

Shoreditch Prototype House



Shoreditch Prototype House by Cox Bulleid Architects is a low cost, low energy house and studio for a dense urban site. It was designed using principles transferable to larger schemes and locations.

Tessa Cox and Oliver Bulleid bought a brownfield site and developed it to create their own house and studio. They used the project to explore and define their approach to architecture and building in the city.

The project promotes principles of sustainable architecture. The architects sought to 'green the city through the use of vertical planting as screen filter, sunshade and oxygenator to create a new "garden city" in an urban context'. The house features a lightweight steel and timber frame with highly insulated 'thin wall' construction.

Bolted on steel decks provide balconies and privacy screens while planting grown over the mesh gives shade in summer and allows direct solar heating in winter. On the top floor a combined planter, balustrade and sunshade creates an external room with long views south to the City.

The building layout has potential for development as a new urban housing typology and Cox Bulleid Architects have drawn up initial proposals for a Prototype Green Terrace developed as a natural evolution of the urban terraced house built to zero carbon standards for 21st century living.

The house, which was completed in 2008, has won a Hackney Design Award 2008 and Grand Designs Best Eco House 2009, and was shortlisted for the RIBA Awards 2009. It received funding from the Department of Trade and Industry.

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contents

- [01 Shoreditch Prototype House](#)
- [02 Manor Garden Allotments](#)
- [03 Building Watch](#)
- [04 Noticeboard](#)
- [04 Publications](#)
- [04 Hackney Society events](#)

The legacy is now for Manor Garden Allotments

By Julie Sumner

Evicted from the Olympic development site in September 2007, Manor Gardening Society (MGS) had almost 100 years of growing vegetables on its jewel of a site on the Hackney/Newham borders. Ironically Major Arthur Villiers built the plots as part of his Eton Manor project, which provided sports facilities and healthy food to the poor of the East End. Originally the allotment had over 400 plots. This was reduced to just the 83 on Bully Fen; the last of those were destroyed to make way for a walkway between Olympic stadia in 2012.

MGS members ducked down under the parapet faced with the enormous odds against them presented by the Olympic mega-event. I had been a plot holder for 14 years, and decided to put up a fight. After objecting to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), I established the Lifeisland Campaign to support myself and those plot holders wishing to join forces to expose how the Green Olympics would destroy the greenest, most sustainable feature the Lower Lea Valley had.

The clean slate approach of the planners allowed no flexibility for such innovations as retaining the allotments as a demonstration of a much-loved part of British life within the park. However to prevent eviction prior to any replacement site being provided MGS took the London Development Agency (LDA) to Judicial Review. Friends of the Earth deemed the cause worthy of their support, given the huge media profile Lifeisland had generated and the great level of public support for the allotments.

The LDA were forced to allow crops to be harvested and to accelerate the building of a temporary new site in Waltham Forest before they could re-locate MGS despite the Olympic site's closure to the public in July 2007. Meanwhile the CPO objection had ensured the allotments were in the inspector's mind when he wrote his report. This stated that the allotments must be rebuilt, with a similar location and all of the main qualities of the old site.

The temporary relocation of the allotments cost £1.2m, but provided only two-thirds of the original number of plots and turned out to be unfit for horticultural use until substantial drainage works were carried out. Thanks to terrier-like persistence by the Chair pushing for the work to be done, it was finally completed in April 2009.

The brutally managed eviction led to most of the plot holders' possessions being wrecked or stolen. There was a dismaying reduction in members, as a quarter of plot holders could not make the move for various reasons. The drainage problems delayed cultivation on a third of plots. However 18 months on, with our tough as old boots members and many new members, the plots are beginning to establish nicely albeit with 'temporary' imprinted on everyone's minds.

In July 2008 MGS met with John Hopkins, of the ODA, and representatives from EDAW, the renowned landscape design firm. They awarded MGS 'special status' in relation to the Legacy Park as they are the only evicted group due to be returned. This means MGS should be included fully in the design process of the area of Park to be dedicated to allotments. Trust that this is a genuine offer will take time to build.

MGS thinks of itself as primarily belonging to Hackney. The entrance to the Bully Fen site was west of the river and most of

New site



Old site sheds



its members live in Hackney. However Mayor Jules Pipe is reputed to be against any Hackney Legacy land being dedicated to allotments. Yet in Hackney there are only 113 very small plots taking up a mere 0.873 hectares of land (our current site is 1.2 hectares for 63 plots) all managed by the Hackney Allotment Society. None are run by Hackney Council. There are 200 names on the closed waiting list.

Mr Pipe's objection seems to be based on the common misconception that allotments are semi-privatised land benefiting only the plot holders. Were he to have visited the old site or even the Lifeisland website he would be forced to recognise that a vast and diverse community benefits from such facilities, for instance in the form of a bag of surplus vegetables given to a neighbour. Artists, photographers and students use the character of the allotments as inspiration for projects, and numerous films and TV programmes have been made about the site. Members of the public come in droves to Open Days and taste the produce. Most of all, plot holders' extended families come to a barbecue on a sunny Sunday. These places offer balance to the stresses of London life – a visual relief to the tarmac, cars and concrete – and allow the meeting of people who would otherwise never speak. They are a densely used, safe and richly deserving use of flagship parkland.

For more information about MGS log on to www.lifeisland.org

Building Watch

Destruction of first conservation area in Hackney

By Dr Hilda Kean, FRHistS



Conservation Areas at Risk campaign

English Heritage has launched a Conservation Areas at Risk campaign to encourage residents, groups and councils to work together to manage and protect these special places. For a free campaign booklet and for more information log on to: www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas

Clapton Square, which was laid out in 1816 as a central garden surrounded by houses, is under threat. The first conservation area in Hackney to be so designated – in 1969 – and seen by English Heritage as a ‘priority conservation area’, its future now looks bleak. The Clapton Square Conservation Area Appraisal, drafted by the Council’s Urban Design and Conservation Team in October 2007, praised the ‘significant open space’ declaring it to provide amenity and recreation facilities as well as being a ‘significant ecological resource’.

However recent drastic changes to the Square have changed its character. De facto the northern part of the square is now a children’s adventure playground complete with seesaw, roundabout, and gibbet and swinging tyre that dwarf the nearby pavilion and shrubs. Other additions of a white path bisecting the lawn area and wooden sculptures and a ceramic art piece are completely out of kilter with the design and former use of the Square.

However, no planning application was made to alter the character of this key conservation area and no conservation area consent was granted. No referral was made to the Clapton Conservation Areas Advisory Committee. No consultation with residents took place through surveys or notices in the local press or council newspaper. It would appear that the Learning Trust, an independent – and apparently unaccountable – organisation, has decided that under its remit for children it has the power to go over the heads of the Planning Department, residents and councillors.

The Learning Trust had funding to improve play facilities in the borough. They could have used part of the funding to design a play area that was in keeping with the conservation area and offered improved play equipment. For example, the play area in De Beauvoir Square, another conservation area, has not been upgraded to dwarf the gardens completely and the character of the place has not been significantly altered.

The council has, belatedly, conceded that planning permission should have been sought and has apparently advised the Learning Trust that it needs to apply for retrospective planning permission. There needs to be vigilance and concerted pressure to ensure that the destruction of the character of the Square is not made permanent.

Dr Hilda Kean is a member of the Hackney Society and has lived in Clapton Square for over 20 years.

Haggerston Baths

Hackney Council have agreed to redevelop Haggerston Baths in Whiston Road. A detailed feasibility study (published in 2006) to redevelop the pool into a Health and Wellbeing Centre was endorsed by the Council’s cabinet in March 2009. Since then the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have announced a £5 million grant towards the anticipated £20 million required to restore the baths.

Pond House

The current owner of Pond House submitted planning and listed building consent applications to Hackney Council. Planning Officers met with the owner’s agents and the applications were withdrawn with the owner being advised to revise the scheme. The Council says ‘it will seek to secure a scheme that meets with the approval and agreement of English Heritage, who have powers to direct a refusal in the case of a grade I or II* listed building.’

Hackney Council have assured Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Group (CPNAG) that should ‘current discussions and subsequent proposals fail to produce an acceptable scheme for Pond House, then the Council would have a duty to consider alternative options to secure the future of the building... With regard to the current condition of the building, at the time of the last visit officers were satisfied that there were no obvious signs of water penetration and that it was not in immediate danger’.

Currently the building is occupied by squatters and the owner is seeking a court order to evict them. A hoarding has been erected by the owner following a fire at the house. CPNAG have been campaigning for a better scheme. [For more information log on to www.claptonpond.org.uk](http://www.claptonpond.org.uk)

From Fever to Consumption: the Story of Healthcare in Hackney

Our community history project is progressing well. Currently we have 21 volunteers doing research and conducting oral history interviews. To date we have had a fantastic response particularly from staff and patients from the Mothers’ Hospital. Volunteers have been travelling across England to interview nurses, midwives and Salvationists. We are still looking for people to interview – especially from Hackney and St Leonard’s Hospitals. Also, we need volunteers to help edit and archive the oral history interviews and moderate the new website. Please contact Lisa on 020 8806 4003 if you would like to add your story or volunteer.

Noticeboard

Olympic Media Centre

CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) has criticised the Olympic Delivery Authority's (ODA) design proposals for the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) and Main Press Centre (IBC/MPC). According to the organisation's London 2012 design review panel, the design is 'extremely weak' and shows 'a paucity of imagination'.

This view is backed by Mayor Jules Pipe, who has told the ODA that its current design 'does not meet the needs of the high quality employers who have expressed an interest in using the centres after the Games'. He said the design must be improved in order to deliver a meaningful legacy for Hackney.

RIBA Awards

Two buildings in Hackney are among the winners of the 2009 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Awards. They are Hothouse in Richmond Road by Ash Sakula Architects and Frame House in Rowe Lane by FLACQ Architects.

Chatsworth Road Market

Traders and residents in Chatsworth Road are considering relaunching a market for the street. On 30 April 2009 some 120 people attended a meeting at Chats Palace to discuss the idea. Currently, the Chatsworth Road Traders & Residents Association (CRTRA) is consulting the local community about whether a market is wanted and what sort of market it should be. Their next public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14 July 2009. *More information is available at www.chatsworthroade5.co.uk*

St Michael and All Angels



St Michael and All Angels Church in Lavender Grove will be open to the public 10.00am - 4.00pm every Saturday from 6 June - 26 September. The church is Grade II listed with a number of unique architectural and artistic features. These include the striking murals painted by John Hayward in 1961-62 and the elegant copper-covered concrete shell dome, a structural innovation for its time. *For further information call Elizabeth Bower on 07949 529795.*

Publications

Beating the Bounds of the Games in Hackney Wick is aimed at children and their families. This storywalk uses poetry and illustrations to bring the history of Hackney Wick to life. Adults may like it too! Order a copy by emailing lisa@hackneysociety.org. £1.00 p&p (cheques made payable to The Hackney Society).

Great Lengths: The Swimming Pools of Britain by Simon Inglis and Dr Ian Gordon traces the development of indoor public baths and pools, from the earliest Georgian subscription baths and the first municipal baths of Liverpool in 1829 to the current generation of leisure pools. Published by English Heritage in 2009, the book costs £19.99.

Saving our Heritage – The Fight to Protect Over 120 Years of Culture in Dalston. To order a copy of the DVD for £7.99 (including p&p) contact shop@opendalston.net

The French Hospital in England: Its Huguenot History and Collections by Tessa Murdoch and Randolph Vigne contains more than a hundred new photographs of the hospital's collections of paintings and memorabilia. The book costs £30.00 and is published by John Adamson, Cambridge.

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Hackney Society events

The Hackney Society Triathlon

Sunday 12 July 2009, 2pm

Meet at Kings Hall, Lower Clapton Road, E5

Swim, cycle and walk your way round Hackney's historic swimming pools with Simon Inglis – co-author of *Great Lengths: The Swimming Pools of Britain*. The tour will include King's Hall, Pitfield Street Baths, Haggerston Baths and finish with a swim at London Fields Lido (LFL). **FREE**, except swim at LFL. Bicycles required for travel between pools. If you need a bike please let us know.

Jewish Heritage

Talk with Ruth Solomons and Gail Chester

Meet at Hackney and East London Synagogue, Brenthouse Road, E8 Monday 27 July 2009, 7pm

Many Jewish immigrants came to Hackney in the 19th and 20th century. The talk will look at how this community has influenced the buildings and culture of the area.

FREE for members, £5 non-members

Tale of Two Towers

Walk, event leader to be confirmed Saturday 19 September, 2pm

Meet at main entrance of St John-at-Hackney Church, E5

This walk starts at James Spiller's wonderful 18th century church. Built in 1791-4 to the plan of a Greek cross this church is huge, symmetrical and influenced by Sir John Soane. The walk will then thread its way along Sutton Place and Homerton High Street, ending in St Mary-at-Eton in Hackney Wick.

FREE to all. Part of London Open House weekend

Beating the Bounds of the Games

Walk, event leader to be confirmed Saturday 26 September 2009, 2pm

Part of Hackney Wick Festival Starting at Gainsborough Primary School, Berkshire Road, London E9 5ND

'Yes, this was Hackney Wick, my dears, this was Hackney Wick, do the rounds and beat the bounds, and make the memories stick'. Find out about the history of people and places in the Hackney Wick area, including local boxer Harry Mallin, the Eton Manor Boys' Club, Hackney Speedway and Carless, Capel and Leonard – the Pioneers of Petrol. **FREE** to all

Most of our events are free to Hackney Society members and £5 to non-members. For special and joint events there may be a charge for members. Please book as some events have a limited number of places. To book contact Lisa on 020 8806 4003 or email lisa@hackneysociety.org