

The Islamic Cultural Center of New York is a mosque and an Islamic cultural center in East Harlem, Manhattan, New York City, United States. It is located at 1711 Third Avenue, between East 96th and 97th Streets. The Islamic Cultural Center was one of the first purpose-built mosques in New York and continues to be one of the city's largest. The mosque's older dwelling in a townhouse at 1 Riverside Drive is still in continual prayer use as a satellite location.

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## Design and history[edit]

Plans for a large Islamic center in New York were originally drawn up in the late 1960s as the first cultural center occupied a location at 1 Riverside Drive by 72nd Street.[1] The first Islamic Center started functioning on a small scale from a modest townhouse at that address. However, the board of trustees later aspired to build a new larger center in a way suiting its prestigious position in the community, and to be one of the landmarks of New York City.[1] Later, an overall project comprising a mosque, a school, a library, a museum, and a lecture hall, were planned out. After years of delays which included raising funds from Muslim countries, a prolonged process of relocating tenants, and the eventual demolition of the buildings on the site; construction of the Islamic Cultural Center began in October 1984.[2] Construction of the associated mosque began on May 28, 1987, the day which corresponded to the end of Ramadan.[3] The cornerstone of the minaret was laid on September 26, 1988.[4]

Construction was delayed during the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait and the First Gulf War.[5] The mosque opened on April 15, 1991, for the feast of Eid ul-Fitr.[6] In the end, more than 46 Muslim countries made contributions toward the \$17 million construction cost of the mosque.[7]

Today, like most mosques, the mosque at the Islamic Cultural Center of New York is oriented toward Mecca at a heading of 58°.[8] Consequently, the building is rotated 29° from Manhattan's north-south street grid,[9] which in turn is rotated 29° from due north-south. The precise calculation of the direction from New York to Mecca was based on the great circle that produces the shortest distance between the two cities.[8] As with many mosques, the direction of Mecca is marked inside by a niche on the wall, known as the mihrab.[10][failed verification] Placed in the center of the large room, the mihrab is ornamented with a large design. Additionally, next to the mihrab is the minbar, which is a staircase from which the imam leads prayer.[citation needed]

## Outreach[edit]

Imam Abu-Namous engaged in a series of interfaith dialogues with prominent Muslim leaders and rabbis.[11] Abu-Namous's successor as imam, Mohammed Shamsi Ali, continued the meetings.[12] Due to political differences, Ali was fired from his post in

2011.[13] Ali was replaced with Abdul Razzaq E. Al Amiri.

Sheik Muhammad Gemeaha, a week after his resignation, stated he had received death threats which partially explained his reason to return to Egypt.

See also[edit]

List of mosques in the Americas

Lists of mosques

List of mosques in the United States

Islam in the United States

Islamic architecture

Park51, canceled Islamic center in the World Trade Center area