

**Lennox House – planning application reference, listed building consent 2010/0077**

**Comments:**

Lennox House was built 1936-7 to designs by John Eric Miers Macgregor (1891-1984). The block's concept of the stepped section was unique in pre-Second World War social housing and anticipated the much larger and monumental Brunswick Centre, Camden, built thirty-years later in 1967-72. JEM Macgregor was a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings stalwart, but in his own buildings regularly combined traditional claddings with innovative concrete frame constructions. His designs were fired by a desire to build low-cost housing prototypes, and Lennox House is thought to be his most successful building.

The windows at Lennox House are multi-pane, rectangular, steel casements which are painted black. They are an important element of the building's character, as well as evidence for Macgregor's deftness in combining of traditional-styled windows with modern materials. We understand that the current windows are thought to be replacements of the 1970s, but their appearance suggests they are the originals.

Replacing the original windows in anything less than an exact visual match would impact on the building's character. The Hackney Society believes that repair is preferable to restoration and a conservation-led approach to the building, which its Grade II listing warrants, should be taken. If replacement is deemed the only solution and is accepted by Hackney Council's Urban Design and Conservation Team, however, we recommend that as close a match as possible to the originals in materials, glazing bar arrangement and profile is made. Replacement should only be considered on a like-for-like basis.

JEM Macgregor is largely remembered today for his role in repairing and preserving many historic buildings. It would be a fitting tribute to his vision and expertise for the restoration of Lennox House to be undertaken with sensitivity to the building's historic character and architectural interest.