



Architect Marks Barfield is to design a £13 million “eco” mosque on a 0.4 hectare brownfield site in Cambridge.

England's historic city of Cambridge, with its world-famous university and idyllic countryside, will soon count a mosque amidst its stunning skyline of spires. But this isn't just any old mosque. In fact it is the **first-purpose built mosque in the city** which also happens to be environmentally-friendly!

After years of dealing with overcrowding at various small sites across the city, the growing Muslim community decided that it was time to take action. By the summer of 2008, a strip of land and an old warehouse has been purchased and plans for the new mosque were underway. However rather than simply building a mosque as quickly as possible, it was decided from the very start that the mosque would follow environmental sustainability principles.

Europe's first Eco-Mosque

“Islamic civilization has been based on the rejection of waste as an under-estimation of God's blessing and so in the construction of the new mosque here in Cambridge, we were very much in the forefront of the local environmental movement in that we are using the latest heat pumps, conservation technology and green roofs so that we'll have an almost zero carbon footprint,” commented Chairman of the Trust, Tim Winter who is also known as Abdul Hakim Murad.

Winters also added that they intended to build Europe's **first truly ecologically-responsible mosque** and encourage Muslims world-wide to take up their environmental responsibilities.

It is stated in the Qur'an that God has made believers the stewards and protectors of the earth and so to harmonize this important environmental ethic with the most important place of worship in Islam makes perfect sense.

It is also hoped that such initiative will encourage Muslims in the Middle East to take an active interest in the environment and preserve precious resources both at home and in the mosque.

Designed by the award-winning architect [Marks Barfield](#) , who were behind stunning projects such as the London Eye and Kew Treetop Walkway, the mosque is based on the premise of creating an oasis of calm and sustainability in an urban jungle. Winter adds, “This building will be truly inclusive, sustainable, safe, secure and respectful of the neighbourhood.”

Back to the Eco Basics

Stunning skylights mean that the mosque will be naturally lit throughout the year, the building is well insulated and temperature will be carefully optimized by heating or cooling using energy efficient technologies and locally generated energy from ground source heat pumps.

The overall design will enlarge the existing [community garden](#) , create a new permeable green edge around the structure with trees as well as providing bicycle racks at street level and car

parking in the basement. The £13 million project building, which will accommodate up to 1,000 men and women, will also include a cafe, a teaching area and meeting rooms for use by the local Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

“The new mosque will be a real neighbourhood as well as a spiritual centre, easily accessible by public transport and on foot, with facilities for formal and informal community group meetings as well as a leisure destination,” said Winters.

A reminder of the mosque's humble roots

Whilst building an eco-Mosque may seem like a modern invention, it not only helps strengthen and demonstrate Islam's eco principles but also takes Muslims back to the simpler and ecologically sound construction of the first mosque built for the prophet Muhammad ([peace be upon him](#))

. Mud bricks were used for the walls, a palm trunk for the minibar as well as the pillars and waste was minimal- a humble reminder of the mosque's true green roots.

Similar projects have been carried out in the UK such as a £3.5m [partially eco-friendly mosque in Levenshulme](#) , Manchester in 2008. It installed solar panels and was built using wood from renewable sources - however energy was not entirely from renewable sources and they outsourced some construction materials from India.

<http://www.greenprophet.com/2010/07/eco-mosque-england/>