



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2019

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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146A Rushmore Road



© ZCD Architects and Charles Hosea



146A Rushmore Road is a three-bedroom infill family house on a tight site in the Chatsworth Road area of Hackney. Designed by ZCD Architects, the corten steel clad home negotiates 11 separate boundaries and has a street frontage of 3.5m. It is set back from the street, in line with the adjacent terrace, and manages to insert three stories of accommodation arranged around a rear courtyard.

The architects used oversized windows and openings to create a greater feeling of space across the courtyard, picking up longer views and providing a strong connection to the street.

The perforated weathered steel facade casts patterns on internal surfaces and filters direct sunlight.

Entering through a small front yard, the hallway leads onto three bedrooms around the courtyard. On the first floor, where the family congregates, the client wished for as much height as possible; the trick is pulled off by connecting a series of distinct areas defined by changes in levels, scale and height. These allow for different spatial

scenarios and occupation; through the dining area and kitchen and up onto a higher platform living area. The second floor, at the top of the staircase, is an office for the post-production client and leads onto an expansive roof deck; it sits between the roof tops of its neighbours.

The project won the People's Choice and was commended in the Hackney Design Awards 2018.

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BUILDINGS AT RISK #1

195 Mare Street By Lisa Shell

The Hackney Society probably receives the most email enquiries about the precarious condition and uncertain future of one of the borough's most important historic buildings, known as The New Lansdowne Club, The Elizabeth Fry Refuge or the late C17 merchant's house at 195 Mare Street. Few subjects have demanded more column inches within the Society's newsletter than the fate of this grade II* listed building. Ten years since it was added to the 'Campaigns' pages on hackneysociety.org and five since Claudia Jessop's article about the extraordinary C19 history of the building as a rehabilitation refuge for female ex-convicts, and the tide could be turning. Since the New Lansdowne Liberal and Radical Club closed its doors for the last time in 2004, the building has suffered the theft of fittings (including fireplaces), vandalism, the wear and tear of repeated squatting, and all the while an increasing risk of developers' ambitions to strengthen their portfolios: neglect is no longer the greatest threat to historic Hackney!

So this, the first of a series of articles under the banner of 'Buildings at Risk', provides an update, if not necessarily reassurances, and considers what might at last bring this wretched period of the building's history to a close.

Michele Foti's 2010 insightful commentary on the history of the house published at www.newlansdowneclub3d.org.uk/ ended on an upbeat note since the building had been purchased by the local Vietnamese community to house a Performing Arts and Cultural Centre. And he optimistically anticipated that its listed status might mean 'that the building will be restored like many other historical houses'.

But the last 15 years have seen a series of failed proposals. In 2004 an application was submitted to replace the C20 concert hall extension with a Hawkins\Brown-designed detached four-storey building which, linked back to the house at basement level, would house the Vietnamese Centre. The project was to include the careful repair and restoration of the house, and was to be part funded by the construction of two floors of flats within the new building. Whilst planning was granted, it appears that the Listed Building Consent application was withdrawn, and a series of withdrawn applications followed, including those to vary conditions of the planning approval. In 2011 Hugo Warner of Benugo success, attempted to revive the



proposals with an application to extend the duration of the approval, which had either long since expired or never been ratified by a S106 agreement. The scheme was exhausted, and in the meantime the value of the house and site had exploded.

The house was subsequently sold to Simcha Green, a local property developer operating under the name of Berkshore Ltd (and one not unfamiliar with Hackney's enforcement procedures). But the subsequent planning and listed building consent application in 2016 for proposals to the rear 'site' comprising, a frenetic residential development by Cook Associates, remain at large, despite some concessions and amendments to the design.

And all the while property values in Hackney rise as the building rots. Understanding the increasing risk, Hackney Council worked with the owner to try to break this cycle, and in March 2018 a further LBC was granted for 'essential repairs' *only*, excluding any alteration or demolition work, whilst the development approvals were finalised. But demolition then commenced ahead of approval, attracting enforcement action and stopping works. And Berkshore cut their losses and sold the house to Gold Section Investments LLP in Feb 2019, for the tidy sum of £6,830,400.

Under new ownership, a full scaffold and substantially more secure hoardings have



recently been erected and we understand from the council that a Section 106 agreement, on which the 2016 approvals hinge, is in an advanced stage of negotiation. Once permissions are granted, then pre-commencement conditions will still need to be discharged and so any work beyond the approved 'essential repair' is unlikely to progress for a number of months.

In the meantime council officers are carrying out regular unannounced site visits, and those who have had an eye on this magnificent house over the years, are keeping closer watch than ever before.

Hackney Disinfecting Station By Tim Walder

On Millfields Road is a fenced yard between Ruby Close and the Recycling and Waste Depot. This is the former Hackney Disinfecting Station at 201 Millfields Road E5 0AL. The site is Grade II listed and contains three buildings from 1900 until 1901, with significant later buildings from 1934.

The 1901 buildings are by the architects Henry Thomas Gordon (1846-1922) and Josiah Gunton (1861-1930) and consist of a Disinfecting Station, a Shelter House and a Caretaker's Lodge. The Shelter House originally formed four one-bedroom flats for people who were being disinfected to stay the night. The Caretaker's Lodge originally formed a three-bedroom house. The Disinfecting Station building was the heart of the operation.

The site has its roots in late Victorian municipal concerns about the health and hygiene of Hackney's population. This resulted in three key pieces of legislation. The Public Health (London) Act 1891 placed a duty on the local Authority to disinfect bedding, clothing etc. where a person had a notifiable disease (including tuberculosis, measles, smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, whooping cough, erysipelas, scarlet fever and various fevers) for free. This came with powers of entry, and duties to provide free shelter to people made temporarily homeless. The Cleansing of Persons Act 1897 permitted the local Authority to fund the cleansing of the clothing and persons of people 'infested with vermin'. The Local Government Act 1899 reorganised local government in London, replacing the Hackney Vestry with the Metropolitan Borough of Hackney.

Having previously used various primitive disinfecting stations in sheds in the workhouse and near the River Lea, the then new Hackney Council were prevailed on by their go-ahead Medical Officer of Health, Dr J King Warry, to build an exceptionally elaborate facility which became a national model. In brief, people and their belongings were transported to the station by horse and cart. The people were given sulphur baths, intended to kill lice, fleas, head lice and scabies and then stayed in the Shelter House overnight. Meanwhile their clothing and soft furnishings were cleansed using patent machinery which involved high pressure steam and formaldehyde to kill germs and vermin. Disinfection killed the germs associated with notifiable diseases. Disinfection killed common vermin (including lice, fleas, bed bugs and cockroaches). An onsite facility also provided for the laundering and ironing of clothes. Items beyond cleansing were incinerated on site. At the same time, teams from the station visited the home to cleanse the dwelling using formaldehyde sprayers. Dr King Warry claimed that 'With this station and shelter, I have no hesitation in stating that Hackney will be the most completely equipped district in London for dealing with infectious and contagious disease'. The 1901 Disinfecting Station survives substantially intact with its machinery, some of which is original. The building is thought to be the best and last surviving example of this building type in Britain.

A new Medical Officer of Health in 1934, G H Dart, saw a new future for the station as part of the Council's slum clearance and Council housing programme. There was reluctance to see the



Images courtesy of Hackney Archives



Council's new flats contaminated with the diseases and vermin associated with the slums being demolished. Re-homed families were put through the Disinfecting Station. Furnishings were loaded onto lorries which were driven into purpose-built Fumigators. These were rectangular brick buildings which could be sealed up. The furniture was then fumigated using Zyklon B (hydrogen cyanide gas). Following ventilation and checking, the furniture was then returned to the owners in their new flat. This process involved the construction of four new buildings, with associated Airing Shed and Gas Store, all of which survive. The process was seen as nationally ground-breaking at the time and these humble buildings are almost certainly the only survivors of their type.

During the Second World War, the bathing facilities were enlarged to cope with an outbreak of scabies. In the immediate post-war years the Station was heavily used to disinfect second-hand clothing given to the recovering former enemy nations: in 1949 alone, 498,413 items of clothing were disinfected. The Station soldiered on as a shared facility with other boroughs, until reform of public health legislation in 1974 saw it absorbed into the Environmental Health department, with work focused mainly on the disinfection of imported textiles and the disposal of contaminated foodstuffs. The last known use was for the elimination of head lice by the dreaded nit nurse circa 1984. The Caretaker's House became a special school known as Marsh House in 1965 and was later a youth club. It is now the headquarters of the WorldWrite charity. The Shelter House became offices and is now occupied by building guardians. The Disinfecting Station building remains on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register for 2019.

Green Spaces Walks

By **Debbie Mitchener**

Join Cordwainers Grow on a series of gentle and sociable walks exploring the community gardens and orchards of Hackney. Often hidden, these growing spaces provide social, physical and mental health benefits – as well as enhancing the natural environment. The walks last between 2 and 4 hours and will include a break at one of the gardens for refreshments. FREE.

4 August – Hackney Central to Dalston, 2pm, London Fields Lido

17 August – Homerton and Lower Clapton, 11am, Mabley Green Orchard

18 August – Hoxton and Haggerston, 2pm, The Growing Kitchen, Napier Grove

1 September – Manor House to Springfield Park, 1pm, Castle Climbing Centre

15 September – Stoke Newington, 2pm, Allens Gardens

More details will be posted on Twitter and Instagram @cordwainersgrow or from hello@cordwainersgrow.org.uk and www.cordwainersgrow.org.uk

Hackney Society Events

Hackney Society AGM

Wednesday 18 September 2019, 7.00pm
Booking essential.
Book via hackneysociety.org

The Hackney Anthology

Tuesday 17 December 2019, 6.30pm

Performance and social event

This Christmas we have a very special event – a performance of the Hackney Anthology in Wenlock Barn at Sutton House. Anthology is a collection, originally brought together by the late Mike Gray, of writings by authors from Hackney or writing about Hackney. Among the astonishing gallery of characters featured are Erasmus, Rafe Sadleir, Milton, John Evelyn, Samuel Pepys, Daniel Defoe, Joseph Priestly, Charles Dickens and Marie Lloyd going up to more modern writings by Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker and Will Self. There will be a talented cast of performers including Lissa Chapman and Peter Mudge with our own Laurie Elks standing in for Mike Gray's role as narrator. This will be a wonderful pre-Christmas treat in Hackney's oldest domestic building. There will be a licensed bar during the evening.

Sutton House. Booking essential.
Book via hackneysociety.org

£5 for Hackney Society members, £10 for non-members

Publications



So We Live: The Novels of Alexander Baron edited by Susie Thomas, Andrew Whitehead and Ken Worpole is a detailed study of the Hackney writer Alexander Baron (1917-99) and his work. Five Leaves Publications, £12.99.



Clean: A Story of Addiction, Recovery and the Removal of Stubborn Stains by Hackney author Michele Kirsch is a memoir of drug and alcohol addiction followed by recovery. Short Books, £12.99.



The East End in Colour, 1980-1990 by Tim Brown features photographs of East London during a decade of transformation. Focusing on the Docklands and the further reaches of the East End, the author took these pictures between shifts of driving trains on London Underground's Central Line. Hoxton Mini Press, £16.95.



Island Song by Hackney-based author Madeleine Bunting is a novel set in the Channel Islands during the German occupation in the Second World War. Granta, £12.99.

Noticeboard

Fairchild's Garden

Hackney Council has identified funding to transform Fairchild's Garden into a welcoming urban green space. Currently it is reviewing feedback from a community consultation on new design proposals. The space, which is near the junction of Hackney Road and Columbia Road, is the last resting place of the notable horticulturalist Thomas Fairchild. In 2017, it was officially renamed from Hackney Road Recreation Ground to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Fairchild's birth.

Award for Colville Estate

The Colville Estate in Shoreditch has received a 2019 RIBA London Award. Designed by Karakusevic Carson Architects with David Chipperfield Architects, the scheme is part of Hackney Council's regeneration programme.

St Matthias Church

St Matthias Church in Wordsworth Road, Stoke Newington, may be forced to close unless £30,000 is raised to pay for urgent electrical works. So far £80,000 has been raised towards the total cost of £110,000. The Grade-I listed building, which was designed by William Butterfield, was completed and consecrated in 1853. Following damage by bombing during World War II, the church was rebuilt by Nugent Cachemaille-Day and reopened in 1954.

Huguenot House at Risk

The historian Dan Cruikshank is spearheading a campaign to stop an 18th century Huguenot silkworker's house in Shoreditch being demolished and replaced by flats. Historic England is considering listing the three-storey property in Club Row, and Tower Hamlets Council has issued a six-month long Building Preservation Notice while a review is taking place.

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

Edited by: Monica Blake

Layout by: design@gloryhall.com

Contributors: Monica Blake, Debbie Michener, Lisa Shell and Ian Walder

Photos: Charles Hosea and Lisa Shell

The Hackney Society

The Round Chapel, 1d Glenarm Road, London E5 0LY

T: 020 7175 1967

E: info@hackneysociety.org

W: www.hackneysociety.org

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