



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2019

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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Hackney Town Hall



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The art deco, Grade II listed Hackney Town Hall has been completely refurbished. Designed by Henry Lanchester and Thomas Lodge, it was completed in 1937. In 2005 LB Hackney appointed the architects Hawkins\Brown to carry out a complex series of works in overlapping phases linked to funding and allowing the building to remain open.

The works covered restoration, repair, reuse, conservation, and conversion of the building. Original timber panelling, marble floors, Crittall windows, chandeliers and furniture were restored by a team of master craftspeople. New fittings and facilities, audiovisual equipment, blinds and light fittings were designed in the spirit of the art deco interiors, using matching materials and recognisable patterns and forms.

Two original unused central light wells were converted to indoor event spaces



by the addition of ETFE (ethylene tetrafluoroethylene) roofs. Original ducts, corridors and service openings were reused wherever possible to bring new services and IT to every part of the building. With the support of conservation bodies, all works reconciled the interests of conservation and access. The building now provides access for all and improved spatial efficiency. Underused space has been utilised and existing heritage rooms restored. This has resulted in increased occupancy, reduced

energy and maintenance costs, better public facilities, new atria, event spaces, council services, and a more welcoming, bright and open reception.

The refurbished Hackney Town Hall is one of the winners of the Hackney Design Awards 2018.

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Building Watch

Hackney Design Awards 2018

The Hackney Design Awards were set up in 2004 to celebrate the rich variety of design and architecture in the borough.

In February 2019, Hackney Council announced the results of the 2018 Awards.

The winners were: Black Stone Building, Wilberforce Road, N4 2SX by 6A Architects (see *Spaces* 63); 32 Cassland Road, E9 7AN by Studio RO/ST; De Beauvoir Block, De Beauvoir Road, N1 4EN by Henley Halebrown; Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA by Hawkins\Brown; Kings Crescent Estate by Karakusevic Carson Architects, Henley Halebrown and Muf; and Building 1, Principal Place, EC2A 2BA by Foster + Partners.



The following buildings were commended: Great Eastern Buildings, Reading Lane, E8 1DR by Karakusevic Carson Architects; PEER Gallery, Hoxton Street, N1 6QL by Trevor Horne Architects; Pitwell Mews, Wilton Way, E8 1FH by Wilton Studio Ltd; and 146A Rushmore Road, E5 0HB by ZCD Architects.

Shortlisted buildings were: Bayston Road, N16 7LU by Al-Jawad Pike; The Makers

House, Terrace Road, E9 7ES by Liddicoat & Goldhill LLP (see *Spaces* 56); Nobu Hotel, Willow Street, EC2A 4BH by Ron Arad Architects and Ben Adams Architects; Quadra, Lansdowne Drive, E8 3FR by PRP; and Wrong House, Lauriston Road, E9 7EY by Matheson Whitely.

The winner of the People's Choice Award was 146A Rushmore Road.

Holborn Studios By Nick Perry

We have reported in *Spaces* (No. 59) the ongoing planning saga at 49–50 Eagle Wharf, N1 7ED.

The former 1840s Regent's Canal Iron Foundry has been the home to Holborn Studios – a film and photography studio complex, and long-time supporters of The Hackney Society – since 1990. They sub-let smaller spaces to related trades and businesses. In 2012, the then freeholders submitted two planning applications for comprehensive redevelopment in as many years. Both were ultimately withdrawn by the developers and the freehold was then sold to another party – GHL, who then went on to submit a substantially revised application for redevelopment in 2015. Despite strong protestations by Holborn Studios and others, the Council granted planning permission at the end of 2016.

That decision was challenged in the High Court by Holborn Studios and the secretary of Regents Network – an amenity society which aims to protect London's waterways. In November of 2017 John Howell QC, sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge,

found that the Council had acted unlawfully in granting the permission and quashed it. The case centred on the failure of the Council to re-consult members of the public when it received substantial amendments to the scheme it had previously advertised, and also on its failure to fully disclose the contents of letters of support submitted by the applicant such that Holborn Studios might have been able to question their merit, and thus Hackney's planning officers' recommendation of the scheme to the Planning Sub-committee.

In response to the quashing of the decision, a substantially similar scheme was again submitted by GHL to the Council. After a considerable period of due-diligence tying up technical and legal details, the scheme went before the Planning Sub-committee in January of this year, with the same recommendation to approve it. In a sometimes fractious meeting, Holborn Studios opposed the scheme largely

through representations of their barrister – senior planning QC, Richard Harwood. However the members of the committee ultimately came to the same decision and resolved to grant planning permission subject to finalising terms of a so-called s.106 agreement – common in schemes of this size.

It is in the narrow window of time between a council committee resolving to grant planning permission and the formal issuing of a Decision Notice, that the Secretary of State (currently James Brokenshire) can 'call-in' the decision of a planning authority to decide it themselves – normally following an inquiry by the Planning Inspectorate. Holborn Studios has petitioned the Secretary of State to do this and whilst his Department decides whether to call-in the decision, Hackney's decision is on hold. If the Secretary of State decided not to intervene then the Council will be free to issue its final Decision Notice, granting planning permission, and other parties will have a six-week window within which to launch a further Judicial Review on any errors of law in the process.

Talks at the Tower 2019

14 May Neil Martinson: Another Time, Another Place

Neil Martinson has been taking pictures since he was a pupil at Hackney Downs in the early 1970s. He will discuss the themes in his exhibition *Another Time, Another Place: Hackney in the 70s and 80s* that is on display at Hackney Museum until 13 July 2019. The exhibition depicts Hackney's

working lives, protests, children and young people, homelessness, Jewish life, street markets and street scenes.

21 May Embers: Storytelling evening

The Embers Collective is a London-based storytelling and live music group. They adapt world mythology, weaving stories into a live evolving musical landscape. An evening of grown-up storytelling.

4 June John Boughton: Municipal Dreams – The Rise and Fall of Council Housing

John Boughton is the author of the blog *Municipal Dreams* and a book of the same title, charting the history of social housing from the slum clearances of the Victorian age to the Grenfell Tower disaster. A passionate believer in social housing, John

Continued overleaf



© Iain Langlands

Pitcairn House

By Rossana Tich

Eric Lyons is, perhaps, best known for his Span developments in Blackheath, Ham and New Ash Green, many of which are now Listed. But not so many people realise that there is an Eric Lyons building on Mare Street in Hackney.

The 10-storey Pitcairn House, with 93 dwellings, was commissioned by the LCC in 1960 as part of the Frampton Park Estate development, which had begun in the mid-1950s. The site had been compulsory purchased following bomb damage to that side of St Thomas's Square.

Iain Langlands, who was working for Eric Lyons, took the above two black and white photographs at the beginning of construction, in 1961. Ivor Cunningham was the lead architect, working closely with Lyons, sparking ideas off each other and taking others' contributions, such as

the piloti, which Langlands suggested. The layout of the flats reduced the volume of space at the upper floors that had often been devoted to access galleries. First demonstrated in Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (where the galleries are entirely internal), with Pitcairn House there was one open access gallery for each three-floor group of flats arranged above one another. The block was constructed by Rowley Bros and completed in 1963.

A barrel roof was added to Pitcairn House in the earlier part of this century and various other alterations, including the filling in of the void around the piloti, had occurred previously. The RIBA Library has a good image of the completed block to view online. The building, although much altered, is still worthy for consideration to be locally listed.

The practice became the Eric Lyons Cunningham Partnership in 1962 and



Image courtesy of Hackney Archives

they went on to design the World's End development, as well as more Span housing. Eric Lyons CBE was president of RIBA from 1975-77. He died in 1980.

Iain Langlands also worked on Hallgate, one of several Span developments in Blackheath, for Eric Lyons before leaving to join Gordon and Ursula Bowyer. He later became a partner in Bowyer Langlands Batchelor, where he remained for the rest of his working life.

Iain Langlands lives in Blackheath, but not in a Span house.

Talks at the Tower 2019 continued

will discuss the history of social housing in Hackney and beyond, meeting utopians, charlatans, visionary planners and corrupt officials along the way.

11 June Laurie Elks: 50 years of the Lee Valley Regional Park, triumph, disaster or somewhere in between?

The Lee Valley Regional Park was the brainchild of the former Hackney Mayor Lou Sherman. His concept of a smartened-up Lee Valley with 'jazzy waterside cafes' metastasised into a vast Regional Park with a project to provide leisure facilities to serve the whole of London and beyond. Fifty years after the Park Authority produced a first blueprint, which included a fairground at Leabridge to 'rival Tivoli Gardens', Laurie Elks, long-time critic of the Park Authority, reflects on its achievements and missed opportunities.

18 June Alan Ruston: The Gravel Pit Chapel

Hackney was a leading centre for nonconformity from the 17th century. A major congregation was the Gravel Pit Chapel opened in 1716. It came to national prominence in the 1780s when Dr Richard Price – firebrand, radical and passionate supporter of the French Revolution – became its minister. Alongside Newington Green Chapel, it was at the heart of radical theology. Its congregation eventually became the nucleus of the Round Chapel in Lower Clapton Road. A secretive burial ground survives, walled off behind Mead Place near the Morningside Estate. Alan Ruston tells the history of the extraordinary congregation and its larger than life leading figures.

25 June Angry Sam, Performance Poet

Angry Sam is a performer, poet, blogger, author and trenchant political and social critic. Join Sam for an evening of performance poetry.

2 July Richard Hill: Nonconformists in Hackney

In a companion to Alan Ruston's talk on the Gravel Pit Chapel, Richard Hill looks at the nonconformist community of the Newington Green Unitarian Chapel. Increasingly, the leading lights of the community in the 19th century were wealthy suburbanites who took the church into more conservative outreach and philanthropic schemes and more conventional liturgy. Although very different from the leading firebrand figures of the Revolutionary period such as Richard Price and Mary Wollstonecraft, their story is equally fascinating.

All talks are held in St Augustine's Tower, Hackney's oldest building, starting at 7.30pm. The talks are free, but registration is essential (<https://www.staugustinstower.org/>) as places fill up very quickly.

Hackney Society Events

Here East

Thursday 9 May 2019, 6.30pm

Walk with Ralph Ward

Ralph Ward will lead an exploration of the Here East building in Hackney Wick. Built as the media centre for the 2012 Olympics, it threatened to become a huge white elephant but is now taking off as a home for digital business start-ups and media companies.

Meet at Hackney Wick Station.

Booking essential.

Book via hackneysociety.org

£5 for Hackney Society members, £10 for non-members.

Hackney's Secret Places

Monday 24 June 2019, 6.30pm

Walk with Russell Miller

A Midsummer's Day walk to Hackney's most beautiful, and least known natural places.

Russell Miller of the Tree Musketeers will take us to Wick Woodland which has grown from waterlogged football pitches to semi-mature woodland in just over 20 years; the Hackney Tree Nursery entirely run by volunteers; along the banks of the Old River Lea; and into the wonderful Middlesex Filter Beds.

Meet Hackney Wick Station 6.30pm; walk ends Princess of Wales pub, Leabridge Road.

Booking essential.

Book via hackneysociety.org

£5 for Hackney Society members, £10 for non-members

Noticeboard

Newington Green Meeting House



The National Lottery Heritage fund has awarded £1.73million to Newington Green Meeting House for a major renovation. Completed in 1708, this Grade II listed building has been a home of radical thinking for over 300 years. Mary Wollstonecraft frequently attended. It housed a group known as the Dissenters, who campaigned for religious freedom, the abolition of slavery, and social reform. Newington Green Meeting House is expected to reopen in early 2020

Haggerston Baths



Hackney Council has signed an agreement to lease Haggerston Baths to the developer Castleforge Partners. Castleforge will be required to achieve planning permission by June 2021. The company plans to develop the building to incorporate space for businesses, shops and a café, as well as community uses such as a clinic, health centre, day care centre or public hall.

Publications

East London: An Opinionated Guide

by Sonya Barber with photography by Charlotte Schreiber is the second edition of a book first published in 2017. It features 66 suggestions for where to eat, sleep, shop and drink in East London. Over 20 of these places are new to this edition. Hoxton Mini Press, £9.95.

A number of novels have recently been published by Hackney writers:

JSS Bach by Martin Goodman. Wrecking Ball Press, £14.00.



Dead Girls by Abigail Tarttelin. Picador, £8.99.



In at the Deep End by Kate Davies. Borough Press, £12.99.



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

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