

The Bridge Academy



The Bridge Academy is the latest privately sponsored school to be opened in Hackney. This mixed school for 11-18 year olds moved into its new, purpose-built premises in 2008.

From the Regent's Canal, the building's curvaceous aspect is exciting and attention grabbing, as is the transparent ethylene tetra fluoro ethylene (ETFE) cushion, which is stretched over the outside of the building.

The building, which was designed by BDP and sponsored by UBS, forms a 'seven-level interactive learning environment'. Designed to be friendly and welcoming the galleried learning space is set around a 'social gathering area and learning hub', which is designed to deter bullying by being open plan. A sweeping structural arch supports the centre of the school, allowing the learning space to be column free and flexible. The classrooms vary in shape and size, and a number of them can be adapted quickly for small or large groups. Terraces extend the internal learning space, either as outdoor classrooms or playground areas.

The horseshoe form, the ETFE cushion and the south aspect of the building minimise energy use by maximising daylight to the teaching spaces and providing predominantly natural ventilation. The ETFE cushion is a sustainable and hard wearing alternative to glass, and has fewer thermal retaining properties.

By 2013 the academy will cater for 1,150 students, offering 900 places for 11-16 year olds and a sixth-form for 250 students. Specialising in music and mathematics, it will teach a broad curriculum and be a local school for students of all abilities. For further information about BDP visit www.bdp.com

A tour of the Bridge Academy is being arranged for 2009. Full details to follow...



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From Fever to Consumption

The Hackney Society has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to explore the social history and architectural heritage of four healthcare institutions that were pioneering in the field of modern medicine.

The project will focus on

- The Mothers' Hospital, opened in 1894 by the Salvation Army for unmarried mothers, which later became a maternity hospital
- St Leonard's Hospital, which grew out of the Shoreditch Workhouse in the 1770s
- John Scott Health Centre, one of Britain's first post-war health centres
- Hackney Hospital, a workhouse infirmary that became one of the largest general hospitals in London

The project, From Fever to Consumption – the Story of Healthcare in Hackney, will look at how these institutions developed and the significance of their architectural design. We also plan to train volunteers in oral history techniques so they can interview former doctors, nurses and patients to help inform this study. Over the next 12 months we will also be organising special walks, tours and creative writing sessions; and developing a community history website and online education resources for teachers.



St Leonard's Hospital will become one of the government's new polyclinics

Subject to raising additional funds we hope to expand this study to include all the other healthcare institutions in the borough. This larger project will create a book and touring exhibition.

If you are interested in volunteering, or if you have a story to tell please contact the Project Officer at info@hackneysociety.org

London Fields Lido

Following our feature on swimming in Spaces 18/19, Melvyn Brooks, a member, recalls using London Fields Lido when he was a child in the 1950s.

The swimming pool in London Fields was our local. I would meet up there with other boys from Gayhurst School. Entrance was one penny. Once I was almost decapitated trying to get in via the exit to avoid paying. There were two types of changing room – individual cubicles and a communal room. Clothes were placed in a metal basket which was exchanged for a tag. A few years ago, I was offered the official log of the pool from April 1955 to March 1958 (which coincides with the time I swam there). The log records that the pool charged admittance from 10am daily; before that it was free. It closed at 9pm. The highest recorded daily entry was on 18 July 1955, when 2,250 people were admitted. On 16 December 1957, the pool was iced over, but four bathers braved the conditions. The last entry in the log is for 24 March 1959; on that day two broom heads and a lifebuoy were purchased.

West Hackney Recreation Ground *By Matthew Carrington*

Groundwork East London has recently secured funding from the West Hackney Parochial Charity to start the process of improving the historic open space known as West Hackney Recreation Ground (WHRG) plus the land surrounding St Paul's Church. The site is located at the western end of Evering Road and fronts Stoke Newington High Street. The work will involve undertaking a number of key historical assessments plus a wide-ranging community consultation to create a master plan with costs. The project has been developed over the last six months, in partnership with the Rector Niall Weir and the Parochial Church Council.

The original West Hackney Parish church was built in the mid 1820s to cater for Hackney's increasing population. It was designed by the architect Robert Smirke whose son was responsible for the design of the Reading Room at the British Museum. The church itself was severely damaged in WW2 and replaced with a more contemporary building in the 1950s, designed by Nugent Cachemaille-Day who was also involved with the garden city movement.

The recreation ground to the rear of the church was created from the original burial ground in the late 19th century as an open space to provide for the rapidly increasing population in Hackney. This and the gardens of St John-at-Hackney, recently the focus of another restoration programme initiated by Groundwork East London, were two of the first such sites to be created in London, originally supported by the Metropolitan Gardens Association. In recent years the site has fallen into significant decline and it is hoped that the pieces of work described above will start the process of improvement. It is anticipated that a master plan for the site will be in draft form around March/April 2009.



To obtain local views, there will be a number of drop-in events for residents and interested groups on the following dates:

- **10-2pm, Saturday 15 November, Stoke Newington Farmers' Market, William Patten Primary School, Stoke Newington Church Street, N16**
- **4-8pm, Wednesday 19 November, St Paul's Church Hall**
- **11.30-3.30pm, Sunday 23 November, St Paul's Church Hall**

A postcard survey will be delivered to local residents. There will also be an online questionnaire at www.groundwork-surveys.org.uk/westhackneyrecreationground, for those wishing to respond in more detail.

For more information contact Matthew Carrington at Groundwork East London on 020 8985 1755, or email matthew.carrington@groundworkeastlondon.org

St Augustine's Tower

By Laurie Elks

St Augustine's Tower stands in Hackney churchyard next to the bustle of the Narrowway. It is Hackney's oldest building, dating from the early 16th century and almost certainly incorporating masonry from the previous 13th century tower.

It owes its survival to the cheapskate budget provided by the parish for the construction of the new church of St John-at-Hackney, which was completed in 1797. The funds were insufficient to construct a tower and the old tower was retained to house the bells. It was only in 1854 that St John's acquired a tower of sufficient strength to accommodate the bells, by which time the Victorian enthusiasm for all things Gothic ensured the survival of the tower. Subsequently, the tower had a rather chequered history including spells as a mortuary and a tool shed before passing to the care of Hackney Historic Buildings Trust (HHBT) in 1990.

In 2006, HHBT obtained funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to make the tower more accessible as a visitor attraction. Apart from stabilising some friable masonry, little structural work was required.

The works included:

- the installation of safety rails and decking on the roof (and installation of panoramas in each direction);
- making the turret staircase safer; and
- making the first three floors weather-tight.

Electric winding has been introduced to save stress to the 16th century clock, and visitor display boards and a virtual reality tour of the medieval church have been provided. An education pack is available for primary schools to do literacy and history work based on the tower.

St Augustine's Tower has extraordinary potential to make links for visitors between the Hackney we see and the rural village that existed less than 200 years ago, where Pepys used to come out for a country stroll, and watercress grew in the clean waters of Hackney Brook.

The tower is open on the last Sunday of each month (except December) from 2pm to 4.30pm and by special arrangement for schools and groups.

For further information log on to www.hhbt.org.uk



Building Watch: News



The Swan

The Swan Public House on Clapton Common is under threat. The pub is facing closure and conversion to a synagogue. Although the present Swan dates from the 1950s, there has been a pub on the site since at least 1765.

The Swan was important as a departure point for travellers heading towards the City. During the 19th century omnibuses departed from the tavern.

The Stamford Hill area doesn't have many pubs, and The Swan is a vital part of the community for many. A group of people has

formed a committee to investigate the various ways in which the proposal can be halted.

For further information log on to www.savetheswan.com

The Light Bar

The Light Bar at 233 Shoreditch High Street is at risk of being demolished due to a proposed development by Hammerson. The proposed scheme, Bishop's Place, designed by Foster and Partners, is a mixed-use development which includes a 51-storey tower.

At a Planning Committee meeting in July 2008, a decision on the design of the building was deferred. It was thought inappropriate to consider a planning application while a Conservation Area review was pending.

This former electricity power station generated the first electricity for lighting at Liverpool Street Station. Restored by James Goff of Urban Edge, the Light Bar contributes significantly to the local streetscape and it is a valuable boundary building between the high-rise modernity of the City and the lower industrial neighbouring buildings in Shoreditch. For further information log on to www.savethelight.co.uk.

If there is a building in your area that you are concerned about please email info@hackneysociety.org and we will try and feature it in our next issue of Spaces.

Building Watch: The Old Tram Depot

The former tram depot at 38-40 Upper Clapton Road is one of the last remaining Victorian horse tram depots in London. Most passers-by don't give the building a second glance, but its enclosed cobbled yard, main tram gallery with cast iron double colonnade and original tram lines running the length of the building bear witness to its past history.

Opened in 1873, it has been an integral part of the Clapton townscape for almost 140 years, but is now under threat of demolition following a planning application by a developer to build a mixed-use development, including apartments and office space.

When the North Metropolitan Tramways Company opened their horse tram depot in 1873, Clapton became a busy terminus for road passenger transport, as a regular and cheap tram service took commuters to and from the City of London and West End. It heralded the development of Clapton from a semi-rural area to a thriving suburb of Victorian villas and leafy terraces. The population of the area soared, and visitors came to Clapton to enjoy the delights of its picturesque riverside, which was a favourite spot for boating and picnicking.

The proposed redevelopment is designed by Hawkins\Brown – a firm of architects who have designed a number of buildings in the borough, including 2 Hillman Street (part of the Hackney Town Hall redevelopment) and the Culture House in Dalston. This mixed-used development is in the vein of many residential buildings that have recently been built in the borough – modular, colourful, aesthetic and 'pleasantly' modern.

In many ways it is a run-of-the mill development, albeit there are some concerns about the increase in traffic on Prout Road and Casimir Road that will be produced due to the rear car park entrance. But, what is sad about the proposed development is again the loss of a historic industrial building and industrial workspaces that it provided. At present, the Old Tram Depot supports a variety of creative industries and businesses that benefit from the ground floor access and double-height space that the depot provides. Where will these businesses go? It won't be to alternative units in Hackney (as these are at a premium), or into the workspaces proposed in the new development (as they seem to be designed for office-based creatives – like designers and architects, not blacksmiths and sculptors). At a public meeting in October the architect and developer presented their plans to local residents.

For further information about Hawkins\Brown log on to www.hawkinsbrown.co.uk. If you would like to try and save the tram depot for local businesses you can sign a petition at www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-the-tram-depot-site-38-40-upper-clapton-rd.html



Join the Society?

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2009. Full membership is £15 per annum, concessionary and junior membership is £10, voluntary organisation membership is £40, corporate membership is £100, and life membership is £250. For 2009, we have an exciting programme of events including tours of former hospital buildings, a walk looking at the printing industry in Shoreditch/Clerkenwell and a triathlon in July (cycling tour of Hackney's swimming pools – no training required!).

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

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Hackney Society events

AGM at the Light Bar

Monday 1 December 2008, 7pm

Tour of the building with James Goff
Meet at the Light Bar, 233 Shoreditch High Street, E1.

Join us for our AGM at the Light Bar in Shoreditch. Refreshments will be provided.

'A walk through a misty looking village of England'

Sunday 11 January 2009, 1.30pm

Walk with Sean Gubbins, Historian
Meet at Finsbury Park gates by Manor House Underground Station
Discover Stoke Newington's story from before 1066, with its two churches, one of London's most delightful parks, with natural and man-made rivers, to the quiet, urban woods of Abney Park Cemetery. Walk will take c. two hours and end at Abney Park Cemetery entrance in Stoke Newington High Street.

The French Hospital

Monday 26 January 2009, 7pm

Tour with Architectural Historian, TBC
Meet at entrance to Cardinal Pole RC School (Annexe), Victoria Park Road, London E9 7HD

Join us for a tour of the former French Hospital, designed by Robert Louis Roumieu.

Most events are free to Hackney Society members and £5 to non-members. For special and joint events there may be a charge for members (see individual listings). To avoid disappointment please contact Lisa Rigg on 020 8806 4003 or email lisa@hackneysociety.org to book a place.

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