



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2017

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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The Cube Building



© Jack Hobhouse

The Cube Building in Wenlock Road is a mixed use development that provides 50 apartments. Of these 33 are allocated as private units, with the remaining 17 units being offered as either socially rented or shared ownership. The building delivers 12,421 sq ft of commercial space on the ground and lower ground floors, which is integrated into the residential community, offering amenities such as an onsite café.

The building is a solid cross-laminated timber structure, manufactured off-site. It uses steel reinforcement where necessary, and is one of the tallest of its kind in Europe. The cross-laminated elevations are clad in slatted western red cedar,

whilst a dark brick screen completes the street elevation along Wenlock Road, also forming the edge of the conservation area.

The designers, Hawkins\Brown Architects, deployed a basic cruciform shape which provided four courtyard communities for residents and then twisted every second floor, giving a striking external appearance. This ensures all flats have dual or triple aspect views of the city, canal or park opposite, with a generous terrace or balcony. The scheme thereby maximises the amount of daylight and ventilation available.

The gridded brick screen exterior of the building creates private space for those within the development and also follows

the building line of the neighbouring architecture, keeping a uniform view from Wenlock Road.

The façade is clad in timber, which carries the PEFC Chain of Custody Certification, ensuring the project maintains a fully transparent Green Supply Chain. Further sustainable features include the enhanced insulation of the green roof, and the ecologically designed canal gardens.

The Cube Building is one of the winners of the Hackney Design Awards 2016 (see page 03).

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Hackney Central Masterplan By Laurie Elks

As this edition of *Spaces* goes to press, Hackney Council is midway through the process of consultation on the Hackney Central and Surrounds Masterplan. I feel that, thus far, there has been more evidence of process than meaningful consultation but I am sure that the Delivery Team (of which more anon) would say that that is unfair.

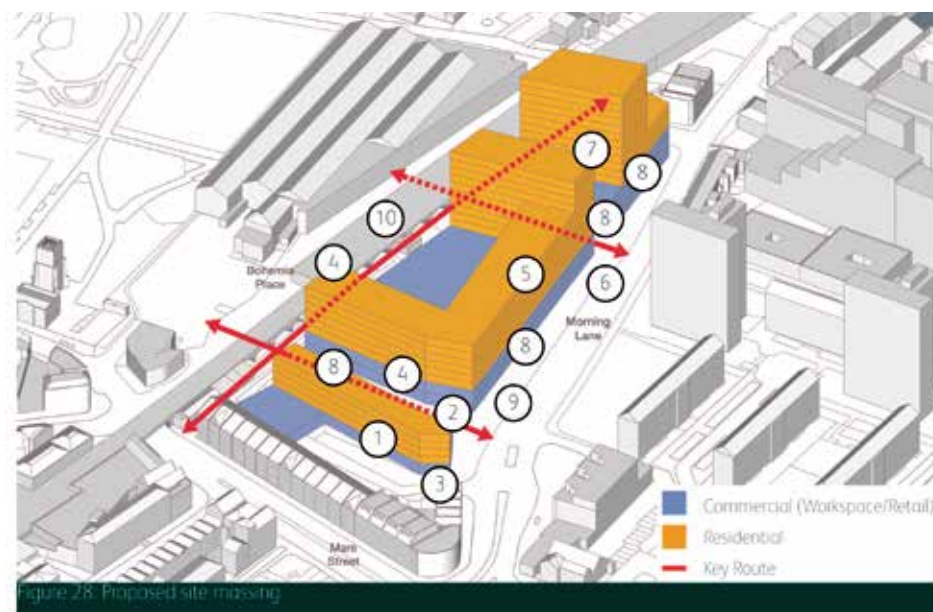
But to start at the beginning, Hackney already has a Hackney Central Area Action Plan (AAP), which can be found at www.hackney.gov.uk/hackney-central-aap. Hackney's planning website records as follows:

The Hackney Central AAP is a comprehensive strategy for co-ordinated development and design that reflects local aspirations for the future of the area. It is a guide to balanced development and provides confidence and certainty to developers and other public sector bodies. The overall purpose is to establish the basis for shaping the regeneration of the area and to ensure the continued role of Hackney Central as a district town centre whilst respecting its unique character. The AAP ... forms a statutory component of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The AAP identifies 14 'Opportunity Sites' clustered around Hackney Central including the Rectory Site (between the Narroway and the Churchyard), the bus depot, the Tesco site and the Florifield Depot (off Reading Lane beside the Town Hall.) The AAP and the wider LDF adopt the rationale that development clusters should be situated around the best public transport links. Most readers would surely agree with that – whilst wondering how much further the capacity of the North London Line (and particularly the Highbury interchange) can realistically be stretched. The AAP pays due and proper attention to the importance of Hackney Central 'Character Areas', including the churchyard, and strikes me as a well-balanced document.

The new Masterplan is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPDs are described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as:

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the



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| <p>1 New, mixed use perimeter block with active frontage onto Morning Lane and shield existing rear aspect of Terrace on Mare Street.</p> <p>2 Pedestrian connection from Morning Lane to Bohemia Place and Mare Street, with active, commercial frontage.</p> <p>3 Car parking and servicing access to basement.</p> <p>4 New retail floorspace, including the potential for a new Tesco store at ground floor with main entrance towards the Town Centre (Mare Street) and framed by smaller commercial (retail / workspace) units around three sides, to avoid blank frontages.</p> | <p>5 New residential block forming continuous street frontage along Morning Lane.</p> <p>6 New route to Bohemia place and St John at Hackney Churchyard Gardens, fronted by smaller commercial (retail / workspace) units.</p> <p>7 New mixed use block with commercial (retail / workspace) on lower floors and taller building element above to draw people through Bohemia Place and along the railway arches and aid wayfinding.</p> | <p>8 Active, commercial frontage along Morning Lane, Nursery Road, the northern edge of the development (fronting on to the railway arches), and along new access routes to Bohemia Place.</p> <p>9 Set back development to create generous footpaths, potential bus facility improvements and opportunities for tree planting along Morning Lane.</p> <p>10 Uses with active frontages in railway arches.</p> |
|--|--|--|

Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites.

That nicely describes what this Masterplan is about. It is designed to turbocharge the process of development of Hackney Central by giving intending developers a steer, almost an outline development brief, on the kinds of development the Council hopes to see. The Opportunity Sites identified in the Masterplan extend towards the southern end of Mare Street (designated as the Mare Street Priority Employment Area) including mixed use developments at the London College of Fashion and at St Andrews Road, close by the Regent's Canal.

As SPDs are (to quote the NPPF) *capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions* developers can have some confidence that compliant schemes will have a fair wind in the planning process. It is the job of the Delivery Team to ensure that LDF policies

are implemented and in particular the achievement of 1599 additional housing units in the Borough each year up to 2025.

In other words, if you will the ends (the additional housing and employment sites that Hackney and London requires) you will the means; clear planning guidance on site selection and on site design for major schemes. So far, so good.

But to my mind, in providing 'further guidance' to intending developers the Masterplan unduly eclipses consideration of the local and historic character of Hackney and its ancient churchyard in particular. One site of particular sensitivity is the bus garage, sandwiched between the churchyard and the Victorian railway viaduct. The bus depot and associated offices form a fine and characterful group of buildings in London stock brick which help to frame the churchyard and give it seclusion. Hackney Council has been in discussion for some years with the bus operator, Arriva, about relocating the bus

depot and liberating this Opportunity Site for development. The Masterplan includes a detailed 'Opportunity Site Development Brief' for the site which (despite the honeyed words which documents of this sort always contain) portends pretty 'bog standard' development which would be highly detrimental to the setting of the Churchyard – a missed opportunity to make the most of the special character of the area.

There is more (much more!) I could add on the proposed development of the Tesco site in Morning Lane. The

'Proposed Site Massing' illustrated in the draft Masterplan shows development to 15 storeys extending right up to the railway viaduct and overshadowing the Churchyard – perhaps the first step to the Croydonisation of Hackney Central. The Delivery Team has conceded (with some reluctance) that the AAP requires development of this site to be scaled down to four stories adjacent to the railway viaduct.

At the time of writing, the Delivery Team are submitting the draft Masterplan to Cabinet on 23 January after which

there will be a further 'pre-publication' consultation. I am awaiting with interest to see how the original draft has been amended in response to submissions from Historic England and others. Whatever emerges from this consultation will feed into the new Local Plan which is to be issued in 2018. It would be nice to have a document which facilitates development whilst truly grasping the opportunity to cherish the historic settings at the heart of Hackney. I am not wildly optimistic!

Hackney Design Awards 2016

The winners of Hackney Design Awards 2016 have been announced. The seven buildings are Copper Lane (Henley Halebrown Rorrison), the Cube Building (Hawkins\Brown, see *front page*), Frampton Park Baptist Church (Matthew Lloyd Architects), Lansdowne Drive (Tectonics Architects; Passivhaus, see *Spaces 51*), Spruce Apartments in Barretts Grove (Amin Taha Architects, see *Spaces 54*), 96-100 Shepherdess Walk (Jaccaud Zein Architects) and Woodberry Wetlands (Kaner Olette Architects & Allen Scott Landscape Architecture).

Woodberry Wetlands was the winner of the People's Choice award. This project opened up the East Reservoir as a nature reserve after it had been closed to the public for 180 years.



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Noticeboard

Abney Unearthed

Hackney Council has received £21,400 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a new project led by volunteers from the local community to research, map and learn about the people buried when Abney Park operated as a commercial cemetery from 1840 to the late 1970s. Collating all existing knowledge and filling in the gaps due to missing or illegible records from a period when the site fell into disrepair, Abney Unearthed will tell the story of the park and how it reflects the changes that have taken place in Hackney and East London since the cemetery opened in 1840. This two-year project will reveal who is buried in Abney Park and where their graves are.



Abney Park is listed as a Grade II park on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens. As one of the 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries in London, it is the resting place of around 200,000 people in 60,000 graves, ranging from elaborate monuments to path-side common grave markers. A Site of Metropolitan Importance for biodiversity, it is one of London's most central woodlands and an important site for deadwood invertebrates and fungi.

The site was formed in 1840 from the estates of Fleetwood House and Abney House. Abney House had been the home of the nonconformist hymn writer Isaac Watts, which led to Abney Park becoming the foremost burial ground for Dissenters. The cemetery is home to an impressive collection of trees, as it was originally laid out as an arboretum.

Sunken Bath Project

A refurbishment and extension project in Clapton has been shortlisted for the 2017 'Improve, Don't Move' award. Designed by Studio 304 Architecture, the project involves adding a new kitchen, WC and sunken bath to an existing ground floor apartment. The starting point was a set of references from early 20th century concrete installations to Japanese theories on aesthetics and materiality. A particular condition was to create a bath specifically designed for relaxation and warming which follows the principles of ritual bathing.

A new wall which features glazed openings into the garden is clad with larch slats allowing light and views through while

providing privacy. The garden is completed with granite gravel, polished concrete and bamboo to reference the original ideas of Japanese aesthetics. Over time the larch slats will weather to a silver grey while the copper is intended to develop a patina.

Well Street Market



On 3 December 2016, Well Street Market reopened following a successful crowdfunding campaign by local traders and residents. The occasion was attended by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and fashion designer Wayne Hemingway as well as by the Mayor and Speaker of Hackney. The market, which started in 1862, fell into decline in the 1980s and eventually closed. In 1919, Jack Cohen, who founded Tesco, began trading from a barrow in Well Street. The revived market runs from 9am to 5pm on the first Saturday of every month.

London Fields Lido

In *Spaces* 54 we reported that London Fields Lido was due to close for repairs at the end of November 2016. These works have been delayed until further notice in order to find a suitable tiling contractor and to consult users on a new layout for the changing rooms. The pool will remain open for the time being.

The Lion

The Lion, a 300-year-old pub in Stoke Newington Church Street, is rumoured to be under threat of being turned into a pizzeria. The Hackney Society and the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) are campaigning to have it registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), which would prevent the owners changing the use of the building. See *Spaces* 52 for an account of ACVs and other Hackney pubs.



Hackney Society Events

The Makers House

Saturday 4 February 2017, 11.00am-12.30pm

Tour with David Liddicoat and Sophie Goldhill

Architect-led tour of recently-completed house.

Meet at 10.45am, 40c Terrace Road, E9 7ES. Book online at <https://billetto.co.uk/hsmakershouse>

Sponsored Walk in the Lea Valley

Saturday 9 May 2015, 10.00am

Walk with Laurie Elks

We will be having another sponsored walk along the Lea Valley to raise funds for the publication of our book on Hackney's history which will be published in the early autumn. Meet at 10.00am (or 9.30am for tea and bacon sandwiches) at St Augustine's Tower, E8 1HR. The walk will finish at Cheshunt which is now within the Oystercard/Travelcard zone. The walk will be 20km but dead flat. Birdwatchers should bring binoculars. Contact Laurie Elks at l.elks@btconnect.com for further details. **Booking essential.** Book online at <http://billetto.co.uk/leavalley>. We will be setting up a giving page for sponsorship.

Publications

Adventures in the Lea Valley by Polly Braden and David Company is a record of a journey along the Lea on bicycles. Commencing in 2004, the authors documented the landscapes and people of the area as it was changed by the 2012 Olympic developments. Hoxton Mini Press, £14.95.



Girls It's Time For a Change by Stoke Newington microbiologist Joan Reid is a resource for girls entering puberty. It is illustrated by Carolina Storni. JR's Marketing Consultants Ltd, £13.99.



Thanks to Kopykat for sponsoring this issue

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