

Lauriston Primary School



Large, silver letters announce the arrival of the bigger, bolder and (in part) brighter Lauriston Primary School in Victoria Park. Designed by Meadowcroft Griffin Architects, this new building, located on Rutland Road, replaces the single-storey 1970s building that was previously on the site. The first phase of the new school was opened in November 2009.

The architect's brief was to design a building that enhanced the school's creative approach to learning through the use of art, drama and music; and allowed the school to expand from single- to two-form entry – increasing each yearly intake from 30 to 60 children. The former school building, too small for The Learning Trust's planned expansion, was not considered suitable for adaptation.

Construction was carried out while the school was still teaching approx. 200 pupils. In order to minimise disruption, prefabricated units were used – helping to reduce time on site as well as noise and dust created during construction. The final phase, to be completed in time for the new school year in September 2010, will see the construction of further classrooms, but most of the building work has been

finished, with a new house for the school keeper in nearby Connor Street.

Constructed on a restricted site, this two- to three-storey building is formed out of a series of interlocking prefabricated timber panels – clad in a range of materials, including grey brick and multicoloured panels. The majority of the classrooms are raised above ground-level providing natural daylight, ventilation and views over Hackney – exemplifying the teachers' desires for all classrooms to be inspiring learning environments. The interior is warm and textural with large areas of exposed timber as well as spacious double-height corridors. The classrooms for younger children, aged three to five years, are located on the ground floor allowing easy access to outside play areas.

Despite the building's reduced footprint, the architects have increased the amount of external space, thereby providing an



exciting and imaginative range of play, sport and outdoor learning facilities. They have achieved this through a combination of roof decks and terraces, placed at various heights, and the use of a void created by the rear of the building being raised on stilts. The children at Lauriston should now feel adequately equipped to jump, skip and climb their way to future educational success.

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LBH Training Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities

By Lisa Rigg

In 1959 the Mental Health Act devolved care for mentally ill people to local authorities, and in 1963 the Department of Health published a Building Note encouraging the provision of local training centres. In the following year Hackney Council began work on the construction of a Training Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities at 205a Morning Lane.

Designed by Stillman and Eastwick-Field the building is elegant, well proportioned and meticulously detailed. Possessing a strong character – with its concrete edge beams, escape stairs and flues, projecting glazed lift and stair tower, red brick panels and eau-de-nil spandrels – the design is as formal an assembly of architectural elements as any Palladian villa. Brutalism hardly seems the right word to describe such an elegant example of an increasingly rare species of post-war building.

Today, the LBH Training Centre stands empty and forlorn – waiting to be demolished. In its place a new school is planned for Cardinal Pole RC Secondary School, which is currently split across two sites. This project is to be funded by the Building Schools for the Future programme, which has seen the demolition of many perfectly adaptable buildings. Jestico Whites have been appointed to design the school, with early plans recently presented to Hackney Council. No reference was made to whether they had considered retaining the building. The Society would like to see the LBH Training Centre integrated into the new school, as it seems profligate to demolish this building – both economically and culturally.

The LBH Training Centre was closed in 1970, but Hackney Social Services continued to occupy the building until 1999 when it was then leased to Space Studios – a charity that rents studio spaces to artists – up until March 2010. Due to a history of short leases and under investment the building currently looks tired and shabby, but underneath the faded exterior is an architecture that demonstrates a confluence of social purpose and avant-garde design, complete and largely unspoiled. Unusual features, such as a diagonally set porch, could be carefully conserved and adapted to modern requirements. With some imagination the building could be



transformed to provide excellent workshops for art, technology or science.

John and Elizabeth Eastwick-Field and John Stillman met as students, in 1937, at the Bartlett School of Architecture, and in 1949 set up a practice together. By the 1960s, most local authorities had recruited teams of architects, like Stillman and Eastwick-Field, to deliver the very large housing, education and health building programmes which were in train. The style was defined by the historian Reyner Banham, in his essay *The New Brutalism* in 1955 as ‘the clear expression of structure and valuation of the materials as found’. The supposed economy achieved by stripping away redundant finishes and decoration and the clear relation of the form to the use of the building, rather than any stylistic stereotype, appealed to public sector bodies operating within closely prescribed budgets. In practice the supposed savings were not always realised. The care in detailing and manufacture, and the high quality of materials required to achieve the required standard, often offset any cost efficiencies.

During their career SEF managed to make their mark with award-winning designs that were often published in the architectural press. They also had a respect for conserving existing buildings with many

of their school designs integrating buildings from former periods. Today they are largely remembered for their role in the rebuilding of Britain in the post-war years, providing well-considered, beautifully crafted designs. It should also be noted that the practice was committed to education. The rebuilding of the Camden School for Girls, in 1957, was one of their ‘boldest achievements in the educational sphere’. In Hackney, they designed Stoke Newington Secondary School which was recently submitted for statutory listing, but failed.

While many of their buildings are mentioned in Pevsner’s *The Buildings of England*, none have been listed, despite attempts by the Twentieth Century Society. It would be a fitting tribute to their vision and expertise if the LBH Training Centre were listed Grade II, and integrated into the proposals for Cardinal Pole – something which was at the heart of their practice.

If you would like the building to be listed please send a letter to: Delcia Keate, Heritage Protection, English Heritage, 138-142 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST. This article is based on an essay by John Turner, which originally appeared in Hackney – Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored. Thanks to Richard Hill for identifying the building’s architects.

The Ship Aground

By Julia Lafferty

Following the surrender of the licence of the Ship Aground Public House at 144 Lea Bridge Road, Punch Taverns have sold the building to a Sikh organisation. At a meeting with local residents in February 2010, the new owners indicated that they proposed to demolish the historic pub to build a cultural and religious centre on the site.

Although The Ship Aground is not statutorily or locally listed, it lies at the heart of the Lea Bridge Conservation Area on the south side of Lea Bridge Road, west of the River Lee Navigation, and is designated a Building of Townscape Merit. It has been described by English Heritage as 'a handsome building that contributes to the Conservation Area' and it provides the setting for the early 19th-century mission school which is listed Grade II and is located beside it.

The Ship Aground has been an integral part of the history of the riverside community at Lea Bridge for centuries. The present building, which dates from the late 19th century, was built on the site of an earlier pub of the same name that served as a meeting place for river dwellers and bargees. Of all the buildings in the Lea Bridge Conservation Area this public



house has had the closest relationship with the river and the people whose livelihoods have depended on it for centuries.

The pub took its name from its location between the River Lea and Paradise Dock (formerly known as Ashpittel's Dock), which was constructed by landowner William Hurst Ashpittel (1776-1852), an architect and surveyor who was involved in the building of the London Docks and the Kennett and Avon Canal. The Dock was still in use in the first half of the 20th century but was filled in by the 1960s. The course of the Dock is still visible in the form of a water feature which has been integrated into the recent residential development by Vision Homes at Lea Bridge.

The surviving cluster of Victorian and Edwardian buildings within the Lea Bridge Conservation Area and its riverside setting are a unique and distinctive remnant of the historic uses of the River Lea and the industrial heritage of the area. The Ship Aground is an important element in retaining the cohesiveness of the Conservation Area, and the commitment by the Council to resist proposals to demolish the building is welcomed.

Book review

By Ken Worpole

William McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment*, The John Hopkins University Press, 2008, £32.00.

Anna Barbauld was in many ways the Virginia Woolf of the 18th century, a writer possessed of a radical enquiring mind, passionate in her espousal of the role of feelings in human affairs, a religious dissenter, poet, republican and for a while the most famous female essayist in Britain and America. Alas today she is known principally as the originator of children's reading books, and not as the philosopher/critic who – the author of this wonderful biography claims – anticipated many of the ideas of Marx and Freud and other 19th century luminaries.

Born in 1743 in Leicestershire, she worked as a schoolteacher before marrying a French dissenter, Rochemont Barbauld, and pursuing a career as a writer. In March 1802 she and Rochemont moved to Stoke Newington, buying a house in Church Street, where she remained until her death in 1825. She is buried in the family vault in St Mary's, Stoke Newington, and a commemorative plaque was erected in the Newington Green Chapel. Rochemont had already secured a position as a preacher at the chapel on Newington Green, where he and Anna were part of the large dissenting community, though this was his last ministry. Suffering from periods of serious mental instability for much of his life, he finally ended it by drowning himself in 1808 in the New River, close to what is now Clissold Park.

Barbauld worked on, bereft. In 1812 she published her most notorious poem, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, a radical attack on British imperial ambition, and her reputation suffered badly. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth disliked her radicalism, possibly through guilt at their own abandonment of earlier beliefs. This monumental biography succeeds in bringing this remarkable woman back to her rightful position as one of Britain's most original intellectuals, as well as an untiring campaigner for many radical causes. Towards the end of McCarthy's biography there is much interesting detail on life and gossip in Stoke Newington in the early 1800s – fights outside the Red Lion, house burglaries, women's book clubs, dinner parties, factional religious and political disputes – to anchor it in the continuing story of Hackney's contrarian life and culture.

Publications

Hackney Photographs 1985-1987 by Berris Conolly contains 52 duotone images from the London Borough of Hackney. Publisher: Contours Publishing, £16.00 plus £2.50 UK p&p (bconolly@blueyonder.co.uk).

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel is a novel of extraordinary detail about Thomas Cromwell that brings the Tudor period alive. Publisher: Fourth Estate, £18.99.

The Thirties: An Intimate History by Juliet Gardiner is a portrait of 1930s Britain told through the stories of its citizens. Publisher: Harper Press, £30.00.

England's Schools: History, Architecture and Adaptation by Elaine Harwood provides a concise history of school buildings in England from medieval times to the 1980s. Publisher: English Heritage, £9.99.

East of Islington by Sam Taylor is set partly in Stoke Newington. Publisher: Gibson Square, £7.99.

Must You Go? My Life with Harold Pinter by Antonia Fraser includes mentions of Hackney, in particular Clapton, where Harold Pinter grew up. Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20.00.

Volunteering

Volunteers are required to help with the Hackney Society's administration and bookkeeping. Please email lisa@hackneysociety.org for further information.

Noticeboard

Stoke Newington Town Hall

Hawkins\Brown have restored Stoke Newington Town Hall, which was designed by J Reginald Truelove and dates from 1935-37. The Grade II listed building declined after 1965, when Stoke Newington became part of the London Borough of Hackney. Restoration work includes removal of a false ceiling in the council chamber to reveal the original domed roof and the creation of a sprung dance floor.

Gainsborough Community Primary School The school has been listed Grade II by English Heritage. Built in 1899, it was designed by the renowned London School Board architect T J Bailey.

Clapton Library The newly refurbished library was officially reopened on 22 February 2010 by Mayor Jules Pipe, with entertainment from John Hegley. Restored by the architects Shephard Epstein Hunter, the library now provides new areas for private study and young people, a meeting room for community use and better facilities for disabled users. The scheme extends and transforms the Grade II listed building, designed by Edwin Cooper and opened in 1914.

Hackney Society News

The Planning Sub-group has met four times this year to comment on planning applications in Hackney. To view their comments log on to www.hackneysociety.org/page_id__137__path__0p4p.aspx

The Society's community history project From Fever to Consumption is finished with the completion of over 30 hours of oral history interviews and original research about the story of healthcare in Hackney. Log on to www.hackneysociety.org/health to listen to former patients, doctors and nurses talking about the Mums', Hackney Hospital, St Leonard's and the pioneering John Scott Health Centre.

2010 has seen record attendance of our events programme. Book early for events as they are filling up fast and most have limited numbers.

Please check our website for up-to-date information and additional events that are organised throughout the year. Most of our events are free to Hackney Society members and £5 to non-members. To avoid disappointment please book in advance. Contact Lisa on 020 8806 4003 or email lisa@hackneysociety.org



Hackney Society events

The Castle Climbing Centre

Saturday 8 May 2010, 11am
Tour with Allen Abramson and Jon Clarke
Come and explore the former water pumping station with two climbers who also share an interest in its architectural history.
Venue: The Castle Climbing Centre, Green Lanes, London N4.
FREE to members, £5.00 to non-members

Discover Planning and the Historic Environment

Saturday 15 May 2010, 10.30am to 5pm
Study day with speakers (inc. Will Palin, Graham Loveland and Michael Passmore)
The day will bring together a varied programme of talks and practical workshops, and will include an advice surgery and local area walk. Topics include: how the planning department is structured, national planning policy, how to comment, building a case, and how to research historic buildings.
Venue: Hackney Archives, 43 De Beauvoir Road, London N1.
£12.50 (inc. lunch and refreshments)

Sustainability vs Conservation

Thursday 20 May 2010, 7pm
Debate with Robert Prewett, Robyn Pender, Hattie Hartman, Meredith Davey and Julian Harrap
How are we going to make our historic buildings more environmentally friendly? Is a carbon neutral Victorian house possible? What should government be doing to help us improve our homes? Come and join the debate.
Venue: Hothouse, 274 Richmond Road, London E8.
FREE to all

Advice Surgery @

Hackney Central Library

Saturday 22 May 2010, 12-2pm

Stoke Newington Farmers' Market

Saturday 3 July 2010, 12-2pm

St John-at-Hackney fête

Saturday 10 July 2010, 12-2pm

An opportunity to ask for advice on planning and built environment issues. Experts will be on hand to answer your queries with information to take away.
FREE to all

St John-at-Hackney: monuments and memories

Saturday 5 June, 11am
Walk with Sean Gubbins
Come for a walk around St John-at-Hackney's churchyard, finishing with a climb up St Augustine's Tower. Hear the stories behind some of the names on the tombs – the poor as well as the great-and-the-good.
Meet on the steps of St John-at-Hackney Church, Lower Clapton Road, London E5.
FREE to all

Optimistic Architecture

Thursday 10 June, 6pm
Talk with John Turner, Anthony Thistleton and Ken Worpole
To celebrate the Hackney Society's new publication, *Hackney – Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored*, three contributors take a walk through the post-war landscape of Hackney to discover three architectural gems: Haggerston School for Girls, LBH Training Centre and the John Scott Health Centre.
Venue: Hackney Museum, TLC, 1 Reading Lane, London E8.
FREE to all

An evening stroll around Upper Clapton

Monday 26 July, 7pm
Walk with Dr Ann Robey
The walk will follow a route around Clapton Common and some of the adjoining streets. It will look at the development of the area, the exteriors of some of the architecturally interesting buildings and will examine briefly conservation issues in the area. Funded by the Hackney Heritage and Built Environment Partnership.
Meet outside St Thomas's Church, corner of Clapton Terrace and Oldhill Street.
FREE to all

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