

## Clonbrock Road By Edward Lipton\*



Photos ©Charles Hosea

**Thirty-three Clonbrock Road is a semi-detached house built in 1957. The site, which is wedge-shaped, was occupied by a two-storey house and garage. Works comprised full reconfiguration and a two-storey front cantilevered extension.**

As you enter the building through the large, glass, sliding front door, the diagonal floor immediately orientates you in the hall towards the full-height timber doors to the rear sun lounge. With the aid of leather pulls, the double doors open to reveal the rear space and the full-width expanse of glass in thin yellow frames.

Internally, the building is a combination of white oiled pine, and white walls and ceilings. The original floors have been reused;

they were sanded, and received a white and clear oil finish. The skirtings and architraves have been 'designed out' and replaced with flush frames and clear silicone bead.

The bespoke kitchen is in light pink with a white oiled pine work top. The sink drainer is uniquely set in. Kitchen features hover above the ground, thereby adding to the sense of space and openness. A tall unit cleverly designed to incorporate the white goods and conceal the oven allows the kitchen to be 'closed off'.

The stair is formed from white oiled pine and painted treads, hung from above. The soffit is faceted to wind around the underside and reflects the shape of the building and the cantilever to the front.

Heading up the building, past the four bedrooms and generous hall, one arrives at

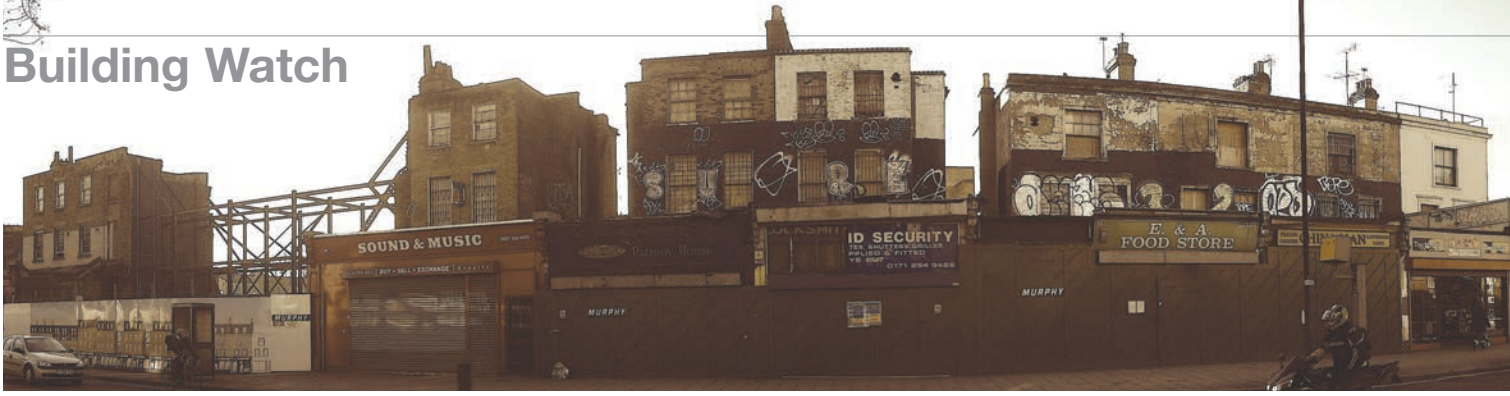
the 'bird's nest', an over-sized landing and 'den' perched over the street overlooking an ornamental silver birch. Continuing up, one comes to a flat roof with a black zinc 'box' that forms the enclosure to the 'bird's nest' below.

\* Edward Lipton is Creative Director of Lipton Plant Architects, the firm responsible for the work on the house.

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## Last Hope for Dalston Lane Terrace

By OPEN Dalston campaigner Lisa Shell

**On the day of the Spitalfields Trust's long awaited meeting with Hackney Property Services, Murphy commenced the destruction of the 1807 villa at 66 Dalston Lane which had housed the Sound and Music shop for some 30 years: lopping the chimney pots, smashing the roof coverings and removing all windows. Representatives from the Trust, Circle 33 Housing and conservation architects, The Regeneration Practice, accompanied Councillor Snell to hear Hackney set out the reasons behind its approach to the regeneration of Dalston Lane Terrace: commercial profit and urban 'sustainability' had been identified as primary objectives of the development brief... whilst the Trust were just relying on 'assumptions' that the buildings could be restored.**

We have learned that wholesale demolition of number 66, along with numbers 68-76, is to commence early in the new year, as part of phase 1 of the 'conservation-led regeneration' project. The other significant buildings at numbers 48-58 form part of phase 2 which it is understood will commence on completion of phase 1.

In June 2013 Murphy's engineer, contrary to their previous advice, notified Hackney that the façades of the 16 Georgian properties could not be saved in the implementation of the approved 'conservation-led' façade-retention redevelopment. Further investigation and tests on the masonry indicated that years of neglect as well as defects in the original construction were to blame. Despite having previously carried out brick-strength testing, it was decided that the bricks were too soft to be fixed back to the new steel frame that was necessary to support the proposed flats behind the façade. So the whole terrace would need to be demolished and rebuilt to modern standards in 'heritage likeness'.

Such appalling news went against Hackney's own adopted conservation policy and so in due diligence the Council appointed a conservation-accredited engineer to check this structural assessment. Their independent engineer acknowledged that some of the properties were 'near collapse' and others 'very poor'. But at number 66 the walls generally appeared plumb; there was some degradation of timber but the overall condition of the building was 'average to poor'. Similar positive assessments were made of the other properties at numbers

48-52 and 54-56. Hackney Council was also advised that the bricks and mortar were 'not in any way unusually weak per se'.

But despite this, Hackney's engineer concluded that none of the façades would survive the process of removing the ground floor brickwork to create open plan shops, which was a key part of Hackney Property Service's commercially driven project brief.

Murphy's own engineer quickly sidestepped this fundamental and shocking conflict and saved Hackney Property Services from an expensive U-turn with the killer blow: apparently cleaning the paint and graffiti would destroy the weathering surfaces of the bricks and render them unusable! Without tests or samples anyone might think that Murphy didn't want to save this brickwork!

At the Hackney Planning Committee meeting of 5 March 2014, the case officer recommended approval of demolition and the Committee, equally divided, passed the resolution by use of the Chair's casting vote.

On 24 November the High Court of Justice dismissed OPEN's challenge of Hackney's decision to approve demolition stating that Hackney's Planning Committee acted within their legal powers to approve the demolition on the basis of the evidence in front of them. Mr Justice Collins, who was 'not without considerable sympathy for the approach of the objectors', found that it was not for him to judge whether the decision was right or wrong but that there was no procedural or legal defect in Hackney's decision which could justify his intervention.



It is easy to see how adhering to correct process does not always cough up the best or right outcomes. Without time or technical expertise the High Court were unable to question the applicant's interpretation of expert technical reports nor interrogate the definition of planning policy.

And with such clear conflicts remaining unexplored OPEN have applied to appeal the court's decision, in the meantime making an injunction application to halt the progress of the destruction at number 66 before all is lost.

Such legal procedures are only made possible through continued donations: the Dalston public clearly still have energy for this fight. A petition to Mayor Jules Pipe asking that he allow the Spitalfields Trust to restore Dalston Lane Terrace has over the last weeks attracted 845 signatures, providing a welcome outlet for increasing public outrage: <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-jules-pipe-allow-the-spitalfields-trust-to-restore-dalston-lane-terrace>

To conclude with Dan Cruickshank's simple words on the Trust's proposals, delivered at the Saving Dalston Lane fundraising Soiree on 23 November: 'There should be something for everyone in Dalston in saving and developing this scheme in a sensitive and thoughtful way that preserves history'.

The future of the terrace ultimately rests with Mayor Jules Pipe.

## Wilmer Place

By Nick Perry for Stokey Local

Since the summer (*Spaces* 45), the Planning Court has heard three days of evidence in a judicial review challenging the granting of two identical planning permissions to redevelop the site at Wilmer Place, N16. In a lengthy judgment, produced just days after the hearing, Mrs Justice Patterson dismissed all the legal claims, giving the developer a green light to proceed to build the 44,000 sq ft supermarket with 53 flats above it, hard by Abney Park cemetery.

The legal claim had become about more than a single development as it sought to establish what rights the decision-makers – the elected Councillors – had to see crucial information from the developer and the Council's consultants. Confidential viability reports were written to justify building just nine affordable homes when local policy would seek 26 on this development. The Planning Court said Councillors had no right to see the justification. Lawyers for the campaign say there is a realistic chance of having the decision overturned at appeal, as important legal principles need to be settled.

Meanwhile, in a separate action, the Information Commissioner's Office has started formal proceedings to force the Council to let it see the viability documents that are in dispute, so the Commissioner can rule on their disclosure. The ICO rarely needs to issue these formal Information Notices. Stokey Local is currently raising funds to

support the legal action. See [stokeylocal.org](http://stokeylocal.org) for more information.

## Progress at 195 Mare Street

By Lisa Shell\*

In 1951 Pevsner described the Grade II\* listed number 195 Mare Street as 'the best 18<sup>th</sup> century house in Hackney'. The Elizabeth Fry Refuge adapted the building for its use between 1860 and 1911 and the subsequent New Lansdowne Club was in residence from 1913 until 2004, since when the Hackney Society has expressed grave concern about ongoing neglect and vandalism. It is heartening to report that a new owner has submitted plans to Hackney (ref 2014/3594) for listed building consent for a careful restoration and refurbishment of the property, removing 20<sup>th</sup> century additions and reinstating details and finishes, so that the building can be leased to a single commercial tenant.

However, the works are to be funded with the profits of an 'enabling scheme', whose details are still unknown, but which is likely to comprise a development of flats within the original rear garden of the house. The Hackney Society will be alert to the potential detrimental impact of a new residential proposal on the setting of this very important building.

The Hackney Society has raised the following concerns in its comments to Hackney's Planning Department:

- The proposals have been drawn up without the reliable expertise of a

conservation accredited architect or engineer.

- The works of repair need to be implemented without delay and prior to the completion and occupation of an enabling development.
- The selection of a tenant should be made and consultation carried out prior to the commencement of construction work to minimise the risk of uncontrolled subsequent alterations.
- It should be demonstrated that the premises fulfil essential fire escape building regulations to accommodate a commercial use.
- It is felt that access provisions have not been sufficiently investigated to meet the requirements of the Equality Act.
- Conditions requiring approval of brick cleaning and repair samples should be included in any approval.
- The insertion of WCs and tea points is regarded as harmful to the original plan form.

It may be of further concern that the applicant, Berkshore Ltd, who formed in 2013, registered a charge with which they purchased the property in May 2013 only to be 'dissolved/struck off' the day after the listed building consent application was submitted with the charge outstanding. It may be speculated that the protection of 195 Mare Street is not the principle interest of the owner in purchasing the building.

\* Lisa Shell is Chair of the Hackney Society's Planning Group.

## Strictly for the Birds? A sponsored walk for HacSoc

By Laurie Elks

The Hackney Society is organising a 20 kilometre sponsored walk to raise money for its future publications programme. It will take place on 9 May, when the cow parsley will be lacy and glorious.

Our walk will start at the heart of Hackney – at St Augustine's Tower, with refreshments – and will take us via Well Street Common, Victoria Park, Fish Island and the Olympic Park to the path along Old River Lea beside Hackney Marshes. After that, the Middlesex Filter Beds and over Walthamstow Marsh to the Walthamstow Reservoirs with two fascinating historic buildings: the Copper Mill and the Marine House.

Then back along the Lea Navigation to finish at Springfield Park.

The walk weaves in and out of Hackney, and offers the most glorious and surprising landscapes our borough can offer. You don't have to be a birdwatcher to enjoy this, but if you bring binoculars you should see plenty of birdlife.

The walk will be led by Lea Valley expert Laurie Elks and will include an introduction to the Walthamstow Wetlands project. There is an old-fashioned sponsor form with this issue of *Spaces* and an e-version on the website.

## The Hackney Design Awards – 2014

The winners of the Hackney Design Awards 2014 were announced on 26 November. The winning buildings were: Cardinal Pole Catholic School, E9; 151 Church Walk, N16; The Gingerbread House, E9; The Garden School, N16; and Writer's Shed, E8.

The judges commended 215 Kingsland Road, E2 and Leonard Circus Shared Space, EC2, and mentions were given to Blackbox, N1 and Hackney City Farm Shop, E2.

Shortlisted buildings were Black and White Building, EC2; 141-145 Curtain Road, EC2; Drake's, N1; 71 Greenwood Road, E8; Kings Crescent Estate Pocket Park, N4; Shakespeare House, E9; and Waddington Studios, N16.

The People's Choice Award went jointly to the Black and White Building and the Writer's Shed.

## Hackney Society News

### A note from Nick Perry, the new Chair of the Hackney Society

Dear Readers,

At the Society's AGM in December we were treated to a tour of the ongoing refurbishment works at the Town Hall by the architect and building manager. It was a pleasure to see the fine quality of workmanship; we hope the remaining works are finished to the same high standard.

At the formal meeting we said thank you to our outgoing Chair, Kevin Moore, and Vice-Chair, Monica Blake. Kevin chaired the Society for some ten years, a period when we experienced some difficult changes in the way we are funded; Monica was on hand for most of these years. I am pleased that they are both staying on the Board of Trustees so we can benefit for their advice and expertise. Monica continues to edit *Spaces*. Margaret Willes was elected as Vice-Chair. Margaret, who chairs the group responsible for Hackney Society publications, edited *Hackney: An Uncommon History in Five Parts*.

I am pleased to have been elected, for the moment, as Chair, having been a Trustee for a few years now. Some of you may know me from the Clapton and Stoke Newington Conservation Areas Advisory Committees and as part of the Stokey Local campaign.

If you would like to read more about my background and how I'd like to use my expertise to benefit the Society over the coming year, then please visit the website for a longer letter to members and friends of the Society.

### Horticultural Hackney

Discover Hackney is working with the Hackney Society to deliver walking tours that take in the horticultural heritage of Hackney. The tours will coincide with the Chelsea Fringe (the alternative gardening festival), which runs from 16 May to 7 June 2015. The guides will be Julia Lafferty (Clapton) and Margaret Willes (Hoxton). See the Hackney Society website for details.

## Noticeboard

### St Mary's Secret Garden

The charity St Mary's Secret Garden has been awarded £4,888 by Hackney Giving. The grant will provide enhanced therapeutic horticultural activities for people living with HIV and Associated Neurocognitive Disorders.

### London Fields Lido

Floodlights have been installed at London Fields Lido, enabling people to swim during the winter evenings. The heated pool is now open between 6.30am and 9.30pm all year round.

## Book Review By Kristina Gillett

*The Hackney Scout Song Book 1921-1971*, by Dr Melvyn H. Brooks, Fast-Print Publishing, £7.

The *Song Book* was reprinted many times and it was widely distributed among scout groups. It was conveniently designed to fit in a uniform shirt pocket. The first editions carried a roll of honour of scouts who had died during WWI. Sadly, a long list of the names of those who died in WWII was added to the post-1945 editions.

Dr Brooks has compiled a moving document charting the history of the *Song Book* and printing the index of first lines.

His research into the names on the roll of honour gives a glimpse of the lives of ordinary people in Hackney, of the lives behind the lists of names in books of remembrance and recorded on memorials.

The brief entries listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records usually amount to no more than next of kin and home address. Dr Brooks has managed to contact old colleagues and family members and added their recollections of some of the young men who never returned.

He was given a collection of letters written by two of them, Alan Piesse and Bill Surridge, to their friend and fellow scout, George Hawkins. They are full of jaunty optimism and peppered with the slang of the day giving an impression of great energy. They showed a willingness to engage with the local communities. They joined scout groups near the camps where they were stationed, organising activities for the boys and obviously feeling warmly welcomed by the scouting family. They were making plans for their scout groups back in Hackney after the war believing that there would be a great role for scouting after the hoped-for victory.

There are delightful letters from Edna Richards remembering her brother Kenneth Ing, who was killed while undergoing pilot training in Canada. There are pictures of the Collings family visiting Sgt Ronald Collings' grave in France. It is important that the memories of these ordinary people are recorded.

Hackney continues to change in ways that could not be imagined during the life of the *Song Book* but it is interesting to find ways of relating to those who lived here before us.

## Publications

**Swimming with Diana Dors** by Hackney writer Jeremy Worman is a collection of short stories. Cinnamon Press, £9.99.

**70x70: Unlicensed Preaching: A Life Unpacked in 70 Films** by Hackney writer Iain Sinclair documents a curation project to celebrate the author's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Volcano Publishing, £25.

**Probably Nothing** by Matilda Tristram is about having treatment for cancer while pregnant. The author was living in Hackney when she wrote it. Penguin, £16.99.

**Ridley Road** by Jo Bloom is a novel set in sixties' London against the backdrop of the 62 Group, a Jewish organisation formed to fight the resurgence in fascism in East London. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99.

## Hackney Society Events

### Hackney War Walk

Sunday 1 March 2015, 2pm

### Walk with Julian Putkowski

Guided tour of local sites of memory and sites of mourning associated with WWI. Meet at 2pm at Wattisfield Road, E5  
*Free to all, but booking essential.* Book online at <http://billetto.co.uk/warwalk>

### Lea Valley

Saturday 9 May 2015, 10.00am

### Walk with Laurie Elks

Sponsored walk along the Lea Valley – see 'Strictly for the Birds?' article or contact Laurie Elks at [l.elks@btconnect.com](mailto:l.elks@btconnect.com) for details.  
Meet at 10.00am (or 9.30am for refreshments) at St Augustine's Tower, E8 1HR  
*Booking essential.* Book online at <http://billetto.co.uk/leavalley>

Thanks to Kopykat for sponsoring this issue

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*Spaces* is published by the Hackney Society. Views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the Society.

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