosque architectural understanding. On the other hand, a Mosque can be on the contemporary stage at several levels. A contemporary design is not simply to please individuals with superficial architectural forms but on the contrary it exists to acknowledge one’s own presence in the modern-day. Therefore, to be contemporary is also to be sensitive to the context. In order to bring a Mosque into existence, it is crucial to establish a thorough understanding of the physical, social, cultural, economical and political context. This information will give a greater depth to the existence of a building and avoid uncertainty.

Historically, early Mosques have been multifunctional and secular to serving as community centres for local residents. However, interestingly enough, “... in recent years Mosques have moved towards a single function, as places of prayer ...” 32 This is particularly relevant to the West where the majority of the Mosques are solely used for religious purposes. Also, they are sometimes secluded and separated from the overall community. Why? Is this because of the separation of Muslims by the non-Muslims or, is it because of the need for the Muslims to be exclusive for a sense of protection and identity preservation? Whatever the reason may be, it is more vital to question how we can ‘reintegrate’ the Mosque into the community and remove the religious boundaries that exist between Muslims and non-Muslims.

6.2 How Should we Design a Mosque?

A Mosque in Auckland should be an emblem of diversity, equality and freedom of faith (citizen rights). It must have the ability to accommodate different ethnicities and cultures. In addition, a Mosque should also be a symbol of social contribution and should provide a positive role to its immediate surroundings. The design of a Mosque should not be carried out with apprehension, nor should it be merely a design for the sake of pleasing the authorities and the non-Muslim communities. To begin, we need to approach the design with the correct attitude and determination to ensure a positive outcome. The Mosque architecture is an opportunity for the Muslim community to present their aspirations and share Islamic values with the local community regardless of religion, ethnicity and culture.

The Mosque needs a strong sense of community, (Ummah). This is because “the place of prayer never stood alone but was complemented by other spaces that dealt with general societal interactions.” Therefore, it should not be designed to be closed as a defense to negativity from the outside rather, it should be a platform that allows the presence of Muslims to be accessible to the local community. Building a Mosque is neither a language of defense, nor a demonstration of power and strength, but it should be an act of compassion to serve the people: as a sign of willingness to contribute to the society.

Modern Muslims in the West require inspiration to practice Islam. Similarly, designing a contemporary Mosque requires creativity in bringing solutions to these complicated issues that are sensitive and controversial. The past must not be avoided or ignored, nor should it be imitated; it exists to help evolve to the future. In being contemporary, Mosques can utilise the technologies available today. This could be

expressed by adopting the idea of sustainability through recycling, harvesting rainwater and solar power.

A contemporary Mosque must be welcoming, not just to Muslims but non-Muslims alike. Transparency is important and a necessity to create a dialogue to form between people. The conclusion of secular programs in a Mosque can encourage non-Muslim users to visit. This will give an opportunity for the Muslim community to interact with the non-Muslim community and, hopefully, create a greater bond and mutual understanding.

Figure 6-1 - Render of a Modern Mosque concept in Copenhagen

33 Ibid . 112

34 Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’. 50
6.3 **ISLAMIC ART AND VISUAL LANGUAGE**

The artists and designers throughout the Islamic world have used geometric designs to an advanced level and have managed to establish an art form that is unique without the use of images. This is due to the discouragement of figurative images in Islam. In Islam, no Islamic visual images or depictions of God are permitted as it is believed that such artistic depictions may lead to idolatry. Moreover, Muslims believe that God is immaterial.

Islam aimed to relate the material world to its basic abstract principle, by freeing itself of any representation of living things, Islam gave a real constraint to the development of an art and architecture which relied on pure inspiration: geometries, patterns and forms derived from nature. A wide alphabet, inspired and derived from nature, created a whole grammar and language which universally spread and came to be accepted as a unique creation of the Muslim world spatially and temporally.

Patterns and ornaments inspired from nature and developed in a unique way through the use of geometry created across centuries what is now known as Arabesque: Islamic patterns and Islamic ornaments, which created a definite visual language.

The application of ornamentation consists of elaboration in materials through geometrical techniques of tiling, multiplication, modularity and dispersion of the ornament, which can be found across the architecture of the Muslim world through a distinctive visual language.

The language of Islamic ornamentation can be explored for their tectonic capabilities and used to generate an infinite, new visual language for Mosque architecture.

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6.4 **ISLAMIC ORNAMENTS AS 3D COMPONENTS**

"Global technology is shaping the architectural discipline into a distributed, multidisciplinary, and collaborative profession responding to a rapidly changing telecommunications industry. These alterations within the profession have been occurring with such rapidity that their theoretical implications have yet to be fully realized." 37

The most recent techniques not only assist in the virtual forming of architecture, but also bring out the diverse behaviour of the digital material, according to Therese Tierney:

"Form is no longer something static imposed on the outside on structure with homogeneous properties or a behaviour that can be assimilated by the characteristics of solid modelling, but is rather influenced by the properties of the tools used, under the form of the singularity of the digital material. Therefore, it brings out the generative processes and their possibilities connected to the concepts of interactivity, modifiability and evolution among the principals." 38

Though ornament and structure have been recognized as important architectural features of architectural history, the difference between the two was never fully realized as a meaningful difference until the late nineteenth century. As Anne-Marie Sankovitch identifies in her discussion concerning the Gothic cathedral St. Eustache:

"Structure is the recessive, unrecoverable, unstable presence that finally we cannot work back to: ornament becomes all that we can clearly see, but we can never remove it, see past it, without destroying the structure, which is essential. They are both here but do not coexist in the simple oppositional way that so many modern texts would have us believe." 39

The modular development in architecture through the repetition and dissolution of form, structure, ornament and skin, as systems that act upon each other, is being widely supported by the emerging technologies in digital fabrication.

The aim of this research is to set up a conceptual framework for the Mosque within the scope of advances in design and emerging technologies. By adopting a method of creating 3D components resembling the 2D Islamic patterns and then applying and testing them in creating the skin, structure and space for the design of Mosque will help keep Islamic patterns alive and continue to spread world-wide.

Moreover, the use of this approach will bring a tangible solution to the discourse on identity and symbolism, cultural attitudes toward a specific style or historicist approach. Hence, together with the conceptual design framework for spatial organisation of the Mosque as an institution and its representation, it will bring a very solid and grounded solution for the overall Mosque ‘crisis’.

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37 Therese Tierney, 'Abstract Space: Beneath the Media Surface' New York: Routledge, 2007, 7
38 Ibid., 17

*Figure 6-3 - Islamic Stone Screen at Fetehpur Sikri in Agra, India.*
7.0 SITE INVESTIGATION

7.1 SITE REQUIREMENTS

Islam may be considered to be one of the most popular religions globally; however it is still imperfectly understood by non-Muslims. We are a growing religion, yet we do not show it in our architecture. Simply copying past architecture from another place is inadequate.

To show how Islam has entered into the 21st century the new Islamic Mosque should represent that. For this reason I have prepared these requirements as the selection for the new site.

**Strong Visual Connection to Public**
There should be a strong visual connection to the public so that Islam is no longer solely depicted by the media. The Mosque should speak for itself, and not become another stereotypical Mosque.

**Close to Public Transport**
It should be in close proximity to local public transportation, such as bus and taxi stands.

**Private Car parking**
As the community grows, the number of cars that they possess will also need to be accommodated.

**Security**
As there will be community members living on site, there has to be some sort of protection for them as well as protection for the facilities on site.

**Landscaping**
As in all Islamic buildings they should be lavish courtyards and water features.

**Easy Access**
The site has to be accessible for Muslims and non-Muslims.

**Mixed Use**
Not only will there be religious programmes being held on site, there will also be community members living on site.

**Close to the Community**
The site has to be in close proximity to the majority of the community members, and has to be central and easy to access.

7.2 SELECTED SITE

The site which had met all these requirements was 79 Ormiston Road, East Tamaki, which was formerly a readymade lawn company.

![Figure 7-1 - Site Image from Google Earth](image-url)
7.3 SITE MAP

Figure 7-2 - Google Map of Manukau

- Shopping Malls - Top to Bottom - Sylvia Park, Botany Town Centre, Botany South/Junction and Westfield Manukau City.
- Amusement Park
- Proposed Site
- Buddhist Temple
- Current Islamic Centre
- TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre
- Ormiston Hospital
7.4 Site Images

Figure 7-4 - Photograph Looking into Botany Junction Shops

Figure 7-5 - Photograph of Green Belt of Te Irirangi Dr

Figure 7-6 - Photograph of Existing Buildings on Site

Figure 7-7 - Photograph Looking into Botany South Shops

Figure 7-3 - Photograph Looking into the Site from Orniston Rd
7.5 **SITE ANALYSIS**

Site topography

Traditionally Mosques were built on the best location in any region and the entire township grew in an organic way around it. However, today, the left over open spaces are all that are available for Mosques, since they are usually donated or sold at throw away prices to the committees. Mosques are always orientated to *Qibla* and are square or rectangular in plan. However, the unique shaped site posed the biggest challenge.

Surrounding

The site is roughly 61,000m², located at 79 Ormiston Road, East Tamaki, adjacent to Botany Junction shopping centre. The North and East are predominantly surrounded by commercial/industrial buildings and to the West is a small nine hole golf course, which shares a large lake between both sites. There is a residential area towards the South East of the site.

Zoning and road hierarchy

The site is at the transition between residential and commercial zones. It has adjacent roads along two sides, Te Irirangi Drive to the East and Ormiston Road to the North. As Ormiston Road is less busy it is a good idea to have the main entrance to the site from this road. However it would be beneficial to create alternative entry points into the site from Te Irirangi Drive.

![Figure 7-8 - Site Analysis Drawings](image-url)
Sound and traffic

There is a green buffer belt between the site and roads that acts as a sound barrier. This can in turn be utilized as an extended part of the site for retail and a green area. These facilities in turn can be utilized by the neighbouring properties.

Architectural character, materials used

The surrounding commercial structures have predominantly corrugated iron roofs and painted plaster claddings. The houses are simple, single storey blocks with brick or weatherboard cladding and concrete tiles.

Climate

Manukau is a part of the greater Auckland region and has an average mean temperature of 14°C in winter and 23°C in summer. It experiences 174 days of heavy rainfall (1240mm annual rainfall) and about 2060 hours of sunshine annually. 40

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7.6 Site Programme

A serious re-evaluation and reframing of the Mosque institution, using the model of the Mosque of the Prophet as the generic Mosque, is needed. We need to also address the social changes that are implicated in the definition of the way of life in the West, which separates the activities of life into secular and religious. Mosques these days in the West, rather than being just a sanctuary, need to become a centre for the development of the community, in particular the younger generation, as they are the ones who will become the new face of Islam.

Programme

Phase I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>40m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>240m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosque - Men's Hall</td>
<td>2000m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladies Hall</td>
<td>700m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offices (Management, Youth Office, etc.)</td>
<td>300m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>120m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms (Male &amp; Female)</td>
<td>300m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>900m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose Hall</td>
<td>900m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>200m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery</td>
<td>750m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>200m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Facilities</td>
<td>200m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage (Food &amp; Equipment)</td>
<td>200m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghusl Khana Room (Ritual washing of the deceased)</td>
<td>80 m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase II (Not included in this thesis)

- Residential Units [100m²] X 12
- Public Plaza and Garden Spaces (with accommodation for weekend markets and holiday festivals)
- 300 Car parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Halal Cultural Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halal Butchery</td>
<td>230m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic Store</td>
<td>200m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secular Stores</td>
<td>570m²</td>
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</table>

Private Islamic School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>160m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Room</td>
<td>90m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>250m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>1450m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>500m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>400m²</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bathrooms</td>
<td>110m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>160m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Room</td>
<td>80m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>150m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>90m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.7 Site Axis

The axis of a site can be generated from several influences, in this instance that of religion, fabric and compass. The axis of religion is generated from the direction of Mecca, for religious reasons. The axis of fabric takes the line of the existing built fabric around the site, and the axis of compass is generated from the direction of North as this is the best direction to generate energy from solar gains. These studies will help with locating the most advantageous positions for the Islamic Centre to be located and how the development should be orientated.
8.0 **Design Process**

A number of explorations were undertaken in response to the critical analysis. The studies here were not designed in isolation, but were developed as a succession of ideas learnt from each subsequent design.

8.1 **Exploration One**

The first exploration was an investigation of how Islamic art and geometric forms can be used to help generate the building blocks of this development.

The relevance of using Islamic patterns as structural components:
- Islamic patterns, even in two dimensions, reveal a high potential for structural and tectonic capabilities of component-space formation through modularity and tessellation.
- Islamic patterns are universally recognized embodiments of Mosque architecture.
- As identity gets so complex to be expressed from different cultures through a single architectural built form, the point of finding a universal neutral language comes to the forefront.

Criteria on selecting Islamic patterns:
- Structural and tectonic potentials
- Potentials of three dimensionality and dissolution in ornamentation
- Potentials of variations
- Potentials of tiling and diffusing in modular multiplicity
- Universally legible Islamic patterns (not just locally)
Outcome of Exploration One

Legible Islamic ornamentation can be also used to enhance and emphasize the location and legibility of the Mosque and prayer space. By applying the Islamic ornamentation on the facade of the Mosque where the prayer space is set, it will act as a legible sign to identify the Mosque. In addition, it will assist in revealing the Mosque to the street at the forefront.

The reason for the location of the Mosque at this corner is so the people travelling past this intersection or junction can have sufficient time to view and read the Mosque’s facade. It also makes the Mosque a focal point of Botany Junction intersection.
8.2 **EXPLORATION TWO**

The second exploration was to investigate the architectural result of modifying the direction of public movement to a more direct and visual linear approach to the Mosque. The design also investigates the approach of creating a plaza, which will not only act as a market place, but will also give a strong sense of direction towards the *Qibla*.

**Outcome of Exploration Two**

Exploration two, was a major shift in location and design of the Mosque from exploration one. In this design the main focal point shifted away from the road. It is now protected from sound and toxin pollution from ongoing traffic on the road. However, there is still a strong visual connection through the framed plaza which connects to the Botany Junction intersection, further connected to the retail stores located opposite my chosen site.

The plaza serves as a venue for markets to be held during weekends. Its aim is to help draw non-Muslims into the site, to facilitate in closing the boundaries between Muslims and members of other religions. It may also lead them to enquire about Islam in the process. The covered walk way which frames the plaza will have modified Islamic arches, to help give more of an Islamic identity to the site.

![Figure 8-4 - Exploration Two Render of the Plaza](image)

![Figure 8-5 - Exploration Two Site Plan (n.t.s)](image)
The Mosque setup has been changed into different zones/levels of entry; from the Plaza to the Foyer, Foyer to Ablution (Bathrooms) and then to the Prayer hall. This movement creates a journey through the Mosque. You are shown to leave the material world behind as you gradually pass through each level of the Mosque. In addition, the walkway through each level is maintaining the sense of direction of the Qibla. Thus, as you enter the Prayer Hall you are presented at the forefront with the Qibla wall, which illustrates the orientation of the prayers.

The Prayer Hall does not have the conventional domed roof. (Refer to appendix D, describing the significance of the dome.) The concept used here adopts ideas from James Dickie, who mentions that the dome can be interpreted as a canopy of heaven\footnote{James Dickie, “The Islamic Garden in Spain,” in: E. MacDougall, \textit{The Islamic Garden}, 1976, 92} and Mohamad Tajuddin who states that in the Quran there is no evidence with regard to the construction of the dome or mosque, that it can be created by any method that still fulfils its main purpose.\footnote{Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’, 95} The dome within this exploration is constructed with two intersecting domes engulfing the Prayer Hall. The point at which the domes connect would be a glass wall which will allow natural light to enter and travel along the curvature of the wall. The dome on one end is connected to the ground floor. It can be said that it symbolises the canopy of heaven and is more attainable to man than being on the roof of the Mosque where it is out of an individual’s reach.

Moreover, either side of the Mosque is surrounded by a garden, as in Islamic theories it is said that the gardens represent the gardens of paradise (heaven). An Islamic garden is a place of rest and reflection to escape from the tensions of everyday existence. (Appendix E, discusses further detail about the theories of the gardens in Islam.)

One of the requirements was to create retail space on site in order to provide additional funds to run the Mosque, in addition to attract more people to the site. The retail is orientated towards Ormiston Road. Reason being that, on Te Irirangi Drive people are moving at 80km/hr, which does not allow for clear viewing time of the retail sector as they drive by. The environment is also friendlier on Ormiston as it is not dominated by cars.

The Prayer Hall of the Mosque will be partially surrounded by water from the lake. This positioning isolates the Prayer Hall from the environment functionally and symbolically. However, not to an extend that it takes away any importance from the Mosque itself.
8.3 Exploration Three

The Third exploration is an extended investigation of exploration One. It encompasses Islamic patterns to generate the form and massing of the Mosque.

Outcome of Exploration Three

In exploration one, Islamic patterns were used to create the structure and facade of the mosque. Taking this concept one step further will let these patterns generate the shape of the Mosque, rather than conforming to the conventional, rectangular Mosque.

The pattern which will be used will be generated from the central circulation space. This will be the primary circulation space, which is connected to all secular and non-secular activities within the Mosque for example workshops or classes. These activities will not only serve Muslims but also the non-Muslim community. The circulation space also splits the strong sense of direction from the plaza to the prayer hall, which symbolises the fact that prayers are not the sole factor in Islam and that there are other important aspects in Islam.
The plaza in the forefront of the Mosque was far stretched and needed to become more consolidated so that the market did not become isolated from the Mosque. By increasing the size of the Mosque, not only does it increase its capacity to help accommodate the ever growing Muslim population but also helps condense the market.

The gardens on either side of the Mosque were too isolated from one another. By creating an internal atrium, it would allow for them to be connected via the central circulation space. This will also symbolise the gardens of paradise engulfing the Mosque. The internal atrium also contributes to the sustainability of the building by providing a cooler environment. The garden in the North West is to be a family picnic area to encourage family values which are important both in New Zealand and within Islam.

The site is heavily dominated by cars on the surrounding roads and the scheme has allocated little surface parking. The majority of the parking will be situated under the Mosque, which will have two underground entry points, one from Ormiston Road and one near the private Islamic school. Pedestrians can enter the underground parking lot, through the central circulation space and from within two points in the covered plaza walk way.

An Islamic school was incorporated within this design with a central hall/gym. Two main sections are to be allocated, from preschool to Year 3 and to the right, catering from Year 4 to Year 8. The reason for not providing schooling for Year 9 and above is that there are a multiple colleges around the site such as, Botany Downs Secondary College, Tangaroa College, Sancta Maria College, and Ormiston Senior College. In Islam boys come of age at 15 and girls at 9, when they become responsible for their own actions, till then they are to be educated in how to live and act Islamically.

In an Islamic school, children are taught the essentials through the interaction with their teachers and fellow-peers so that they may obtain the tools that will help them to be successful in the other disciplines as well as to help build their Muslim Identity. An Islamic school is no different than a public school however; they also encompass the teachings of Islamic values and the Qur’an. Currently there are two Islamic schools in New Zealand, Al-Madinah School and Zayed College for Girls. However they both share the same site in Mangere.

The playground within the school grounds will also serve as a playground for the general public on weekends and during religious programmes held at the Mosques, which are typically held in the evening.

Within this design, there also will be accommodation provided for those who are travelling from other cities to attend major events held within the Mosque. These accommodation units will also serve for any individual or family in need of temporary accommodation. However, there will be one unit amongst these which will serve the resident religious leader, known as an Alim. The resident Alim will be living full time on site, to help people of the community at any given time. By having the Alim living on site, a sense of security and a presence on the site will be provided. The units are situated next to the lake so that they may optimize the view of the lake and golf course and are away from the sounds of a busy road.

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43 Ramadan, “Western Muslims and the future of Islam, 190
44 A resident Alim is an Islamic scholar, who leads the community.
8.4 **Exploration Four**

Exploration four progresses the formal aesthetic of the shape of the building with regard to the use of Islamic patterns. It is also an investigation into the opening of the ground level and to ensure that the Botany Junction intersection is to become a viable corner as a result of exploration three. The line of movement and direction has once again changed within this design.

**Outcome of Exploration Four**

In exploration three, an Islamic pattern was used to create the structure and facade of the mosque. In this exploration we organize the pattern to create an improved shape that will allow for more interaction between the programmes and create an outdoor environment.

On this site, there is a level change from the bottom plaza to the school and accommodation units. As opposed to having a flat section between the two, a cascading staircase with platforms has been designed.

In Exploration Three, there was only one main vehicular and pedestrian access onto the site. As most patrons will be travelling by vehicles it seems viable to create a prominent entry right into the central circulation space from the car park. This allows for easy access to all programmes within the Mosque. The entry from the retail plaza will be kept for pedestrians arriving from the retail or Botany Junction stores across the road. A secondary vehicular entry is created from Te Irirangi Drive, which will be primarily used by patrons of the school.
Botany Junction is typically a busy intersection. However, it does not cater to pedestrians as the environment next to the road is hostile. This corner will consist of retail shops along its perimeter which in turn will help with framing the site. Access to the retail stores will be from the plaza they frame. Thus, the very most corner building will become an atrium which will allow a visual and physical connection into the plaza. The shops will not be solely religious stores but they will cater for secular and non-secular activities such as an Islamic store, fashion store, Halal butchery, etc.

Through positioning the retail on the edge of the site, facing the road, this will have an impact on the development of Botany Junction. This in turn would facilitate in creating a pedestrian friendly environment along the street which would not be possible if car parks were designed on the perimeter of the site.

The minaret is an Islamic icon that acts as a beacon to inform people that there is a Mosque. However, it is not enough to just erect a tower without it actually benefiting the site. The minaret is a sundial, to inform people of the time. That is why the ground pattern on the floor is different from the left of the development; to help people read the time which will also indicate time for prayers throughout the day. (For reference on the Minaret refer to appendix D.)

The accommodation has changed from being separate units to an accommodation block. This way it creates a community within the occupants of the block. This method also provides more security for the occupants.

The school has been shaped as an 'L' to help close off the boundary and help frame the plaza between the accommodation, Mosque and the school. This plaza will serve as an outdoor venue for functions held by either the school or Mosque.
8.5 **EXPLORATION FIVE (FINAL DESIGN)**

Exploration five’s focus was to develop the potentiality of a greater expression for each of the previous explorations.

**Outcome of Exploration Five**

The pattern used in Exploration Four was successful in creating an Islamic pattern that would have more interaction between other activities on the site. However, as the Muslim population is an ever growing, the size of the Mosque was inadequate and thus needed to be scaled up. This will also solve the problem of having too much undefined outdoor space. To assist with defining the outdoor plaza between the Mosque and school, the auditorium has been relocated, enclosing the plaza which will be used for outdoor events, as well as the school’s recreational area.

The manner in which the Prayer Hall was constructed in the previous exploration has been redesigned. The circle as a shape has been seen to represent inclusion and infinity, a symbol of unity. However, on the other hand, it could be read as a symbol of isolation and seclusion. In order to avoid any negative associations with the Prayer Hall, the use of a cube will be made symbolising the Ka’aba which is the focal point of all Muslims and a place where Muslims congregate. Furthermore the reason for using two intersecting geometries for the Prayer Hall and the Community Centre is to show that they are two different entities but share one roof.
The roof structure of the Mosque will mimic the pattern used to generate the mass of the building. Selected sections of the roof will be glass panels to allow light to penetrate deep into the building. The glass sections will have timber louvres to diffuse the sun light before entering the building. This will also create sun patterns onto the floor of the Mosque.

An Islamic garden is a place for one to get away from the burden of everyday life. That is why it is vital to incorporate this idea into the Mosque, as in the design from exploration three. Through the adding of nature into the Mosque, it creates a more attractive and welcoming environment. That is why the two cascading staircases leading from the lower plaza to the school will take characteristics of an Islamic garden, and will be joined, through the Mosque, to the family picnic area on the North West.

The main entry into the central circulation space from the North was too large and spaced for the design. Thus, by dividing it and creating a framed grass section, a transitional space between the family picnic area and the entrance into the Mosque is created.

The Mosques programmes can be divided into five zones (Management, Religious, Cultural, Commercial and Public). These programmes are harmoniously interwoven to provide a stage for intercultural and interfaith events to take place. The activities that take place will ultimately help create a Mosque of continuous encouragement and enrichment of the Islamic and New Zealand culture.
To allow for a more visual and physical connection to the Mosque from Botany Junction intersection, the atrium has been removed and a minaret has taken its location as this provides a visual focal point and also symbolizes a religious communication antenna. The retail has been repositioned back from the road slightly allowing for it to be accessible from both ends. This crafts a safe environment for pedestrians and a buffer zone to protect from the hostile road environment. This consists of a 1.3m high fence and a green belt. In regards to the framing of the site, the aim is not to isolate the Mosque from the rest of the community but to create a safe environment for Islam to be practised. At certain locations a strong vista towards the Mosque has been created to show the general public of its activities.

The apartments take ideas from exploration three and four and combine the two to create an accommodation that still has its individuality, while still creating a sense of community. There will be two types of units, one for families and the other for couples/bachelors. They have been orientated to face West which will take full potential of the view of the lavish golf course. They have also been positioned in relation to the Mosques pattern. This is done to symbolise that Mosque Teachings should radiate throughout all aspects of our life. As these accommodations can be used throughout the year, the need for privacy is an issue to be resolved, so on the East side of the apartments, there will be a garden to help with not only farming the top plaza but also help create a visual buffer between the school and apartments.

The addition of a multipurpose hall on site will allow the local community to hire out a hall for private functions. The hall will be connected to the school to be used as an assembly hall and gym while the school is in operation.

The school has been slightly re-positioned to assist in enclosing the top plaza. As the school is also on a higher contour than the plaza, a deck will be used as a transitional space between the school and the plaza which will be used at recess time for the children. Alternatively, the deck can also function as a stage for any outdoor events. The classrooms are situated on the East, so that they can benefit from and utilize the morning sun. The cafeteria is orientated towards North and has an inward slanting glass wall, to allow natural light to fill the room. For the school to take advantage of solar gain from the North, timber louvres will be attached to the glass wall and coated with a thin film of solar cells. This will also prevent direct sunlight from entering into the cafeteria. The building facade will house square windows located in a vibrant, rhythmic sequence on all sides. The varied pattern of windows not only creates a strong visual effect, but also allows the light to flow into the building and frames views to the outside. This method was based loosely on Islamic patterning method. The kindergarten, which is also part of the school, will have its own Figure 8-19 - Exploration Five Housing Unit

Figure 8-20 - Exploration Five School
playground away from rest of the school children, as it allows teachers to closely monitor due to their young age group. As the school has a deep body, one way of letting light penetrate into it is to create large skylights, which also create an attractive environment.

Traditionally screens are used in Mosques to separate male and female areas and religious and secular activities. Besides visual separation, the perforation allows gentle light to filter through and encourage natural ventilation. That is why the Mosque has been given a double skin which also assists in creating an interesting façade. As is typical in Islamic architecture the exterior of the building is left bare, while the interior has been highly decorated. The facade will allow the Mosque to stand out from the rest of the development and surrounding context.

8.6 MATERIALITY

The materiality of the Mosque will use materials from both Islamic and New Zealand construction, as a way to help integrate Islam into the West on a sublevel. Typical Islamic construction consists of concrete and marble and, within the New Zealand construction industry they use timber to build.

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Figure 8-24 – Word Collage
9.0 **Critical Appraisal and Conclusion**

This Mosque is not designed to be provocative or to be separated from Islamic architecture (tradition or stereotype); but it is designed with sensitivity to the site. A contemporary Mosque design should attract many non-Muslim visitors.\(^{47}\) This allows dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims to form and provides a space for a greater understanding of Islam, hence promoting respect and tolerance within the multicultural and multi-religious society.

The purpose of this project was to investigate if it is possible to design a Mosque that encourages integration with Muslims and non-Muslims in a Western context. By creating Synergic Spaces and accommodating secular and non-secular programs, it contributes to an interaction among diverse Islamic and non-Islamic societies. By doing so this also provides a tangible solution to the Mosque ‘crisis’, that being the separation of activities into secular and religious. A Mosque is a sanctuary and a sacred place, as well as being a centre for the development of the community.

However, a true solution to the Mosque ‘crisis’ can only be accomplished if people understand and recognize the true essence of Islam and incorporate progress and development spatially and temporally while serving the welfare and development of the community.

\(^{47}\) Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’, 250
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11.0 GLOSSARY

Adhan:
An Islamic way of calling Muslims to the five obligatory Prayers.

Allah:
The Arabic word for God.

Arabesque:
Is a form of artistic decoration consisting of surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines.

Ayatollah:
A title in the religious hierarchy achieved by scholars who have demonstrated highly advanced knowledge of Islamic law and religion.

Hadith:
The word literally means communication of narration, in the Islamic context has come to denote the record of what the prophet (p.b.u.h) said, did, or tacitly approved.

Halal:
A term designating any object or an action which is permissible to use or engage in, according to Islamic law. The term is used to designate food seen as permissible according to Islamic law.

Hussainya:
A place which is associated with Imam Hussain (a.s), grandson of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h), a reviver of the religion of Islam. A place which is a combination of a Masjid for prayers and lecture hall where religious lectures are given are given.

Imam:
1 - Signifies the leader, and in its highest form, refers to the head of the Islamic state.
2 - A person who leads the prayer.

Islam:
Literally means 'submission to the will of Allah' the most important and pivotal concept in Isla is the oneness of God.

Jamaat:
An Islamic assembly.

Ka'aba:
The Cube-shaped stone building completed by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (p.b.u.h) and his son, Prophet Ismael, (p.b.u.h), in Mecca. It is the focal point towards which all Muslims face when praying.

Khutbah:
A sermon preached by an Imam in a Mosque at the time of the Friday noon prayer.

Medresa:
Arabic word for any type of school, whether secular or religious.

Masjid:
Another word for Mosque, a place of worship.

Mihrab:
Prayer niche of a Masjid, in front of which the Imam stands when leading the congregational prayers.

Minaret:
Vertical structure where the call of prayer is traditionally given.

Minbar:
Steps on which the Imam stands to deliver the Khutbah (address).

Muslim:
A follower of the religion of Islam. One who submits their will to Allah (God).
Qibla:
Signifies the direction to which all Muslims are required to turn to when offering their prescribed prayers, namely towards the Ka'aba, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Qur'an:
The literal word of God and the culmination of God's revelation to mankind, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) in the year AD 610

Salat:
Is the Arabic word for the obligatory prayers that are performed five times a day, which is a spiritual relationship and communication between the creature and his Creator.

Shahadah:
Declaration of Faith. A person must recite the Shahadah to convert to Islam. The shahadah in Islam is "I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"

Sunna:
The traditional portion of Muslim law, based on the words and acts of Muhammad, and preserved in the traditional literature.

Surah:
The Qur'an is composed of 114 chapters, each of which is called a Surah.

Ummah:
Nation, people, generation or Community.

Wudhu:
The ritual washing before prayers.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ABOUT ISLAM

A Brief Introduction to Islam

Islam is a monotheistic religion, based on the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

Islam has been recognised as being the second largest faith on the planet after Christianity, with between 1.6 and 1.7 billion people, representing 22-25% of the world population. There is a high diversity of Muslim communities around the globe, originating from a wide spectrum of different geographical, cultural, social and political contexts.

"O mankind! We created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All-knowing, All-Aware." (Qur’an 49:13)

Branches of Islam

The first century of the Islamic calendar, Islam was divided into two sects, the Sunni and Shi’a. Sunni Muslims are the majority of the Islamic world (about 87-90%). The separation between these two sects arose over the title of caliph (Ruler of the Islamic Ummah). Sunni means ‘adherent of the Sunnah’. Shi’a Muslims believe in the chain of leaders from the Prophets family, the Ahlul Bayt.

What does Islam mean?

Islam was the name bestowed upon this religion by Allah (God). 
"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion." (Qur’an 5:4).

The Arabic word Islam is defined as “submission, peace and obedience”. In the context of religion it means a complete submission to the will of Allah.

What is the Ka’aba?

The Ka’aba is considered by all Muslims as the centre point in the Islamic world. It is also the unifying focal point for which all Muslims face during their daily prayers, regardless of where they may be in the world.

The Ka’aba was constructed by Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, who where commanded by Allah to create a monotheistic house of worship. It should be noted however, that Muslims do not worship the physical properties of the Ka’aba but rather the significance of it.

“We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn thee to a Qiblah that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction.” (Qur’an 2:149)

Figure 12-1 - The Ka’aba

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48 Houssain Kettani, 2010 World Muslim Population, Proceedings of the 8th Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities, Honolulu, Hawaii, January 2010, 53
Who is Muhammad?

Prophet Muhammad, (p.b.u.h) was the last of the Prophets sent by God to guide Man to the right path; he was born around the year 570 in the city of Mecca, Arabia. During his life time, qualities such as his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity had become well known and respected throughout Arabia, and abroad.

The Prophet’s mission was to spread the word of Islam, and to replace idol worshiping with the worship of one true God, as well as to demonstrate the laws of moral, ethical, legal, and social conduct.

It was through the Angel Gabriel that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was taught the verses of the Qur’an over the period of 23 years. Those verses where then later dictated by the Prophet to his companions, and were recorded by scribes, who had cross-checked it during his lifetime.

The sayings and behaviours of the Prophet have been documented separately in collections known as Hadith. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was the model of Qur’anic behaviour for all Muslims, to aspire to. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had passed away in 632.

What is the Qur’an?

The Qur’an is a record of the exact words revealed by Allah through the Angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), creating a relationship between us and God through his Holy Book. Not one word of the Qur’an’s 114 chapters (Surahs), have been altered over the centuries, making it in every way as unique as at the time when it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

The Qur’an is a complete guide for all Muslims. It deals with subjects that appertain to humanity such as, wisdom, doctrine, worship and law. The Qur’an is there for Muslims to live a good and honest life that would provide a rewarding life in obedience to God’s will, which will not only provide a peaceful life here but also salvation in the next life. The Qur’an is thus the prime source for Islamic faith and practice.

"Indeed, there has come to you light and a clear book from Allah; With it Allah guides him who fill follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by his will and guides them to the right path." (Qur’an 15-16)

The Hadith as a secondary source for Islam

The Sunna is a collection of reliably transmitted reports of the Prophet’s quotes and actions also known as Hadith. As the Prophet was the perfect model of Qur’anic behaviour, these Hadiths are regarded as a secondary authority for all Muslims to follow. The belief in the Sunna is very much a part of the Islamic faith.

Example of the Prophet Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h) quotes:

The Prophet said:
“God is merciful to those who show mercy to others.”
“Power consists not in being able to strike another, but in being able to control oneself when anger arises.”
“Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother.”
“The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.”

The Five Pillars of Islam

The Islamic faith is founded on the five pillars, which are the fundamental beliefs of every Muslim. Muslim children learn their basic Islamic teachings through these five pillars.

The Shiites believe in the five pillars of Islam, as do Sunnis, however there are some discrepancies as to what are those 5 pillars. The Shi’ia beliefs include the following:


1. **Tawhid** (Oneness): The Oneness of God
2. **Adālah** (Justice): The Justice of God
3. **Nubuwwah** (Prophethood): God has appointed perfect and infallible prophets and messengers to teach mankind the religion (that is, a perfect system of how to live in "peace" ("submission to God").
4. **Imāmah** (Leadership): God has appointed specific leaders to lead and guide mankind — a prophet appoints a custodian of the religion before his demise.
5. **Qiyāmah** (The Day of Judgment): God will raise mankind for Judgment - the Day of Resurrection

Branches of Religion (Furū al-Dīn) — These are the duties that every Muslim should perform, and should be woven into the very fabric of their everyday life.

1. **Salat** (Prayer) — "Connection", establish the five daily prayers, called Namāz or Salat
2. **Sawm** (Fasting) — Fasting during the holy month of RamAdhan,
3. **Zakat** (Poor-rate) — Charity. Zakat means "to purify".
4. **Khums** ("Fifth" of one's savings) — Islamic Tax on savings.
5. **Hajj** (Pilgrimage) — Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca.
6. **Jihād** (Struggle) — Struggling to please God. The greater, internal Jihad is the struggle against the evil within one's soul in every aspect of life, called jihād akbār (The Great Struggle).
7. ‘Amr bil-Ma’rūf — Commanding what is good
8. An-Nahy 'ana l-Munkar — Forbidding what is evil
9. **Tawalla** — Loving the Ahl ul-Bayt and their followers
10. **Tabarra** — Dissociating oneself from the enemies of the Ahl ul-Bayt

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51 The Family of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h)
12.2 **APPENDIX B: WHAT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?**

Islamophobia is a neologism that emerged in the late 1980s. The term has been widely used after the attack of September 11 in the United States of America. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said:

"...when the world is compelled to coin a new term to take account of increasingly widespread bigotry, that is a sad and troubling development. Such is the case with Islamophobia." 52

Therefore, it is extremely important to address this issue to mobilise the international agenda of peace and harmony. Islamophobia has become a widely spoken discourse in the West and sparks controversial debates and discussions all over the world. Islamophobia cannot exist in isolation, but commonly resonates with other widely spoken discourses such as racism, religious pluralism, multiculturalism and orientalism.

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12.3 Appendix C: Prayers

Prayers (Namâz or Salat)

Salat is an Arabic term for prayers, which in Islam, one is obligated to perform five times a day. It is how one creates a spiritual connection between themselves and God. Every Muslim who has become of age is obligated to perform his or her prayers in a clean space and in the direction of the Ka'aba in Mecca. The prayers are prefaced by ablution – the ritual washing (Wudhu).

"O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (salat). Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere." (Qur’an 2.153)

Prayers are offered at dawn (Fajr), mid-day (Dhuhr), late-afternoon (Asr), sunset (Maghrib) and nightfall (Isha), and thus determine the rhythm of the entire day. Islamic prayer comprises of a prescribed set of gestures and recitations, performed in the same way, either individually or collectively. It involves a series of bodily postures rhythmically repeated in one place with no processional rituals.

Salat may be offered almost anywhere, such as an office, university, garden or a factory as long as the space is clean and the direction of Qibla is known.

Although prayers can be performed alone, for men, it is highly recommended to pray in congregation (Jamat). The congregation forms the meaning of the space and place called the Mosque, from Arabic: Masjid = congregation.

A Jamat is led by a learned person who knows the Qur’an and has been generally chosen by the congregation; in most case it would be the Imam of the Mosque who would lead the prayers.

Figure 12-4 - Images Showing the Prescribed sequence of the actions for Salat

Figure 12-5 - Men Praying in Jamat
APPENDIX D: ABOUT THE ISLAMIC AHLUL BAYT FOUNDATION OF NEW ZEALAND

Islamic Ahlul Bayt Foundation of New Zealand

Islamic Ahlul Bayt Foundation of New Zealand is a service provider for the needs of the Muslim Community of New Zealand as per the teachings of Ahlul Bayt (The Family of Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h). The Foundation’s core competency is Islamic Education which is provided through different means such as the weekend Medresa, Imam Ali Knowledge Foundation (a sub institute under the Ahlul Bayt which specializes in deeper Islamic studies), Friday prayer Khutbas, Library, and lectures which are delivered during more than 40 functions per year. Furthermore, the Foundation has several other services such as funerals (Ghusl), marriage and divorce celebrants, Qur’an recitation events being organized at the demise of community members or their relatives, Qarzul-Hasanah (loan fund), counselling services, youth activities, camps, picnics and other social activities.

History of the Islamic Ahlul Bayt Foundation of New Zealand

The Ahlul Bayt community first started with a few families gathering at people’s homes for religious functions. It was not till 1993 that The Islamic Ahlul Bayt Foundation of New Zealand was formally established as a Registered Charitable Trust, with the initiative of five trustees and with the blessings of Ayatollah Golpaygani, who acted as the Settler of the Trust.

From there the community purchased a house in Mt. Wellington, which then became the first Islamic Mosque for the Ahlul Bayt community in New Zealand. It was here where a Medresa was started for youth and held regular religious programmes. Once the community had outgrown that premises, they bought an abandoned pizza factory in Pakuranga in 1999. This was renovated to accommodate their ever growing community and become the current Islamic Mosque.
APPENDIX E: MEANING BEHIND THE DOME, MINARET, ORNAMENTS AND GARDENS

The meaning of dome in the architecture of Mosque

In the course of architectural history we find different tendencies on the meaning of the dome. A few meanings are looked at below, in order to reveal some aspects of our concern on symbolism.

Samer Akkach in his work examines how cosmological thinking mediates human acts of making and space ordering. Akkach has an unorthodox and critical approach: he explores the meaning of the dome both in religious and cultural sources in the scope of cosmology. Conceiving the dome to create spatial order and spatial sensibility by giving religious connotation of heaven, perfection, and centrality, he further explores the geometrical meaning of the dome both in a cosmological sense and tectonics. His work is valuable for bringing a deep examination of both interpretations of the dome: divine and geometrical/tectonic.

"Shaped by prevailing intellectual and intercultural conditions, as well as by established professional practices, ‘spatial sensibility’ remains an elusive concept. One whose roots extend well beyond any historically or culturally identifiable boundaries." 54

An orthodox, and less critical view we can find in architectural historians’ works.

James Dickie, a well known historian of Muslim architecture, interprets the dome as the canopy of heaven and reinforces this statement by indicating that the ornament on the dome symbolises the Paradisal Tree. 55

While Mohamad Tajuddin Haji Mohamad Rasdi says: 56

"Since there is no evidence either from the Qur’an or Hadith with regards to following the construction tradition of the Mosque, the Mosque can be built with whatever construction system that is economical to the particular culture it is built for and that it may adequately fulfil the many tasks of the Mosque."

Even though the scheme of Mosque with a domed central space took its own direction and spread worldwide, at its basis was preserving the generic Mosques scheme functions, spaces, meanings were to be added and removed across geo-cultural, temporal and typological boundaries. The domed Mosque seems to have become an archetype of Mosques built in the East and West. Despite this in the West the hypostyle Mosque has to be found more suitable for the region, working with the local culture and building practice and even embedding certain futures of a more universal language inside the Mosque, while remaining quite simple from outside (compared to the expressive appearance of domed Mosques). Hence, frequently, Islamic architecture was called ‘the Architecture of the veil’.

Minaret, its development, meaning, symbolism and present role

The aim at this point is not to go through a detailed historical, stylistic and formal development of minarets, but rather give a brief description of their meaning, development in different regions, and their present role with a special emphasis on the Western countries.

54 Ibid., 152
55 Dickie, “The Islamic Garden”, 92-95
56 Haji Mohamad Rasdi, ‘The Mosque as Community Development Centre’, 95
- Origins and Meaning of the Minaret

The word minaret is of Arabic origin, “Manara” with the original meaning of light house, signal tower, coming to Europe in a Turkish form.

The first Mosques had no minarets. The early Adhans (call to prayers) were called from the roof-tops of the Mosques. With the expansion of the cities, the call for prayer could not be heard from those who were living far away, so a need was seen for a raised structure from which the Adhan could be called and heard over longer distances. This was the simple logic of introducing the minaret as a structural element in the Mosque architecture.

The first minaret is documented around year 665-666 in Basra, Iraq, 44 years after the first Mosque was built. 57

Nowadays most minarets are equipped with amplifiers and loudspeakers and Adhan is called downstairs or reproduced from a tape or a recording.

- Minaret and the ‘Pan-Islamic’ Style — Seeking for a Present Meaning

The development of Islamic architecture, from particularity in the built environment towards universality, leads to the appearance of a pan-Islamic style. This is due to the pressure of Muslims - especially in non-Muslim countries and even in new established Muslim countries — to become more ‘formative’ and express their identity through a universally legible feature in the Mosque architecture, through a pan-Islamic style.

The minaret is justified and is important as a landmark to signify the presence of a Mosque. Furthermore, it serves as a legible element in the city fabric to guide travellers and strangers who are looking for a place of prayer. The minaret has now become an iconic symbol of a Mosque, where functionally, the use of a minaret for calling the Adhan is now superseded by modern amplifier systems.

The shape of minarets, decoration, materials, position in the plan of the Mosque was developed differently across geo-cultural, temporal and typological boundaries. Despite the number of formal and stylistic variations the minaret became:

- A symbol of Islamic presence in a location
- A landmark for orientation and identification
- Element of design, balancing elevations and entrances
- Repetition of the minaret may also signal the political or religious importance of a building.

In Western countries an ambiguity exists concerning the minaret. For Muslims it is seen as a symbol of Islam, while for the non-Muslims it is just another tower. In reality, a Mosque without a minaret is still a Mosque, however, a minaret without a Mosque is just another tower.

Despite its loss of function of the calling for prayers in the West, the minaret has become a strong recognizable and legible symbol of the Mosque and Muslims themselves, as it becomes a symbol when it reminds one of Islam.

Figure 12-7 - Minaret of the Taj Mahal in India

57 Porchazka, ’Mosque’, 32
The Meaning of Ornaments in the Architecture of the Mosque

Islamic prayer requires no tangible object, such as an icon or a statue, to induce a sense of divine presence and serve as a support for worship. Visual engagement is therefore unnecessary.

The Mosque reveals little correspondence between Muslim prayer ritual and the Mosque form. Hence Islam itself is prescriptive in behaviour, not in form. In this work we will adopt a critical approach to the views on ornamentation used in the Muslim world and specifically in the architecture of the Mosque.

The First View - the Perennialists  

Symbolism, the Perennialists argue, is the most appropriate approach for comprehending the inner meanings of traditional art and architecture and for penetrating deep into their worlds of spirituality and metaphysics.

The Perennialists approach the question of artistic production from the viewpoint of creative imagination and religious inspiration. They focus primarily on the ideas, rituals, and cosmology within the matrices of which an artefact is produced, rather than the historic-cultural conditions that facilitate such production.

The Second View - the Ornamentation as Pleasure Oriented

Here we bring two statements and conclusions of two prominent architects and historians of Islamic architecture:

"Ornament is the ultimate mediator, paradoxically questioning the value of meanings by channelling them into pleasure."  

"Norms of beauty in the Arab-Islamic culture were autonomous, pleasure-oriented, and independent of moral and religious criteria."  

Ornamentation in Islamic arts and architecture has a certain level of ambiguity due to several implications and tendencies to give meaning to it. Moreover, we inherit a sharp distinction from our recent Modernist past of what is ornament and pure structure.

As the Eternal Idea of the Mosque as Synergic Spaces derived from Islamic sources, the ornamentation with religious meaning finds no place, as Islam is not about merely forms, but is prescriptive in behaviour. We should look to ornamentation as a universal legible feature of Muslim architecture by mining its potential to develop a new, and still legible visual language, for the Mosque as a representative built form that would bring a tangible solution to the representative ‘crisis’ of the Mosque.

What method can be used to develop the ornamentation further in the expressive language of the Mosque? Is it the traditional crafts?

The traditional crafts that form the beauty and the spirit of architecture in the Islamic world can survive in the contemporary world only if reframed in the scope of advances in design and technology.

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58 Perennialists - Perennialists believe that the focus of education should be the ideas that have lasted over centuries (http://www.siue.edu/~ptheodo/foundations/perennialism.html)
59 Akkach, "Cosmology and architecture". 16
61 Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Beauty in the Arabic Culture” 1999, USA, 135
Islamic Gardens

An Islamic garden is a place to rest and reflection upon one self, and to serve as a reminder of paradise which is promised to believers. In the Qur’an there are many references describing paradise as a garden oasis, man shows his desire to attain a higher state of being by creating such gardens on earth based on heavenly descriptions.

“Allah has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is Allah’s goodly pleasure; that is the grand achievement” (Qur’an 9:72)

“The Islamic garden, based on its Qur’anic archetype, is a place of retreat, shelter, abode, away from the tensions of everyday existence. Flowing water, fountains and rivers are the most memorable descriptions one has after reading the Qur’anic references to paradise.”

Islamic gardens are created with the intention for one to find peace so that one may rest and reflect. The aim of these gardens is that one may aspire towards physical and spiritual enlightenment, which will help bring Muslims closer to God through quiet contemplation.

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Any act of architectural design is inherently an exercise in geometry. Both are concerned with the properties of lines, surface and forms arranged in space, hence any analysis of a work of architecture is partially an inquiry into its geometry. Principles of geometry have been applied differently in various architectural traditions. In the western world from the renaissance onwards, the influence exercised by geometry in the conception of architectural form has generally been regulated and clearly articulated by leading architects and writers on architecture. In the architectural traditions of the Islamic world, rules of geometry were applied in a more flexible manner and were used to provide general guidelines rather than lay down canons of design.

A new form of complicated and elaborate art designs, that symbolized the importance of unity and order, was invented by Islamic artists. This new style of art was the combination of knowledge from mathematicians, astronomers and scientists which gave birth to this geometric artwork.

Unique patterns of squares, triangles and circles were merged, overlapped, turned and intertwined; creating ornate and complex patterns of Islamic art. It has its own distinguishing features which is recognizable worldwide. Islamic artwork has infinite possibilities and not just limited to the primary design but can be combined with many other types of artwork. This enables it to become one of the most distinguishing features of Islamic art. 64

Islamic patterns created by artists and designers are created to represent freedom and infinity within the pattern itself through its repetition and complexity. It offers the prospect of infinite development and growth beyond this materialistic world. 65

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64 Department of Islamic Art, “Geometric Patterns in Islamic Art (Accessed 15th June 2011)
65 Dogan, ‘Symbolism in Its Regional and Contemporary Context’ pp. 12-16
12.7 **APPENDIX G: SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL ISSUES**

Finding a tangible solution for the Mosque 'crisis' would solve much of the socio-political controversies. The understanding of the Eternal Idea of the Mosque, based on a profound knowledge, by both Muslims and non-Muslims would close the gap of social, cultural and religious differences through the Mosque as a Synergic Space open for all communities.

First of all, the way the Mosques were financed throughout history affected them as a representative built form. The patrons of Mosques where usually rulers, politicians, the wealthy or anyone of high standing. Their approach to the construction of a Mosque, was through a specific borrowed style or image, which then narrowed down the creativity and architectural development of the Mosque. In many cases those who made the decision about the building of a Mosque were a small group of people.

The situation of Muslims abroad seems to be more promising. Those communities abroad who finance the Mosque take the decision through a large consultation group, but even here the approach towards Mosque architecture in many cases would be a specific style or image borrowed from their country of origin.

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66 Khan, “The Architecture of the Mosque”, 109

**Criteria for Mosque Design concerning Socio-Political and Economical Issues**

Looking at these scenarios and the present situation of Muslim communities, in the scope of Eternal Idea of the Mosque concerning socio-political and economical issues, these criteria can be set:

- Mosque financing has to be very transparent not just inside the Muslim community itself, but to the local community as well.
- The decision and approach on the Mosque should be widely discussed with Muslims and non-Muslims communities in the surrounding context.
- The approach on the design of the Mosque as an institution and representative built form should be based on the needs of the Muslim society and its surrounding context.
13.0 Precedence Studies

13.1 Precedence #1 Assyafaah Mosque in Singapore

Architect: Tan Kok Hiang / Forum Architects
Client: Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura
Location: 1 Admiralty Lane, Singapore 757620
Completion: April 2004

‘A Modern Mosque’ is a term often used to describe the Assyafaah Mosque. It is located in Singapore, a country which is diverse in religion and culture. The Assyafaah Mosque is a redefinition of a traditional Mosque and a creative re-interpretation of the arabesque. The ‘modern’ design allows better assimilation in a multicultural society. The Mosque is cleverly designed to address both the contemporary context and the Islamic context. Modern forms and materials amalgamate with traditional arabesque, creating interesting screen patterns to filter the tropical light of Singapore. Natural ventilation and natural lighting is imbued harmoniously into the design, emitting great sensitivity to the locale.

Design Concept

The first floor is elevated from the ground level to allow greater natural ventilation and also allow natural ventilation in the basement. The volume above the main praying hall is supported by a series of off-form concrete arches to maximize unobstructed space for prayers. On plan, the centre of the building is shifted to face Mecca. The Qibla wall (wall perpendicular towards Mecca) has a Mihrab (niche) and a recessed mimbar (speaking platform); it is showered with light from the skylight above.

Programmes

The Mosque consists of a main prayer hall, extended prayer halls (on upper levels), ablution areas, classrooms, office, a multi-purpose hall, prayer galleries and a basement car park.

Minaret

The minaret is far from being traditional. It is a tapered telescopic tower which has been made out of metal.
MIMBAR & MIHRAB

The Mimbar is recessed on the Qibla wall with access from the back as opposed to the traditional stairs placed on the front, which allows for a clean front. The Mihrab is designed with Islamic calligraphy cutout, by doing so it blends traditional and modern design.

13.2 PRECEDENCE #2 PENZBERG MOSQUE IN GERMANY

Architect: Alan Jasarevic / Jasarevic Architekten
Client: Islamic community Penzberg
Location: Bichler Straße 15, Penzberg 82377
Completion: 2007

The architect said “We have proven that Muslims can have their own contributions. We are proud that the Mosque, with its design as well as activities, has become an attraction for thousands.”

The Mosque is located in Penzberg, Germany. However the contemporary Mosque design is widely accepted by the locals and attracts many non-Muslim visitors. This allows dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims to form and provides a space for greater understanding of Islam, promoting respect and tolerance within the multicultural and multi-religious society.

69 Ibid (accessed 12th June 2011)
BUILDING
The Mosque consists of Prayer Hall, library, halls, office, apartment and classes for students. All these programs are placed under one roof. The Prayer Hall is separated by a central circulation space.

ENTRY
The entrance to the Mosque features two concrete slabs with Arabic and German inscription that swing out of the wall like open gates, inviting visitors openly into the Mosque.

MINARET
The facade of the minaret has a laser-cut design, which shows that common elements of a Mosque can be done with modern technology.

PRAYER HALL
The ladies are placed on the second level of the Prayer Hall, with the men’s hall below them.

MIHRAB & MIMBAR
The Mihrab is a curved steel plate with laser cut floral design. This allows a sense of transparency and it is incredibly ‘modern’ when, compared to the traditional niche in the wall. The Mimbar consists of an open riser timber tread which is situated next to the wall on one side and has a laser-cut metal plate on the other.

13.3 Precendence #3 Sakirin Mosque, Istanbul

Architect: Zeynep Fadillioglu
Client: Semiha Sakir Foundation
Location: Istanbul, Turkey
Completion: 2009

Sakirin Mosque is the first Mosque to be designed by a woman in Turkey. The Mosque is designed to be contemporary and to relate to both Muslims and non-Muslims.
14.0 Final Design

Figure 14-1 – Site perspective
Figure 14-2 – View into main plaza
Figure 14-8 – Third Level Floor Plan
Figure 14-9 – Circulation space
Figure 14-12 – Gym / Hall
Figure 14-13 – Rear Plaza
Figure 14-14 – Section of Prayer Hall
"All Praise be to Allah, the Cheriser and Sustainer of the worlds"
(Qur’an 1:2)