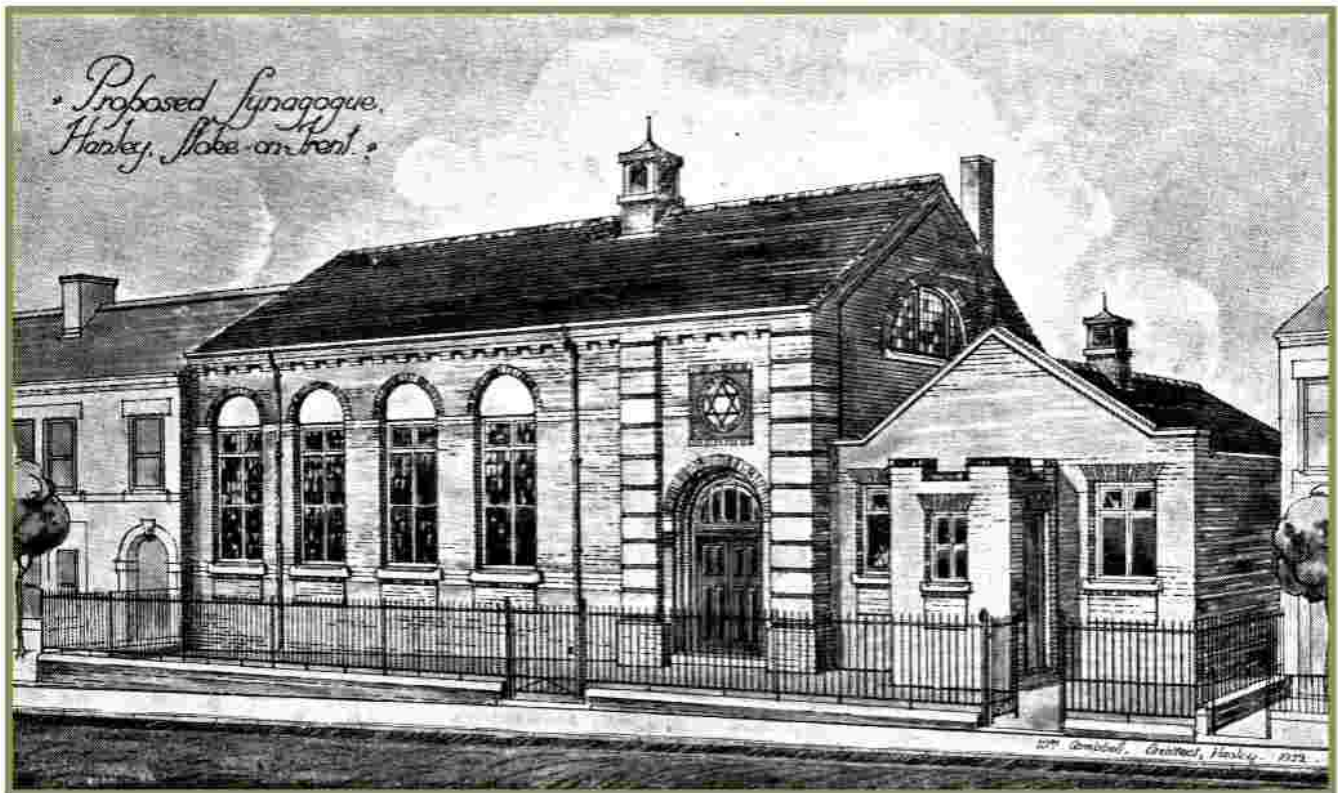


THE NEW SYNAGOGUE AT HANLEY (13th October 1922)



The new Synagogue (the foundation stones of which were laid on 5th October 1922), is now nearing completion and the opening will take place on Thursday 6th September 1923. This ceremony will mark a very important step in the history of the Hebrew Community here in the Potteries. Prior to 1873 the Hebrew Services were held for a few years in a private house in Marsh Street, Hanley. In that year efforts were made to find a more permanent and suitable home and the Community purchased an old Welsh Chapel in Hanover Street, Hanley, where the services since that date have been conducted.

In 1902 at a general meeting of the Congregation, the then Chief Rabbi, the late Dr. Adler, urged the need for the erection of a new Synagogue. The suggestion was taken up with enthusiasm and ultimately resulted in the purchase of a new site in Birch Terrace, Hanley. This site has been occupied for over 50 years by a school building, where in the early days, a private school for boys was conducted by a Mr. Mills.

Some few years after 1902, additional land was purchased adjoining the school site, this land having been used as a Stone Mason's yard. These two purchases now form the site of the new Synagogue. It has a frontage of about 79 feet and an area of about 880 square yards.

The position and the surroundings are eminently suitable for a place of worship, and for a synagogue, have exceptional advantages because the frontage runs from East to West, so giving opportunity for the Ark containing the Scrolls of the Law to be placed at the East end of the Synagogue.

The main building is set back from the road and has a forecourt with wrought iron palisades and gates. The main entrance is approached by a handsome doorway with a semi-circular arch, giving access to a spacious Entrance Hall, which divides the Synagogue from that part of the building which is devoted to School purposes.

A pair of double doors connect the Entrance Hall with the Synagogue, the floor space of which measures 40 feet long and 32 feet wide. The seating is arranged on slightly raised platforms on the North and South walls and provides accommodation for 94 worshippers. Ample space is provided for increasing the seating.

The Reading Desk is placed in a central position. The Ladies Gallery extends over the Entrance Hall, and has five rows of seats providing accommodation for 81 seats. A Staircase from the Entrance Hall leads to the Gallery. The upper part of the Synagogue (including the Ladies Gallery), measures 50 feet long and 32 feet wide. There is a separate Entrance to the School Room through a porch in Birch Terrace. There is also an Entrance into the School Room from the Entrance Hall. A basement at the rear affords ample accommodation for the necessary Kitchen, Scullery and Heating Chamber. The building presents a pleasing appearance and is brick built with tiled roofs.

The front elevation is particularly attractive, having a facing of red pressed bricks, and this is relieved with moulded bricks and brick arches and stone dressing. The eight large glazed windows with elaborate Cathedral glass in leaded lights of special design afford excellent lighting for the Synagogue.

A mosaic tile panel is placed above the Entrance Doorway, this panel represents the "Shield of David" placed in a circle. The stained glass Fanlight over the Entrance Doorway is lettered in Hebrew characters, the inscription "This is none other than the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven" (Genesis 17.xxviii).

The woodwork to the seating, Gallery front and doors to the Synagogue and Entrance Hall is in figured pitch Pine, stained and varnished. The Ark containing the Scrolls of the Law is placed on a raised platform of three steps, this is executed in figured Oak and is an elaborate piece of work having "Ionic" pillars, and broken pediment. In the centre of the pediment is placed two tablets, lettered in gold in Hebrew characters, abbreviations of the Ten Commandments, and overhanging, a perpetual lamp.

On the steps at each end of the Platform are a pair of "Doric" fluted pillars in Oak, with trident electric candle lamps, and on a raised step at each side of the Ark is a special seat with Book Board front executed in Oak and of pleasing design.

The Reading Desk is placed in the centre of the floor space and directly facing the Ark, this is executed in figured, polished, Pitch-Pine and is quite an elaborate affair. The floor space of same measures ten feet by seven feet and is approached by two sets of steps (one at each corner facing the Synagogue Entrance).

The Reading Board - which faces the East - is supported on a Pedestal Cupboard and is lit by a pair of electric trident Candle Lamp Standards. There are seats on each side of the floor space and one at the rear.

The electric lighting of the Synagogue has been tastefully carried out, all the fittings are of a special design in Oxidised Silver. A most elaborate centre chandelier hangs from the ceiling, ornamental wall brackets are fixed round the walls and a perpetual lamp fixed in front of the Ark.

The heating of the Synagogue and School is by low-pressure hot water. For the time being the walls and ceilings have been temporarily decorated in distemper and it is proposed in the course of a couple of years to decorate in a more permanent manner.

It is pleasing to note the way this building is designed, fitted up and furnished for the comfort of the worshippers, and the Hanley Hebrew Congregation are to be congratulated upon their arduous efforts of the past years.

The total cost of the work, exclusive of the site, will exceed £4,000:00. The Architects are Messrs W. Campbell & Son of Hanley, who have also designed the Reading Desk, Ark and other fittings, and supervised the work.

The Contractors for the Building are Messrs H. Howlett & Sons of Hanley, who have also executed the seating and all the Oak and Pitch-Pine fittings. The electric lighting by Messrs Blackburn, Starling & Co. Ltd., of Hanley, and the heating by Messrs W. R. Blackshaw & Co., of Longton.

The Synagogue will be opened by Mr T. Alexander of London. A Gold Key will be presented to him for the occasion. At the Consecration Ceremony the Rev. Dr. J. Abelson, M.A., D.Litt., of Leeds will officiate.