



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

# SPACES 2014

News and views about Hackney's built environment

Issue 46 Autumn 2014 // ISSN 2047-7465

## Curtain Road



Photos © Jack Hobhouse

**Duggan Morris Architects have redeveloped 141-145 Curtain Road to generate 16,500 square feet of retail and work space. The site is located in the Shoreditch Conservation Area close to Georgian brick buildings. Retention of the existing façade was a condition for planning permission.**

Prior to development, the building had four storeys, including a basement. It has been completely altered and refurbished to create an interior suited to modern commercial use. Above this, three new floors of contemporary office space have been added, extending the building to seven storeys and almost doubling the usable area.

A new core structure links the existing basement level to the new upper floor layouts. One of the existing basement level vaults was enlarged to create more communal facilities.

New external curtain walling forms the new façade above the existing retained brickwork, with a new commercial frontage installed at street level.

The basement and ground floor are dedicated to retail, while the other floors provide flexible office spaces that decrease in area towards the top.

The façade features a grid that divides the surface of the extension to correspond with the three bays of the original frontage. Local rights of light required some open sections at the rear to become roof terraces.

The new façade was designed as a simple arrangement of horizontal and vertical units, rendered in visually lightweight modern materials to create a contrast with the existing brickwork.

The building has been shortlisted for the Hackney Design Awards 2014.



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# Building Watch

## And Still... Saving Dalston Lane By Lisa Shell



Postcard from the collection of Melvyn Brooks

### Campaigners for the preservation of historic Dalston can report with great relief the opening of a further chapter in the fight against the demolition of Dalston Lane Terrace.

As reported in *Spaces* 45, OPEN (Organisation for Promotion of Environmental Needs Ltd), supported by the very generous donations of the Enlightened and Appalled, including The Georgian Group, appointed Dowse and Co. Solicitors and Matthew Reed of Landmark Chambers to prepare an application to the courts to review the legality of the controversial decision taken by the planning committee in March 2014 to demolish the whole terrace.

Just days before an appointment at the high court, Hackney Planning moved ahead to discharge all remaining conditions associated with the disputed approval. The implication of this was that Murphy, Hackney's developer partner, were in a position to remove the padlocks and swing the wrecking balls at the early 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace immediately if the application for judicial review was refused.

But on 3 October in Court 18 of the High Court, Dalston Lane Terrace was granted a

continued chance of survival by Mr Justice Foskett. With an audience of supporters, OPEN's barrister brilliantly and succinctly summarised the circumstances surrounding Hackney's decision to demolish the historic structures, and explained why there was an arguable case for reviewing its legality. The judge granted additional time to hear the arguments given their 'intricacies' and without hesitation concluded in favour of the claimant.

A date can now be set before the end of November to return to court to argue the primary claim: that, once the condition of the structures was known, no alternative proposals were considered by Hackney that might have retained some part of the original buildings. This failure goes against the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework if the premise holds true that the retention of original built fabric is of greater importance than the benefit of an immediate implementation of a new-build version of the approved scheme which, to

quote from the planning case officer's report, 'would help to safeguard the contribution of the site towards the townscape of the conservation area'. The applicant had failed to consider whether the restoration of the existing Georgian buildings might not be a preferable, and viable, means of preserving the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Meanwhile The Spitalfields Trust have been busy considering just that, and so paving a path to avoid any further legal action and associated expense. Undeterred by the Council's original rebuff of their offer to take on the restoration of the terrace, the Trust has moved ahead, with the help of conservation architects The Regeneration Practice, to produce outline proposals, involving the restoration of the seven significant houses to the west end of the terrace, the provision of some 27 new social housing units (where the current proposals have none), and retention of commercial space at ground floor level fronting Dalston Lane. Prior to the court hearing, Hackney had already expressed enthusiasm to meet with the Trust's team to discuss the proposals, so that they may assess the feasibility and benefits to Hackney of choosing a magnificent alternative course. Despite these very positive developments, OPEN's solicitor, Dowse and Co., has requested confirmation in writing from the defendant's lawyers that they will not proceed with further demolition until the judicial review is heard; if assurances are not forthcoming, OPEN have the funds in place to apply to the courts for an injunction.

Come the spring 2015 edition of *Spaces*, we hope to be reporting a successful conclusion to any further legal action, and the start of discussions with conservation specialists.

## More Light, More Power

By Andrew Kanter

A scheme to redevelop the Bishopsgate Goodsyards, the 4.7 hectare (11.6 acre) site surrounding Shoreditch High Street station, has been submitted for planning by joint venture partners Hammerson and Ballymore. The Boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets are validating the application ahead of its publication and a formal public consultation.

Local residents and businesses have already responded based on the pre-application consultation, stating that the proposal

disregards the local context, is not fit for purpose, is oversized and underwhelming. OPEN Shoreditch (a coalition of 12 local residents' groups) has launched a major campaign – More Light, More Power – to lobby for a reappraisal of the site.

As submitted, the proposed scheme is an impenetrable development of six towers ranging from 15 to 48 storeys, bringing Hong Kong-style skyscrapers to an historic low-rise residential part of East London. The development is 40 storeys taller than the mid-rise TEA Building, a local landmark and regeneration hub that has fostered Shoreditch's creative community. The

towers will loom over Shoreditch, Brick Lane, Spitalfields, the Boundary Estate and Bethnal Green Road, cause significant shadowing and wind tunnels and destroy the character of the surrounding streets. While the proposal incorporates a one hectare (2.4 acre) park, it has only one east/west link. Such large scale urban blocks and a park largely in shadow would create dark and deserted public spaces.

In summary, residents are calling for a mid-rise high-density solution informed by the surrounding local neighbourhoods, a human scale development integrated with accessible pocket parks; and a

comprehensive community benefits package addressing housing, jobs and training.

Interested in learning more? Visit the campaign website at [www.morelightmorepower.co.uk](http://www.morelightmorepower.co.uk), follow us on Twitter @morelightpower and sign up for our newsletter at <http://eepurl.com/XAZkb>. Contact us at [info@morelightmorepower.co.uk](mailto:info@morelightmorepower.co.uk).

## Chesham Arms

By James Watson



The Chesham Arms in Mehetabel Road served the pastoral needs of Hackney folk for 147 years, until sold to a property developer in October 2012. Registration as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) under the Localism Act was ratified by Hackney Council in March 2013. The pub was also added to Hackney's local list of non-designated heritage assets and it occupies a focal spot within the Clapton Square Conservation Area.

The property developer, Mukund Patel of Enfield, claims to want to convert it into four flats, but after two years there is still no sign of any planning application. Patel's agent has attributed this delay to fighting an appeal over the ACV registration followed by responding to no less than three enforcement cases by Hackney's planning service. The ACV appeal was dismissed and the most significant enforcement case, relating to the unauthorised conversion of the upstairs into a self-contained residential flat, was challenged at an appeal which was heard by the planning inspector via a public inquiry.

When a developer chooses to challenge and resist every piece of planning and localism defence directed towards saving the pub, two years can soon fly by! Meanwhile the poor old Chesham Arms remains closed. Patel used new permitted development rights introduced in May 2013 to temporarily re-designate the pub as an office. This temporary use is allowed for a period of two years with prior notification to the Council. Patel's agent claims that their

aim remains a total residential conversion of the site, but as of now the ground floor is classed as a B1 office in planning use class terms, despite there being no office activity actually being carried out! The office sham allowed the developer to rip out the bar, remove all trace of pub fittings including the historic sign, and to construct a corridor which bisects the old trading space.

This latest twist in the saga is bitterly disappointing to the campaign team, led by Churchwell Residents' Group, who have not only had to suffer the loss of a much-loved community social facility but also face the daily reminder of its sad demise by being forced to live in the midst of the shabby and deteriorating façade, with rotting hanging baskets, peeling paintwork, closed shutters and weeds sprouting through the forecourt. The outcome of the enforcement appeal is expected in mid-November. See [www.savethechesham.org](http://www.savethechesham.org) for more information.

## What Lies Beneath Leyton Marsh? By Celia Coram

Two years ago, the 'temporary' Olympic basketball training facility was finally removed from Porter's Field, Leyton Marsh, following opposition from local people and the Save Leyton Marsh campaign group (*Spaces* No. 37, summer 2012). Yet SLM – now renamed Save Lea Marshes as part of its widened remit – is still battling to get the land restored to its former state, as well as trying to prevent further loss and damage to the marshes and other green spaces.

To recap: local people objected to the training facility because it was an unnecessary encroachment on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), inflicting great damage to the land and habitat of the marshes for a mere four weeks of sport. The word 'temporary' did not add much comfort: the nearby ice rink, erected in the 1980s for the Commonwealth Games, was also supposed to be 'temporary'! Nor did the promises to restore the land ring true – work had barely started when the agreed digging depths were compromised.

Prior to the 2012 Games, the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) organised a 'consultative meeting' to present three options for restoring Leyton Marsh: reseeded (this would mean a slower return to community use); light turf; and heavy turf, seeded with native species that were identified as having been on the marsh. SLM would have preferred the first option even if it did take longer, but we correctly guessed that the third option would be

chosen. Also, that the then unnamed contractor STRI (Scientific Turf Research Institute) already had the contract.

Representatives of SLM, in the spirit of trying to ensure the best outcome for the marshes, later agreed to meet with the ODA and STRI to discuss plans. We were assured that the right mix of plant species would be added to the turf. It was also agreed that regular monitoring meetings would be open to local people to attend. Although site visits with some members of the public did take place, the resulting turf was not what we were promised.

The foundation of the problem is the extra infill of land and plastic membrane laid to replace earth and rubble removed from the marshes when the training facility was built, which made it difficult for water to drain. The condition of the land was attributed to exceptional weather, but SLM's view is that it was made worse by the predominance of rye grass and lack of the promised variety in the seed mix. Like the plague pits of old, the replaced 'monoculture' turf was a different hue and felt different underfoot.

Leyton Marsh is managed by the Lee Valley Park Regional Authority (LVRPA), who granted the ODA temporary use of the site for a fee and cost of reparations (agreed with London Borough of Waltham Forest, where the MOL land is). The LVRPA has received compensation from the ODA and undertaken some remedial works, including engaging the London Wildlife Trust (LWT) to carry out a species survey. They are planning on scarifying (preparing) the land for reseeded of a more varied native species, which is welcomed. However, SLM would have preferred the LVRPA to have gone further, using a higher amount of the compensation towards improving the land. We challenged the quality of work more vigorously. We continue to question the economics of leasing the land – rental income and reparations in thousands against the long-term damage to the land – and that the ODA spent an estimated £5m on the temporary building.

SLM continues to campaign for a better future for Leyton Marsh and surrounding areas. The challenges are great: new canal mooring works have cut back vegetation and a planned 'Hoggin Path', will mean further loss of habitat; the idea of a new, larger ice rink, possibly on its current site, has been mooted and the tower blocks of Essex Wharf cast their shadows close by. Ninety eight per cent of grasslands in Britain have been lost since WW2. We must leave some green space for all our futures.

## Hindle House War Memorial Project

By Brian Longman

Hindle House Estate was built in 1939 in Arcola Street in the Shacklewell area of Hackney. The blocks of flats cover an area of slum clearance in Hindle and Middle Streets off Arcola Street and immediately south of Hindle Street School (later Shacklewell Primary School). The layout of the flats is in two five-storey ranges around a central two-storey community centre. The flats were considered luxurious by the first tenants who previously had no bathroom or indoor toilet facilities.

As soon as the flats were becoming inhabited WW2 broke out and on 18 September 1940 the estate was bombed by enemy aircraft causing serious damage; seven people were killed. After the war ended, the local community funded a memorial plaque for the people who lost their lives during the conflict including those killed in the bombing, servicemen and a fireman. The stone plaque was placed on the external wall of the community centre where it remained for around 50 years. It was removed when the community centre was extended around 20 years ago and subsequently lost. It has since been found and re-erected inside the community centre, but it is damaged and the base is missing.

Hackney Society members Natalie and Brian Longman, whose great uncle's name is on the plaque, contacted the current custodians Southern Housing Group with a view to starting a project that would see the stone plaque restored and a new plaque for the bomb victims. SHG agreed to the plaque being restored and to the new Blitz memorial plaque for the bomb victims being placed on the external wall of the flats where the incident took place. A third part of the project will see research information about the people listed on the plaque and the local community during WW2 being used as part of schoolchildren's education about the area and how it was affected by WW2.

It is hoped that the restored civic plaque and the new Blitz memorial plaque will be unveiled on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing next September. To read more about the project and to keep up to date with its progress please visit and like the FB webpage <https://www.facebook.com/HindleHouseWarMemorialProject>.

Help support our work by joining the **Hackney Society**. Call on **020 7175 1967** or email [membership@hackneysociety.org](mailto:membership@hackneysociety.org) or visit [www.hackneysociety.org](http://www.hackneysociety.org)

## Noticeboard

### Friends of Hackney Archives

Friends of Hackney Archives are looking for new committee members. The committee meets about three times a year. Please contact Robert Whytehead for more details ([robertwhytehead@msn.com](mailto:robertwhytehead@msn.com)).

### Hackney Books

Long-time Hackney Society member, Dr Melvyn Brooks, is selling some books about Hackney from his collection. Titles are listed at [http://www.hackneysociety.org/page/sale\\_of\\_books\\_about\\_hackney?path=0p29p](http://www.hackneysociety.org/page/sale_of_books_about_hackney?path=0p29p).

### Church of St Andrew

Volunteers are sought to show people around the Church of St Andrew in Bethune Road when it is open. Members of the congregation are to be encouraged to work with the volunteers and, ideally, to replace them in due course. At least for the next two or three years, a co-ordinator is required to ensure there is an adequate rota of volunteers to liaise with organisations like London Open House or the Victorian Society. For more information, see [http://www.hackneysociety.org/page.aspx?idtxt=church\\_of\\_at\\_andrew\\_stoke\\_newington](http://www.hackneysociety.org/page.aspx?idtxt=church_of_at_andrew_stoke_newington) or contact Donna McDonald ([donna.mcdonald@virgin.net](mailto:donna.mcdonald@virgin.net)).

### 125 years of Clissold Park

Clissold Park opened on 24 July 1889. To celebrate its 125th anniversary, Hackney Council and the Clissold Park User Group restored the park's memorial drinking fountain, which celebrates the efforts of Joseph Beck and John Runtz, who campaigned to save the land from development. The newly restored drinking fountain was unveiled in July this year by the great-great-great-grandchildren of Joseph Beck.

## Publications

### *Beaten but not Defeated. Siegfried Moos: a German anti-Nazi who settled in Britain*

by Marilyn Moos is a biography of Siegi Moos written by his daughter. Moos was an anti-Nazi and active member of the German Communist Party who escaped Germany in 1933 and, exiled in Britain, sought another route to the transformation of capitalism. He spent the last years of his life in Hackney with his wife, the poet Lotte Moos. There is a plaque on the house where they lived at 22 Gore Road. Chronos Books, £17.99 (eBook £6.99).

*Hackney History, Volume 18* edited by Isobel Watson contains articles on celebrity in 18<sup>th</sup> century Stoke Newington, the bells of Shoreditch, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century middle class families of Stamford Hill, physical resistance to the Salvation Army and Laburnum Street School. Friends of Hackney Archives, £4.

*The Hackney Scout Song Book 1921-1972* by Hackney Society member Melvyn Brooks is a history of the HSSB and a tribute to those Hackney Scouts killed in both World Wars, who are listed on the Rolls of Honour in the song book. Fast-Print Publishing, £7.

*The Planner* by Stoke Newington writer John Campbell is a novel about a town planner in London. Bloomsbury, £12.99.

## Hackney Society Events

### Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 2 December 2014, 7pm  
The AGM (7.30pm) will be preceded by a tour of the recently refurbished rooms at Hackney Town Hall.  
Meet at 7pm, Hackney Town Hall, E8 1EA  
*Booking recommended.* Book online at <http://billetto.co.uk/hsagm2014>

### Clonbrock Road

Thursday 11 December 2014, 3.30pm  
**Tour with Edward Lipton**  
A chance to visit a house with a new front extension and an internal reconfiguration and refurbishment by Lipton Plant Architects.  
Meet at 3.30pm, 33 Clonbrock Rd, N16 8RS  
*Booking essential.* Book online at <http://billetto.co.uk/clonbrockroad>  
FREE for Hackney Society members, £5 to non-members.

Thanks to Kopykat for sponsoring this issue

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Design and Print

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

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