



# The Spatial Needs of the Charedi Community in Stamford Hill

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## 1. Introduction

The Stamford Hill area of Hackney is characterised by a strictly Orthodox Jewish – or Charedi – community. With around 19,000 people, it is the largest Charedi community in Europe. A Charedi community has existed in the area for over 60 years and will continue living there for the foreseeable future. While part of Stamford Hill's built environment has been designed and developed by Charedi people or organisations, for the most part members of the community have relied on pre-existing housing stock to meet their spatial needs.

The needs of the Charedi community are unique. As a community, they require synagogues, schools and other religious, cultural and social facilities. As individual households, they require space for their families which are generally much larger than usual, and also for religious practices that have specific spatial requirements. As a result, Charedim (plural of Charedi) are continually engaged in adapting and extending the housing stock to meet their needs. This is as true of poorer Charedi households as it is of the more affluent members of this classless community. There are literally hundreds of loft extensions, dormers, back extensions and other adaptations across the neighbourhood. Poorer people who cannot afford to move into larger accommodation will borrow money to alter their homes, to create urgently needed space.

Regeneration and development programmes in Hackney have made no housing provision for Charedim. In addition, development activity within the Charedi community has often been a source of tension with Hackney's planners, and sometimes with other Stamford Hill residents. The changes that Charedim seek to make to their homes and community buildings have often been refused on the grounds that they would be overdevelopment and would cause harm to the character of the existing streetscape and housing stock. Many Charedi people on the other hand believe that their freedom to live with reasonable space for family and community needs is unreasonably curtailed by subjective aesthetic judgements, by a system in which they have no significant voice and which does not take account of their needs.

Planning and development policies should reflect the living, dynamic needs of communities, including minority groups. Where a community's needs are unclear, then planning policy will get it wrong. This paper provides demographic and socio-economic information about Hackney's Charedi community and describes some key aspects of its faith. Its purpose is to empower planners and decision makers to ensure that planning policy is able to meet the needs of different communities in a fair and proportionate way, and to address questions such as what constitutes a neighbourhood's character and what is the correct balance between the need to preserve the historic character of a streetscape and the need to meet the needs of rapidly growing population groups. It also seeks to inform Hackney's housing and regeneration strategies about the distinct needs of a significant ethnic and faith minority group.

Solutions need to have a broad vision of the future of the Charedi community and the area in which they have chosen to live, and should consider the residential, educational, cultural, religious and employment needs of the community as a whole and not in isolation

**A note on terminology.** Both the terms Charedi and Orthodox Jewish are used. Generally, Orthodox Jewish is used when the characteristic described would affect all who observe Jewish Orthodoxy, while Charedi is used when referring specifically to the culturally distinct and strictly observant community. Other Hebrew or Yiddish terms are defined either in the text or in footnotes.

## 2. Demographic information

**Size** Hackney's Charedi community – otherwise referred to as the Orthodox, strictly Orthodox or ultra Orthodox Jewish community – is estimated at about 19,200 people<sup>1</sup> making it a significant faith and ethnic minority comprising about 8.5% of the borough's population. It is densely concentrated in the New River, Springfield, Cazenove and Lordship wards, where physical features of the Charedi presence, such as mezuzos on doorposts, contribute to the character of the area. In some super output areas, Charedim (plural of Charedi) comprise the majority of residents. The community spills over the borough boundary into Haringey, with about 13% of community members now living in South Tottenham<sup>2</sup>.

**Growth** The Charedi community is growing fast, with the number of households increasing at a rate of at least 3.4% annually<sup>3</sup>. If this rate of growth continues, the community will number about 26,000 by 2019 (Chart 1). The average household size is 6.3 persons<sup>4</sup>, compared to a Hackney average of 2.3 persons. Over half of Hackney's Charedim are under the age of 16<sup>5</sup>. Charedi children are estimated to be at least 22% of Hackney's child population<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In June 2009 the Shomer Shabbos telephone directory listed 2903 Hackney addresses of Charedi households. A conservative undercount at 5% is assumed, giving 3048 households. Mayhew Associates 2008 for LB Hackney found an average household size of 6.3, giving a total Hackney Charedi population of 19,202, or 8.6% of the Borough's population.

<sup>2</sup> Shomer Shabbos telephone directory June 2009.

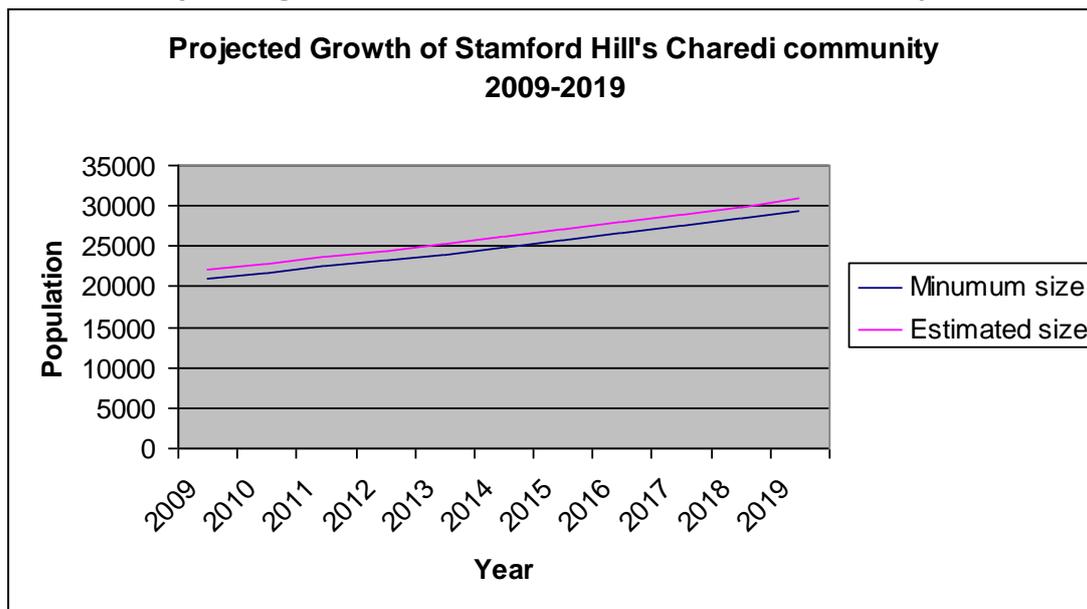
<sup>3</sup> Vulkan and Graham, 2008, Population trends among Britain's strictly Orthodox Jews. Other sources put growth at much higher rates, for example Holman estimates growth at 8% per annum.

<sup>4</sup> Mayhew Associates 2008 for LBH.

<sup>5</sup> Holman 2002 found 56% of Charedi population surveyed to be under age 16.

<sup>6</sup> A Charedi under-16 population is estimated at 10,753, based on the above sources.

Chart 1: Projected growth of Stamford's Hill's Charedi community<sup>7</sup>.



### 3. Historical Perspective

**Immigration** Jews were allowed to re-enter Britain by Oliver Cromwell about 350 years ago. Jewish settlement in Stamford Hill began as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Jewish merchants built their country homes in what was then a rural area. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, pogroms and persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe led to the immigration of 100,000 Jews into England. Many of these passed through London's East End and moved north through Hackney towards Stamford Hill, where their Jewish brethren had already settled. By 1923, Hackney had a Jewish population of 20,000 throughout the whole borough. During the 1930's and immediately post war the Jewish population was swelled by refugees and Holocaust survivors. Within the latter stream were many East European Charedim. Since the war there has been a further more limited Jewish immigration, for example from Hungary following the revolution in 1956 and Aden in 1967 as well as a more recent influx of Jews from the Yemen.

**Out migration of the general Jewish population** Since about 1950 there has been a substantial decline in the total Jewish population in Dalston and South Hackney and consolidation in and around Stamford Hill. Non-Charedi Jews out migrated to the suburbs of Barnet, Enfield and Redbridge, while the strictly Orthodox community has remained, and grown, in Stamford Hill.

The majority of Charedi children and young people in Stamford Hill today are the third and fourth generation of Holocaust survivors and refugees from across Eastern Europe. The community is bound by its shared adherence to the main tenets of Judaism which are described below. There are numerous sub-communities, and considerable diversity of customs, for example dress and dialect. These sub-communities have their origins in different parts of

<sup>7</sup> Chart includes the 13% of the community that resides in LB Haringey.

Europe and the rest of the world. For example, the Sephardi minority (from North Africa, India, Iraq, Yemen with darker skin colour than Jews of Caucasian origin) have cultural differences and customs of their own. However, the common faith that distinguishes its adherents, unites different sects as a single community.

#### **4. Charedi life and its impact on the spatial environment**

**Context and core beliefs** Judaism is a monotheistic faith with laws that provide the framework for Jewish life. These laws are set out in the Torah<sup>8</sup> also known as Mosaic Law. Decisions about practical, day-to-day applications of the law is the province of Rabbis and Dayanim (rabbinical judges), who also provide spiritual guidance and leadership to their communities.

Key aspects of Jewish observance, as well as Charedi custom, that impact on the community's spatial needs are set out below.

**Kashrus – the requirement to eat only Kosher food** The Torah allows the consumption of only certain types of animals, poultry and fish which must be prepared in a strictly prescribed manner. The Torah also prohibits the co-consumption and preparation of meat and milk-based products together.

Kosher food must only be prepared and cooked in kosher utensils, using kosher ovens, sinks and work surfaces, where dairy and meat-based products are strictly separated. The kosher kitchen will have two sets of crockery, cutlery and cookware for milk and meat foods. It will also have separate storage space and food preparation areas, for milk and meat, two sinks and sometimes two ovens, dishwashers or fridges. As a result of these requirements, Orthodox Jewish homes need substantially larger kitchens than the standard British household.

Orthodox Jews will eat only foods that are kosher and have been prepared in their own homes or the homes of people who observe kashrus strictly. Processed, manufactured foods or those prepared outside the home will be supervised by a Kashrus authority that certifies the food as Kosher and places a seal of its approval, or hechsher, on the packaging. This includes staple items such as milk and bread. Living in close proximity to the availability of kosher food is a basic necessity for Charedim.

#### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews require larger kitchens to allow separate food preparation and storage areas for milk and meat.
- They also need to live in neighbourhoods where they have access to Kosher food suppliers including grocers, butchers and bakeries.

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<sup>8</sup> The Torah comprises the Old Testament (the Written Torah) and the Talmud (the Oral Torah). A practical application of the law (halacha) is provided in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>8</sup>, adherence to which can be described as the hallmark of a strictly Orthodox Jew.

**Prayer and Torah Study** There are three daily prayers, and more on Shabbos (Sabbath), Yom Tov (Jewish holidays) and other days of religious significance. Males over the age of 13 must say these prayers with a ‘minyan’ – a quorum of ten males, which are usually held in the synagogue although other locations may be improvised (e.g. a workplace). During weekday morning prayers, men don a Tallis (prayer shawl) and tefillin (phylacteries). Many prayers require reading from a Sefer Torah (Torah scroll), which is usually only available in the synagogue.

Apart from prayer, synagogues also provide space for Torah study, which is an important feature in the lives of Charedim. Torah study is how Jews have kept their religion and identity alive for millennia. The ultimate mitzvah (Torah commandment) is Torah study, and there is a duty for parents to teach their children Torah. Many young men spend their young adulthood studying Torah in a Kollel (Talmudical college for mature students).

Synagogues have separate sections for men and women. As well as providing space for the religious functions of prayer and Torah study, they also serve as community centres, often having a community hall attached. Celebrations relating to new births, barmitzvas<sup>9</sup> and marriages all take place in synagogues.

There are over 75<sup>10</sup> synagogues in Stamford Hill, although some are small and no more than a converted house because of lack of space and finance for purpose-built synagogues. The large number of synagogues reflects the diversity within the Charedi community, with different sects having different liturgical traditions. It also reflects the need for synagogues to be within walking distance of people’s homes (see Shabbos below).

The synagogue and study-hall are not the only places designated for prayer and study. The Jewish home also serves as a place for prayer and Torah study. Virtually every Jewish household will have at least one room with bookshelves filled with sacred books (seforim) for study and prayer. Some homes have hundreds (and occasionally thousands) of books on Jewish subjects. It is in part due to their attachment to sacred books that Jews are known as “the People of the Book”.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews require synagogues for daily prayers, Torah study and community events. Synagogues should meet the needs of diversity within the community. They also need space in their homes for sacred books.

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<sup>9</sup> The event marking the coming of age of a Jewish male at 13 years.

<sup>10</sup> Just over 100 synagogues are affiliated to the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in London

**Shabbos** The weekly Sabbath, or Shabbos, begins just before sunset on Friday and ends at nightfall on Saturday. Shabbos marks the Jewish belief in a Creator and is a time for spirituality and family life. Shabbos is celebrated with at least two family meals, prayer and study of Torah. Meals will often include the extended family and other guests, including needy people in the community who would otherwise go without a Shabbos meal.

On Shabbos, as well as a complete prohibition on employment and business activities, a wide range of 'work' is forbidden<sup>11</sup>. Modern applications of Shabbos prohibitions include activating electrical equipment such as telephones and computers, turning on or off light switches, water heaters, cooking and using or driving motorised transport. PIR lights and electronic fob entry doors are now the norm on new developments and refurbished council blocks, and Charedi people cannot enter premises where these are present on Shabbos<sup>12</sup>.

The prohibition against using cars, buses or any form of transport on Shabbos has a profound impact on the community's choice of location, as they need to live within walking distance of their synagogue.

Carrying in public spaces is forbidden on Shabbos. This prohibition may be overcome by an eruv. An eruv surrounds a spatial area with a string or wire, usually supported by poles, and in Jewish law renders a public space into a private "enclosure", allowing carrying on Shabbos as if one were in their home domain. Some parts of London and the suburbs with substantial Orthodox Jewish communities are surrounded by eruvs, for which planning consent has been provided. While the leading Rabbis in Stamford Hill do not wish to introduce an eruv that would cover large parts of the neighbourhood<sup>13</sup>, eruvs in smaller areas such as cul-de-sacs or defined estates would usually be welcomed. This is because they allow people who might otherwise be housebound on Shabbos, for example parents of babies who need to be pushed in a pram or buggy, to go out.<sup>14</sup>

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Charedi people require dining and living room area in their home that can accommodate their extended family and guests. Requirements of individual households will vary according to their family size.
- They need adequate kitchen space to accommodate the requirements of kosher food preparation for large households and guests.
- They need to live within walking distance of their synagogue.
- They may wish to build an eruv to enable them to carry on Shabbos.
- They cannot access buildings on Shabbos where their entry would activate electricity or electronic devices.

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<sup>11</sup> Work is defined by the Torah as productive activity that in Biblical times contributed to building the Tabernacle.

<sup>12</sup> These and other Shabbos prohibitions are waived in the case of medical emergencies.

<sup>13</sup> Because of halacha problems

<sup>14</sup> One of Hackney's social landlords has not permitted an eruv in Lewis Gardens, a small Charedi cluster on the Hillside Estate, because of the objections from non-Orthodox Jews who perceive the eruv as 'forcing' religion on the public realm.

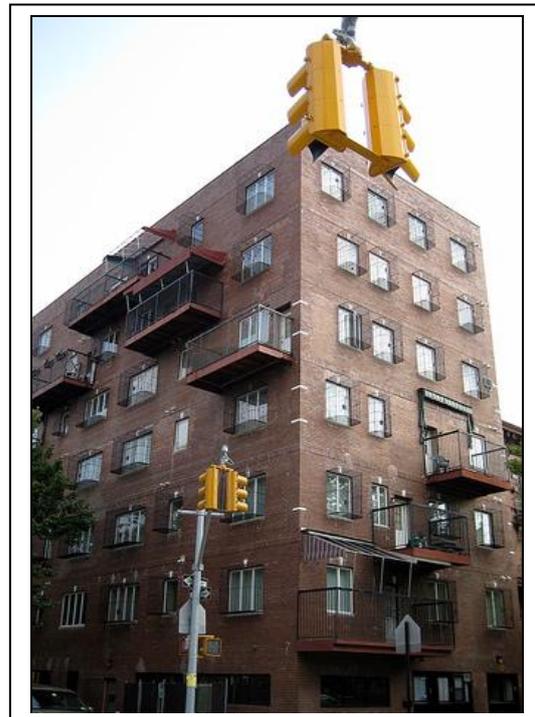
**Other Jewish Holidays** Major and minor festivals punctuate the Jewish year, beginning in the autumn with Rosh HaShana which begins the ten day period of teshuva (repentance) culminating in Yom Kippur. These, together with the other three Torah designated holidays of Succos, Pesach and Shevuos, are known collectively as Yom Tov. Succos and Pesach both have significant spatial requirements.

**Succos** Succos (Tabernacles) brings the requirement to construct a succah – temporary dwelling – for a duration of 8 days in the autumn. During this time, the family’s meals are eaten in the succah and male members of the family sleep in the succah. Succahs need to meet the requirements of halacha (for example in their dimensions) and also the family’s practical space requirements. Traditionally, succahs have been made of wood and covered with organic material such as leaves or bamboo and then decorated inside with Succah decorations. Increasingly, modern homes are built with a slideable succah roof made of glass covering part of the dining area, or even an upstairs bedroom. This roof stays in place throughout the year and is detachable during Succos. It enables the family to enjoy the comfort of their home while satisfying the halachic requirement of a succah. Most rear ground floor extensions in Charedi households include a succah roof.



Above: Succahs in Jerusalem, behind homes and on second floor balcony

Right: A succah should be positioned so that all or part of its roof is open to the sky. For this reason, balconies are designed staggered, so that the succah from each balcony can provide a view of the open sky.



### Implications for Environment and Planning

- Orthodox Jewish homes must have provision for succahs, whether external or built-in. Blocks of flats require staggered balconies and/or a communal area where a succah can be built.

**Pesach (Passover)** Pesach is an eight day holiday in spring marking the Jews' Biblical exodus from slavery in Egypt. All chametz - leavened food (bread, cakes, grain) is removed from the home in the run-up to Pesach. During the holiday, all chametz in the diet is replaced with matza – specially supervised unleavened crackers.

All utensils and food preparation areas (sinks, ovens, cookers) used for chametz are not suitable for Pesach and must be koshered, which is an extensive process which includes thorough cleaning followed by purging with intense heat such as boiling water. Following koshering, worktops must be covered for the duration of the holiday. Many households have separate appliances such as cookers, and all have special utensils (crockery, cutlery, pots). Many households that have the means – or extra space - to do so will have a separate Pesach kitchen (in addition to their usual kitchen) which is exclusively used for non-chametz Pesach food. This avoids the extensive work involved in 'koshering' their year-round kitchen and, more importantly, allows them to prepare Pesach food in the run-up to the holiday while chametz is still being used in the regular kitchen. For large households and where the extended family will be visiting over Pesach, this is a very important benefit.

More than any other holiday, Pesach is a time when families spend the holiday together and families who do not live in the area come to stay. It is also an obligation to invite the poor to the Pesach meals. It is not unusual for Pesach meals to have over 30 participants, and many households will have double or triple the usual number of residents.

Many ground floor extensions to Charedi homes are built to allow the inclusion of a Pesach kitchen, at the same time as creating more living space for the family.

It is for Pesach, other holidays and the weekly Shabbos, that households particularly need large dining and living space. The dining and living space will be proportionate to the size of the household but a well-sized dining room (in a house of 4 – 5 bedrooms) might be in excess of 25 square metres, with a separate living room in excess of 20 square metres. A space of this size can be opened into one to accommodate a larger meal for around 30 people.



During Pesach, worktops and sinks are koshered, then covered with heavy foil. Separate appliances, dishes and kitchenware are used.

**Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews benefit greatly from an additional Pesach kitchen.
- Dining, living and bedroom space sometimes have to accommodate a very large extended family and guests.

**Mikva** The Mikva (plural mikvaos) is a ritual bath containing 750 litres (165Gallons) of pure water and is used for spiritual purification. The first requirement on a Jewish community is to build a mikva – before building a synagogue.



Inside a Stamford Hill mikva

**Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews need mikvaos, which may be situated within synagogue buildings or nearby.

**Children and families** Families are an intrinsic part of Jewish religion and culture. Large families are common in the Charedi community. While the average household size is 6.3 people, this figure includes young households that have not yet started having children, and older households where children have already left home. The ‘peak’ average household size will be much larger than the general average, with some households having ten or more children. The high birth rate is the reason for the growth of the Charedi community. Overwhelmingly, children are raised in two-parent households, by their mother and father. Incidence of divorce and single parenthood are very small by general standards.

The main effect of this in relation to the spatial environment is the requirement for large homes to have adequate bedroom and living space for large families. In 2002, overcrowding in the Charedi community was found in 33% of households<sup>15 16</sup>, and is considered by many to be at crisis level. There are many households with severe overcrowding, for example five children sleeping in one bedroom. This situation is the main reason for the prevalence of loft extensions, which allow households to create one or more additional bedrooms. In many cases the only way to provide the extra bedrooms is to build into or onto the roof. It is also worth noting that the master bedroom for the household's married couple would need to be able to accommodate two single beds, as required by Jewish family law, and a cot, and therefore requires a minimum of 14 square metres as opposed to the standard size for a British master bedroom of 12 square metres. A comfortable size is in fact achieved in a space of 18 square metres. There is a practical need for extra space for equipment for children and babies, in particular the hallway in a Charedi home needs to be capable of accommodating a pram or double buggy. Blocks of flats and community buildings need specific areas for storage of buggies and prams.

Radical thinking may provide solutions to the current situation in Stamford Hill. Some suggestions are as follows:

- In some cases, allowing a household to build a single storey rear extension substantially bigger than the 3.5m that Hackney will allow at the present time. This is especially so when very often neighbours would like the very same thing.
- Allowing an extra floor to be built on to the smaller houses in the area, as is being proposed by Haringey council in South Tottenham, would generally allow families to adequately house themselves.
- Allowing the infilling of the spaces between the original rear extensions at first and second floors on pairs of houses provides a significant amount of extra space.
- Allowing the excavation of basements below and behind existing houses complete with a front basement area again provides much needed extra space.
- Construction for the future needs of the community should consider developing below ground floor to accommodate the additional space requirements of Charedi households.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews generally need larger homes with more bedrooms and larger living space than a smaller family would need. At least one bedroom should be at least 14 square metres and the hallway should be able to accommodate prams/buggies. Hallways in blocks of flats require space for prams and buggies.

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<sup>15</sup> Holman 2002

<sup>16</sup> One problem with documenting the extent of overcrowding is misclassification of rooms, for example a small room designed for a single bed may be classified as a double bedroom, and a storage cupboard may be classified as a room.

- Radical solutions should be considered to alleviate the overcrowding crisis experienced by Stamford Hill's Charedi community.

**Social and cultural norms** Social and cultural norms are heavily influenced by Charedi laws and customs relating to 'modesty' (tznius) in behaviour between men and women, the intention of which is to protect the sanctity of marriage and family life. There is very limited social mixing of males and females, including children<sup>17</sup>. Social occasions such as weddings or other celebrations require that men and women have their own separate space.

**Education** Orthodox Jews believe that education is essential in order to preserve knowledge of Torah and Jewish law equipping children to develop Torah values and to make a valuable contribution to society. Charedi schools play a critical role in serving the community and preserving its identity. They also enable families to raise their children in line with their distinct ethos and values. The lack of suitable sites or buildings is a major problem and puts pressure on the residential stock, which is often converted to premises for education.

Citizenship is a core value to Judaism. Two core tenets are 'dina demalchusa dina', the requirement to observe the law of the land, and the concept of gratitude and allegiance to the host society and sovereign state in which the community resides. The advice given by the prophet Jeremiah was, "seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you and pray for its community, for in its peace you will find peace." A core principle is to treat neighbours well and provide sustenance and justice to those who are disadvantaged in society, which includes both those who are Jewish and those who are not members of the community.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Orthodox Jews require schools and other facilities to provide education and cultural activities to the community, which includes around 10,500 Hackney children.

**Chesed (Acts of Kindness)** Judaism requires its adherents to give charity and to help people in need. Particular value is placed on "Bikur Cholim", which means visiting and helping the sick and disabled. These values, and a very high level of dependency on community based services (members of the community rarely turn to external agencies in times of crisis) have led to the development of a chesed voluntary non-profit infrastructure.

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<sup>17</sup> All physical contact between men and women (include a handshake or dancing) is prohibited. Women dress modestly, as defined by halacha. The requirement for modesty extends beyond inter-gender relationships and covers all aspects of culture including choices of literature, music and leisure activities. Where these include content or images that are considered immodest, they will be avoided. For this reason, Charedi homes do not have televisions and Charedim have very different patterns of social and leisure activities from the general population. Leisure activities for children and young people are provided for within the community in a way that protects their cultural norms.

This covers the whole spectrum of non-profit activity ranging from advice services to services for older people to childcare. Included in this are voluntary first-aid services, provision of free medical equipment to the house-bound, and delivery of free meals to the sick and lonely. Finding premises for non-profit organisations can be very difficult because of the enormous pressures on space in the area, and puts pressure on residential stock.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- The Orthodox Jewish community requires premises to accommodate a wide range of voluntary organisations and public activities.

## **5. Socio-economic context**

**Poverty and employment** Charedi households have very wide variations in their economic positions. A small minority of the community is of comfortable means but over 50% are on means-tested benefits<sup>18</sup>. People in different economic circumstances live side by side. The community is bound by a shared faith and culture, not by socio-economic status. The wealthy in the community bear most of the burden of funding and maintaining the religious and educational infrastructure.

Until recent times members of the Charedi community were associated with small scale workshop industries, including furniture making, shoe and clothing manufacture and the jewellery trade. A small number of individuals invested in the property sector which was spectacularly successful, and much of the wealth in the community today is the result of post-war investment. A characteristic of most economic activity was that it allowed for employment within the community; either self-employment or employment by other Charedi people. While Charedim may be highly educated Torah scholars, having been through many years of yeshiva and Kollel training, there is an almost complete absence of a professional class, resulting from Charedi people's reluctance to go through a university education.

The demise of small manufacturing and the shift to a knowledge economy has severely impacted on the Charedi community. This, as well as the high cost of housing in London and the welfare benefits trap<sup>19</sup>, has resulted in a dramatic decline in the community's socio-economic situation. In most households there is at least one person in work and there are lower numbers of people claiming jobseekers allowance or income support than in Hackney as a whole<sup>20</sup>. However, because people are in low paid jobs and have large families coupled with high housing costs, take-up of other means tested benefits particularly housing benefit, child tax credit and working tax credits are very high. Census 2001 data (the only data available at ward level) shows

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<sup>18</sup> Mayhew Associates 2008 p.

<sup>19</sup> Households receiving welfare benefits lose their benefits when they generate earned income and may end up worse off. Benefits increase with the number of children, and are also higher for people in private rented accommodation (the most common tenure in the Charedi community) who receive housing benefit. People become 'trapped' in poverty, unwilling to earn income which will result in forgoing benefits.

<sup>20</sup> Holman 2002

Springfield, New River and Cazenove wards employment rates of 50.3%, 51.9% and 55.8% respectively for their working age population compared to an overall average of 58.3 for Hackney. Springfield and New River also have significantly lower levels of skills and qualifications for their working age population than overall figures for Hackney<sup>21</sup>.

Charedi people have unique considerations in relation to employment. They will not take advantage of work opportunities in the Borough's key employment or growth areas of financial services, cultural industries and public sector professions. They neither have the prerequisite qualifications for these jobs, nor do these jobs provide them with a culturally safe environment in which Charedim generally have been employed. When they do venture out of their neighbourhood, they will often do this in clusters and in trades where the community has developed a knowledge base. An example of this is the Hatton Garden area in the City of London, where the jewellery trade is concentrated and where many Charedim are employed working in businesses and workshops which are Charedi owned.

Planning policy is linked to strategies and policies for increasing economic activity, with the intention of promoting access to work. Higher density development is permitted and encouraged close to major transport links and in synchrony with the development of economic hubs. This has little relevance to Charedim and may place artificial constraints on desperately needed higher density development in Charedi areas.

#### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- Charedi employment is concentrated in Charedi neighbourhoods or other Charedi work clusters. Economic regeneration activities in other parts of Hackney or elsewhere in London will have very little impact on the Charedi community. Limits on development density need to recognise the likelihood of Charedim to seek employment within the neighbourhood.

**Housing tenure and conditions** A household survey carried out by Holman in 2002 found that 44% of households are owner-occupiers while 54% rent their homes. 71% of Charedi renters are with private sector landlords, a significantly higher proportion than the general renting population in deprived areas. The majority of social housing is with the Agudas Israel Housing Association<sup>22</sup>. Mayhew Associates 2008 confirms the significantly lower likelihood for low income Charedi households to be in social housing, compared to the general population.

Holman found that 33% of Charedi homes were overcrowded<sup>23</sup> compared to 2% in the general population<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Hackney Ward Profile data.

<sup>22</sup> Baseline indicators for the Charedi community in Stamford Hill, Holman 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Using the crude measure of assuming a maximum of two people share a bedroom.

<sup>24</sup> ONS 2002.

75% of households responding to Holman reported at least one problem with their accommodation, and 25% of households had no problems. Multiple problems are most likely in the private rented sector. Commonly reported problems were shortage of space (39%), damp walls or floors (30%) and rot in windows or doors (26%).

In 2002, Holman found that accommodation in all tenures was increasingly difficult to access. No similar research has been carried out since, but Agudas Israel Housing Association and community activists report that this problem has reached crisis proportions, with many families in temporary accommodation with relatives, or more commonly in very unsuitable premises.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- There is a concentration of housing need experienced by the Charedi community in the north of Hackney.
- Charedi people need to continue to live within walking distance of synagogues and community facilities in the Stamford Hill area.
- Charedi people have unequal access to social housing despite low income and housing need.

**Crime** Being victims of crime, including racist crime, is a very high concern for Charedim. Charedi experience of falling victim to all types of crime, particularly street crime, is substantially higher than other groups reported in the British Crime Survey. Holman 2002 found that members of the Charedi community were also significantly more likely to describe themselves as 'very worried' about crime than the general population in England and Wales and more than people in inner city areas. People – mostly men and boys – in 43% of households reported experiencing verbal abuse from strangers. Most perpetrators aggravated their crime by using racist language. Conversely this type of crime by Charedim is virtually unknown. Community safety is a great concern and most families would find it unacceptable to live somewhere where they felt isolated from other Orthodox Jewish people.

### **Implications for Environment and Planning**

- The Charedi experience of racism makes it very difficult for people to be isolated from their community. Developments aiming to include housing units for Charedim need to include a large enough number of units to create a sense of security. The number of units required depends on the proximity to the nucleus of the community in Stamford Hill, but a suggested minimum number might be 30 units. In discussions about developing community clusters further out (for example in the Thames Gateway or Tottenham Hale) the need for a critical mass of 200 households has been agreed.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Yetev Lev Court provides 36 units on the Fawcett Estate. Heron Drive on Green Lanes has a cluster of 28 units.

### **Summary of Considerations for Environment and Planning**

- 1) Orthodox Jews require larger kitchens to allow separate areas for milk and meat.
- 2) They need adequate kitchen space to accommodate the requirements of kosher food preparation for large households and guests.
- 3) They also need to live in neighbourhoods where they have easy access to Kosher food suppliers including grocers, butchers, bakeries and fish suppliers.
- 4) Orthodox Jews require synagogues for daily prayers. Synagogues should meet the needs of different sects within the community.
- 5) Charedi people require dining and living room area in their home that can accommodate their extended family and guests. Requirements of individual households will vary according to their family size.
- 6) They need to live within walking distance of their synagogue.
- 7) They may wish to build an eruv to enable them to carry on Shabbos.
- 8) Orthodox Jewish homes must have provision for succahs, whether external or built-in.
- 9) Orthodox Jews benefit greatly from an additional Passover kitchen.
- 10) Orthodox Jews need mikvaos, often located within synagogues.
- 11) Orthodox Jews generally need larger homes with more bedrooms and larger living space than a smaller family would need. At least one bedroom should be a minimum of 14 square metres and the hallway should be able to accommodate prams/buggies. Hallways in blocks of flats require space for prams/buggies.
- 12) Radical solutions should be considered to alleviate the overcrowding crisis experienced by Stamford Hill's Charedi community.
- 13) Orthodox Jews require schools and other facilities to provide education and cultural activities to around 10,500 children, a number that grows every year.
- 14) The Orthodox Jewish community requires premises to accommodate a wide range of voluntary organisations and public activities.
- 15) Charedi employment is concentrated in Charedi neighbourhoods or other Charedi work clusters. Economic regeneration activities in other

parts of Hackney or elsewhere in London will have very little impact on the Charedi community. Limits on development density need to recognise the likelihood of Charedim to seek employment within the neighbourhood.

16) There is a concentration of housing need experienced by the Charedi community in the north of Hackney.

17) Charedi people have unequal access to social housing despite low income and housing need.

18) The Charedi experience of racism makes it very difficult for people to be isolated from their community. Developments aiming to include housing units for Charedim need to include a large enough number of units to create a sense of security. The number of units required depends on the proximity to the nucleus of the community in Stamford Hill, but a suggested minimum number might be 30 units. In discussions about developing community clusters further out (for example in the Thames Gateway or Tottenham Hale) the need for a critical mass of 200 households has been agreed

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