



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2016

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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Blackbox By Constance Lau*



Photos: Tim Soar

Blackbox, at Culford Mews in De Beauvoir, is the work of Form_art Architects. The idea of the mews served as the starting point for the building in more ways than just its physical location. In contrast to the traditional mews architecture of solid brick enclosures with tiny windows and little daylight, this design is filled with light, but still respects the contextual language of a 'solid box'.

The design features of the entrance courtyard and staircase in this instance are key for the purpose of allowing light into the heart of the house. As a result of the physical area given over to the courtyard, the ephemeral qualities created are 'borrowed' back so to speak. This essentially refers to the light and views, with the staircase serving as a journey up Blackbox right through to the skylight. This can best be described as

the layering of views and the 'bouncing' of light within the house.

Simultaneously developed as a house gallery and vice versa, the design is a continuation of Form_art's work with artists and galleries, namely their current engagement with the Tate. The volume of space carved out by expressing the brickwork enclosure enables the inside to hold a pure white 'floating' box, suspended to further express the interior's language of 'objects'.

The project serves as a testimony to Form_art's working ethos of generating work to test and develop ideas. This process provides Form_art with complete artistic freedom as designer and client and, hence, there is an uncompromised approach from initial design through to completion.

**Dr Constance Lau is an architect at Form_art Architects*



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Building Watch

Hackney Pubs

By James Watson*

Just when we thought the days of popular, thriving community pubs being targeted by predatory developers or retailers were well and truly behind us in Hackney, we have seen one closure and one more pub under threat within a month of each other.

Firstly, the Duke of Wellington on Nile Street, Hoxton, has become Hackney's third pub to be registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This has not stopped the new freeholder refusing to renew the lease with the existing tenant and sadly the pub ceased trading in February 2016. It is rumoured that the inter-war building has been bought as part of an attempt to acquire the entire block, most probably to make way for yet more luxury flats. The ACV was spearheaded by a local campaign team led by regulars Jason and Nicola Youngs.



Hot on its heels on the ACV trail comes the London Tavern on Rendlesham Road, Clapton. This pub, popular with the Irish community, is still trading and it would seem that the freeholder, who is also the current licensee, wishes to cash in on the land value rather than remain in the pub trade. I have no qualms about a hardworking publican wishing to retire, but to snatch the ladder behind him is somewhat antisocial. The pub is bigger than any publican. This handsome Charrington's boozier has been a part of the Clapton streetscape for 150 years. Retire by



all means but sell the pub on to one of the scores of new operators looking for good quality sites in this part of London. Hackney Council is currently considering an ACV application by local residents.

Further South, the Albion on Lauriston Road and the Tiger on Wick Road both closed last autumn. Both pubs remain empty and secured by property guardians. No planning applications have appeared and neither premises appears to be for sale. Two more candidates for ACV status, if only for the planning protection it brings. This year also saw the demolition and conversion respectively of the Deuragon Arms, Homerton and the Penshurst Arms, Victoria Park. The former was consented to by Hackney Council in early 2015. Although it had not traded as a pub for many years, it was one of the earlier gay pubs to appear in London and was famous for its outlandish cabaret performances in the 1960s.

The Penshurst conversion to flats was challenged by CAMRA and local residents, but Hackney planners, contrary to their recently adopted pub protection policy, allowed its loss. As predicted, the beautiful pub, now carved up into pricey apartments,



was marketed in a special feature in a national Sunday newspaper as one of the best pub conversions in England. A tragedy that generations of pub goers will be denied access to this gorgeous historic building.

To end on a positive note, the Chesham Arms, saved by locals after a 1,000-day struggle with a developer, was relaunched in June 2015 and goes from strength to strength, having recently won CAMRA East London pub of the year. Do pay a visit. You will receive a warm welcome.

**James Watson is the Regional Pub Protection Advisor for the Campaign for Real Ale and a founder member of the Protect Pubs movement. Follow @ProtectPubs*

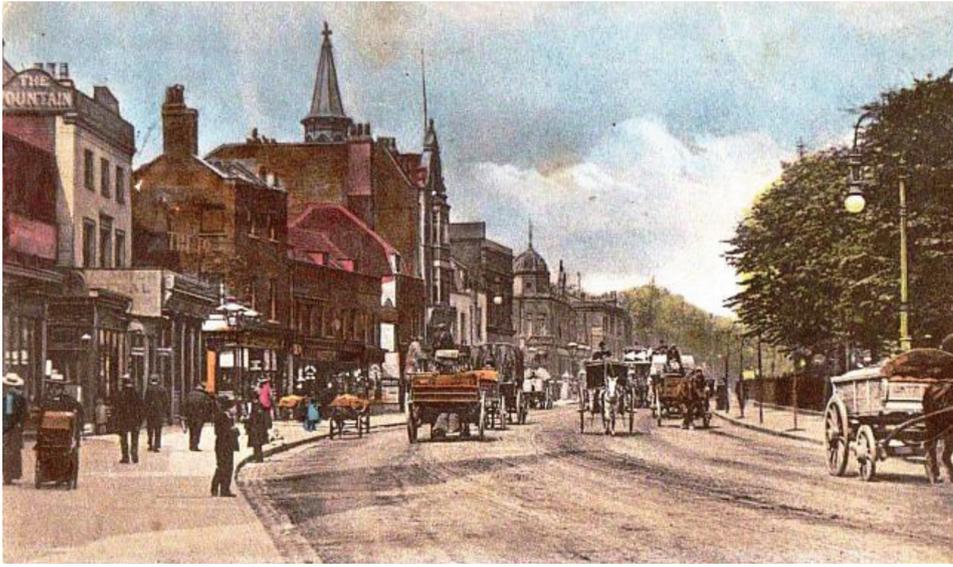


Stop Press: Bishopsgate Goodsyrd Hearing By Nick Perry*

As we go to press, the Mayor of London has announced he will be holding a hearing on Monday 18 April to decide upon the controversial Bishopsgate Goodsyrd application. By the time you receive this issue of *Spaces*, it is likely a decision will have been made on this. But whatever the outcome, the story is unlikely to be over. Sign up to our email newsletter – *Spacelets* – on the front page of our website to stay up to date with events and news that fall between issues of *Spaces*.

** Director of the Hackney Society*

Lower Clapton's Heritage By Carolyn Clark



Hackney Historic Buildings Trust (HHBT) is to receive a Sharing Heritage grant of £9,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to explore the heritage of Lower Clapton.

If you have memories of living or working in Lower Clapton, we'd like to hear from you. Photos, articles or other material about Lower Clapton are also very welcome. We can be contacted on info@hhbt.org.uk or at the Round Chapel office in Glenarm Road.

If you'd like to volunteer help in searching out information from relevant archives and sources, please get in touch. A training and development session will be held.

We will record the changes that have taken place over time and we'll involve young people in photographing the area today to contrast with past images found during the searches.

Commenting on the award, Patrick Hamill, Chair of HHBT, said: 'Including the heritage of Lower Clapton in our work will build on our community links and activities. We can't wait to work with local people to find out more about the social, cultural and economic history of Lower Clapton. The project will result in an exhibition and walking map and we'll include the findings in our educational work with schools and young people, and use them in our work with the community, such as at open days and exhibitions.'

If you are interested in taking part or would like more information, please contact Carolyn Clark: 07773 784 517 or email: info@hhbt.org.uk

Castle Cinema



A crowdfunding campaign to revive the Castle Cinema above Eat17 in Chatsworth Road has raised £57,000 from 663 backers – exceeding its aim of £45,000. The Kickstarter campaign, which ran from 1-30 March 2016, was set up by Pillow Cinema – the people who launched The Hot Tub Cinema on Hackney rooftops in 2012.

The original cinema opened as The Castle Electric Theatre on 8 September 1913, and ran until 24 May 1958. It then became a bingo club and snooker hall. It remained dilapidated until 2014, when local shop & restaurant owners Eat17 took it on.

The funds raised will be used to cover equipment such as a cinema system as well as to restore the space to a fully functioning auditorium, including seats and lighting.

Pillow Cinema want to create a space which is inviting and accessible – somewhere to celebrate the full breadth of cinema from independents to blockbusters, an affordable venue for community organisations to hold events and for local filmmakers to screen their works. They plan to screen a wide variety of content, including new releases, arthouse and foreign language, and well-loved classics and sing-alongs. There will also be specialised screenings such as Seniors, Babes-in-Arms, live content and film festivals. The project was pitched as an intimate and affordable local cinema with a single screen and seating for approximately 60 guests.

The team are hoping to open in June 2016. It will become one of only two independent cinemas in Hackney, alongside the Rio in Dalston.

Noticeboard

Pembury Circus



Pembury Circus has been shortlisted in the two categories Regeneration and London for the Planning and Placemaking awards. The development, which was designed by Fraser Brown MacKenna Architects, was completed in 2015 by the Peabody Trust. In addition to accommodation, it includes a community centre, nursery and gym. The Placemaking Awards recognise and publicise projects, plans, people and organisations that are making places better. Winners will be announced on 29 June.

Chariots



Chariots in Shoreditch, London's biggest gay sauna, was closed down on 22 February 2016. The 20,000 square foot building included a swimming pool, gym, sauna, jacuzzis and steam rooms. The neighbouring Majestic Wine Warehouse is also due to close, but no date has been set for this. The site will be developed to make way for a luxury hotel, office building and retail space (see Building Watch in *Spaces* 51).

Hackney Society Events

Hackney Empire

Saturday 7 May 2016, 11.00am

Tour with Tim Ronalds

Architect Tim Ronalds, who carried out restoration works which were completed in 2004, will lead a tour of the Hackney Empire. The Frank Matcham designed, Grade II* listed auditorium is one of the best examples of Edwardian variety theatre

remaining in London. The refurbishment fully restored the interiors, added the fly-tower and provided new back-stage areas, topping it off with the sign 'Hackney Empire' in massive terracotta 6.4m tall capital letters.

Meet at 11am at the Stage Door, Sylvester Path, Hackney Empire, 291 Mare Street, E8 1EJ

Booking essential. Book online at <https://billetto.co.uk/hshackneyempire>

Publications

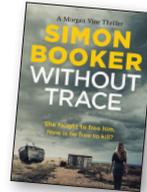
Without Trace by Stoke Newington writer Simon Booker is a psychological thriller. Bonnier Publishing (twenty7books), \$7.99 (ebook), paperback to be published in June.

No More Heroes by Hackney writer Stephen Thompson is a novel set at the time of the 7/7 bombings in 2005. Jacaranda, £7.99.

Each Slow Dusk: Clapton's War Dead by Maria Roberts is a study of the war memorials in St James the Great in Clapton. Copies from www.feedaread.com at £4.99 + P&P.

In a Land of Paper Gods is the first novel by Hackney writer and performance maker Rebecca Mackenzie. It is set in China in 1941. Tinder Press, £16.99.

Messengers: City Tales from a London Bicycle Courier by Dalston journalist Julian Sayerer is an account of the courier community in London, based on the author's experiences. Arcadia Books, £8.99.



Hackney Conservation Area Advisory Committees

By Matt Payne

Are you interested in heritage and conservation issues? If so, you may wish to join one of Hackney's six Conservation Area Advisory Committees (CAACs), which advise the Council on planning issues and applications within the borough's 30 conservation areas.

The six groups cover Shoreditch, Kingsland, Dalston, Stoke Newington, Clapton and Central & South Hackney.

Professional experience in an urban design, architecture or heritage field is welcomed, but not essential. Members should be able to attend regular monthly meetings on a voluntary basis.

If you would like further information, or wish to join, please contact: Matt Payne, Conservation, Urban Design & Sustainability Team. Tel: 020 8356 8106 or email: matt.payne@hackney.gov.uk

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