

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2023



Charity information

The Hackney Society Limited is a civic and amenity society.

Board of Trustees:

Ray Blackburn – re-elected 21 September 2022 Sue Doe – elected 21 September 2022 Tony Gillett – resigned 21 September 2022 (?CHECK?} Julia Lafferty – re-elected 21 September 2022 Bob Mitchell – co-opted 21 July 2022 (?CHECK?); elected 21 September 2022 Annette Russell – resigned 24 April 2022 Oliver Schick – co-opted 26 October 2022 Tina Skivington – co-opted 13 April 2022; elected 21 September 2022

Officers:

	Chair: Vice Chair: Treasurer:	(vacant) Ray Caretaker Chai (vacant) Tony Gillett; T duties from Apr	2022-23 na Skivington	acted as took over
Registered office:	The Round Chapel 1d Glenarm Road London E5 0LY			
Bankers:	The Co-operative Ba P.O. Box 250	nk PLC		

Skelmersdale WN8 6WT



ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The company's charitable objects are as follows:

- 1. To promote the highest standards in design and protect Hackney's unique heritage.
- 2. To encourage positive development of the borough's built and natural environments, through engagement with a broad cross-section of local people and experts.
- 3. To encourage exemplary new design, regeneration and conservation of our rich heritage.

The Hackney Society is a membership organisation, a registered charity, and a company limited by guarantee. An elected Board of Trustees, drawn from the membership, manages the work of the Society.

What do we do?

- Organise public events including talks, guided walks, exhibitions and site visits (aimed at members, non-members and new audiences)
- Produce publications which celebrate Hackney's social, cultural and architectural history
- Produce a regular newsletter 'Spaces' to highlight the society's work and important current issues
- Campaign to protect local buildings of historical and/or architectural merit
- Co-ordinate a Planning Group to assess important developments and emerging policy on the built environment
- Promote high standards of design, construction and conservation, including through making comments on selected planning applications in the borough
- Support the six Conservation Areas Advisory Committees (CAAC) made up of local people including publication of their minutes on our website, where required
- Build links between residents, officials and councillors, including being a member of Sustainable Hackney
- Provide advice and support to local groups to help them improve their neighbourhoods



Review of activities during year ended 31 March 2023

Introduction

Despite the fact the Society receives no public funding, it continued to deliver a modest programme of projects and popular events on modest income from activities and donations, whilst maintaining its public profile and its level of engagement with the planning authority on matters of development, and developing future projects. The Society continues to meet its charitable objectives.

Public health measures to mitigate the spread of viruses eased during the year. This means there should be increased opportunity to re-start the planned project to engage members and the wider public to discuss the future shape of the Society, although we ended the year with this project still on hold.

We continued to print quarterly issues of *Spaces*, now edited by Sue Doe, and publish them online. Events became largely physical again, as the "hybrid" form, in which we live-stream a physical event online, does require more expertise and organisation. The new book we published, jointly with Hackney History, sold out within a year and was reprinted. A proposal for a second edition is being developed.

After the resignations of several trustees in the previous year, this year saw the election of Bob Mitchell and Tina Skivington, and the co-opting of Oliver Schick as new trustees. Bob picked up the role of Membership Secretary, and Tina that of Treasurer, following the resignation of Tony Gillett. Thanks were paid to Tony for many years of service to the Society. Susan Doe continued as Spaces Editor and is our link with Hackney History (Friends of Hackney Archives). Annette Russell resigned shortly after being co-opted as a trustee.

Nick Perry continues to act as Secretary of the Planning Group (Chaired by Lisa Shell) and provides essential support to the committee on administration and IT matters. We have not found a Chair to replace Nick, and Ray Blackburn carried on as Caretaker Chair, as well as leading on Events. Laurie Elks continues to play a valuable role in organising the events programme.

David Harris resigned as Independent Financial Examiner on 21 September 2022, after providing a reliable and efficient service to the Society. It was established that under current regulations the Society's financial situation would not require this role in future.

The trustees continued to seek new members, especially to carry out the role of Chair of the Publications Group.

1. Membership

By the end of the year we had 265 members, a net increase of 9 (3.5%) over the last 12 months. This includes 57 Life members. Subscriptions make up the majority of the Society's income but do not provide a significant surplus for project work. We still have a small number of members who renew by cheque but most now use our preferred automated services of GoCardless and PayPal. Membership subscription costs have not changed for some years and there are currently no plans to review this.



2. Fundraising and volunteering

The necessary work to continue the activities of The Hackney Society either has been undertaken by volunteers, or, where appropriate and funding has been obtained, outsourced. Work such as organising events, editing the newsletter, book sales, managing the membership and dealing with planning matters continues to be done solely by volunteers including, and especially, the Trustees.

3. Programme of events

As the Covid-19 pandemic started to ease in the spring of 2022, our programme contained physical walks, talks, tours and visits, which have a smaller capacity than online and proved very popular, with all places taken for some events. In some cases we managed to repeat a visit on the same day, or add an extra group for a building tour to double capacity. The established ticket prices of £5 for members and £10 for non-members, allow us to pay for venue charges and make appropriate donations where there is no charge.

Some of the online events previously held are available to view on the <u>Hackney</u> <u>Society YouTube Channel</u>. For the future we will consider offering more of a mix of in-person and online, but this depends on available technical resource.

We ran three talks, four visits, two walks, and two film screenings during this financial year. See the **Publications** section for details of the *Women of Abney* film. The screening at the Rio Cinema was notable for the sale of almost 200 seats.

Eastern Curve Garden and the Peace Mural, a visit with Marie Murray and Brian Cumming.

Hackney's Rivers and London's Water, a talk at the West Reservoir Centre by Nick Higham.

How did that get built? - reflections on 16 years as Chair of the Planning Committee, a talk at Newington Green Meeting House by Vincent Stops.

Lower Clapton Road and the Round Chapel, a walk by Julia Lafferty. (repeat of a sold-out event held in 2021)

Christchurch Estate, a tour by Claudia Lynch of Lynch Architects, followed by the AGM.

If they'd only take the 'ackney Road, a walk by Sean Gubbins, Susan Doe and Laurie Elks.



Women of Abney, a film screening by the Women from Hackney's History team with Nick Perry and actors from Tower Theatre, at Newington Green Meeting House, followed by a social occasion

195 Mare Street, a visit hosted by Elizabeth Prochaska and family (in fact 2 visits in one day).

Springfield House and the Glass House, a visit hosted by Hackney Council and Malcolm McGregor of PRS Architects (2 groups involved due to demand).

Women of Abney, a film screening with actors from the Tower Theatre, at the Rio Cinema

Designing and Building Social Housing in Hackney, a talk and panel discussion chaired by Cllr Penny Wrout, with Mayor Philip Glanville, James Goddard, Louise Goodison, Liza Fior.

Outside of the events programme Julia Lafferty developed and delivered a guided walk of Springfield House and Park (with actors in support) for the Park's Celebration Day in June 2022.

The Trustees and the Events Group would like to thank the venues, the walk, talk and tour leaders, Nick Perry for providing the technical platforms required plus help and guidance on their use, Rossana Tich, Wendy Forrest, and Sue Doe for publicity, and all who supported our programme by participating or assisting at these events. Their energy and commitment are greatly appreciated.

4. Publications

The Society continues to sell its backlist titles through local bookshops, Museum of the Home, Hackney Museum, Hackney Archives and online from our website. Additional sales have been made at related events - for example, Women from Hackney's History at Women of Abney film showings. We ran bookstalls at the Springfield Park Celebration and Well Street Common Summer Fair, both in June, and at the Round Chapel Christmas Market in December, all of which brought good conversations and healthy sales. The stall at the De Beauvoir Christmas Fair, although less profitable than the previous year, was still well worth the effort of volunteers and cost. The Trustees would like to thank everyone concerned with online sales, and organising, setting up, staffing and taking down bookstalls.

Work that began in 2014 on a new version of Hackney Houses, a guide to improvement, conservation and maintenance of late Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian houses remains on hold.

Considering the continued successful sales of Women from Hackney's History the Committee will receive a proposal for a second volume. The team behind the book collaborated with Tower Theatre and Abney Park Trust to produce a film, directed by



Nick Perry, which recounted stories from women buried in Abney Park Cemetery. *Women from Abney* had its first showing at the Tower Theatre in September. More details of other showings can be found in the **Events** section of this report. The film can now be viewed on the Society's <u>YouTube channel</u>.

Initial proposals for another new publication and collaboration are in discussion but have not moved forward recently.

5. Spaces newsletter

The Society produced four issues of Spaces: 76, 77, 78 and 79. The newsletter is quarterly and is written by voluntary contributors. They cover planning and historic building items in the borough, topical issues, forthcoming events, buildings at risk and updates on Hackney Society projects and events.

The newsletter continues to be funded piecemeal and by in-kind contribution of the editor and Trustee. Susan Doe has been Editor for the full financial year. Ray Blackburn continues to help with copy editing. The Spaces issues covered Hackney Bridge, the Stamford Hill Area Action Plan, Holborn Studios, the Windrush statues at Town Hall Square, the Britannia Project, the Hackney Central Plan, the Clapton Portico and Yorkton workshops amongst others. Issue 79 was a special edition on Abney Park Cemetery.

The Trustees would like to thank Abney Park Trust, David Altheer, Tony Briggs, the Clapton Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Tim Crocker, Laurie Elks, Marc Ely, Hackney Council, Kaner Olette Architects, Julia Lafferty, Robin Mallalieu, Nick Perry, Tom Stebbing, Vincent Stops, Pat Turnbull and Ken Worpole for their articles and photographs. We would also like to thank Glory Hall. Without her generosity, we would not be able to afford the commercial rates for design. Similarly, thank you to Kopykat Printers who ably print Spaces at reasonable rates. Further and continued thanks go to Kate Starling and the distribution team.

6. Websites

The Society continues to maintain our main website <u>http://hackneysociety.org.</u> Redeveloping the site continues to be a priority for the Trustees, who held a meeting in January to look at our current site and other sites of comparable organisations. Ideas for improvement were generated but our search for a volunteer to manage the project has not borne fruit.

We maintained one other *micro-site,* mothballed some time ago but still available online for much of the year: <u>hackneysociety.org/health</u>

A copy of the data previously held on hackneybuildings.org, using technology that had become outdated, is with the Council, with the hope that it will be used to enrich the local list in the future.



The Trustees thank *Community Sites* for their continued provision of services at very modest costs for community and amenity groups such as ours.

7. Social Media

Social media continues to be important and we are indebted to member Rossana Tich who continues to manage the vast majority of our Twitter presence.

As at 31 March 2023 we had 12,000 Twitter (@HackneySociety) followers, which is a slight increase from last year, and also a good milestone to reach. Our YouTube channel – on which most of our past online events can still be viewed – has 296 subscribers (from 272 last year).

The *Spacelets* email newsletter has 1,565 subscribers, showing hardly any change to last year. This, along with the Eventbrite platform, prove to be important ways to highlight new events.

Our Facebook (@theHackneySociety) page is less actively engaged but has over 560 followers.

8. The Hackney Society Planning Group (HSPG)

The Planning Group continued to meet on a monthly basis to review proposals for significant developments within the Borough. Meetings have been a mix of Zoomonly and Hybrid throughout the year - enabling maximum participation from members of the Group.

Lisa Shell (Architect, Lisa Shell Architects) and Nick Perry (Ex-Chair, The Hackney Society) are Chair and Secretary of the Planning Group, respectively, and have received a consistent contribution from the following volunteers throughout the financial year: Bernard Tulkens (Tectonics Architects), Catherine White (interior architect, Catherine White Interiors), Dickon Hayward (Material Works), Jenny Lovell (Director, Allies and Morrison), Luke Dewey (Metropolitan Workshop), Mike Samuels (Chartered Surveyor, Cunningham Park Properties), Rik Nys (architect), Robin Mallalieu (Brady Mallalieu Architects), Ronan Murray (Planner, LB Islington), Ross Perkin (Director, Emil Eve Architects), and Sarah Mann (Director, Studio Wolsey)

We were also pleased to add **Kate Cornwall-Jones** (Head of CIP Development, LB Camden), **Maribel Mantecon** (Senior Associate, HTA Design) and **Eleni Mente** (Consultant Landscape Architect) during the year.

The planning group email discussion list comprises many more members, including the chairs of the CAACs, who receive monthly minutes and are updated of meetings, presentations and planning issues of interest.



The Group provides advice to developers, their design teams and other interested parties ahead of their submissions for planning approval. Although the Hackney Society is not a statutory consultee, consultation is a matter of the Council's adopted policy and the Planning Group continues to be approached directly by developers, who make presentations to the group ahead of their submissions for planning approval, including the following over the last financial year:

- Techno House / EDGE Shoreditch AHMM / EDGE / Mitsui Fudosan / DP9 / Kanda – the proposals seek to demolish the existing buildings on site, excluding the front façade of 56 Wilson Street, and redevelopment of the site with a mixed-use development ranging in height from 5 to 21 storeys with 3 basement floors.
- 99 City Road (Inmarsat) KPF / Endurance Land / DP9 / Kanda Endurance Land (Nan Fung Group) acquired the Inmarsat site in March 2022, due to be vacated 2024. This sits in LB Islington, on the border of Hackney, at Old St Roundabout.

Group members share triage duties - reviewing a list of typically 30-80 planning applications validated by the Council in a typical week. A total of 2720 applications in the financial year. Members select those that are worthy of discussion with the group. Sometimes they make their own summary comments when it is clear what the Group's position would be. After each meeting, refined comments are sent to the Council on those applications we feel would benefit from our input - typically between 10 and 20 applications each month - in total around 114 applications in the financial year.

The Group raises questions and concerns but also attempts to provide support to those bringing positive visions and quality of design to the borough.

The Group met with the head of Planning to discuss administrative issues and our response to the Stamford Hill Area Action Plan (submitted in the previous financial year). We maintain a good working relationship with the Council. The Council lost its Senior Conservation Officer, Tim Walder earlier in the year, but happily Adam Dyer returned to Hackney to take up the post. The Council appointed Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge as Heritage Champion, although we have yet to meet her. She is not on the Council's Planning Sub-Committee so is likely to be more able to take a Conservation-first approach.

The Group recognises a shared interest with the borough's six CAACs (Conservation Areas Advisory Committees), who comment on applications within conservation areas, and continue to share information, and invite CAACs to relevant presentations, meetings and discussions. HSPG provides a reliable source of Conservation Area applications for five of the six CAACs. Whilst procedural and



technological constraints prevent comments from the Planning Group being routinely uploaded to the Hackney Society website, four of the CAACs have provided their comments for upload each month. A fifth uses our tools but currently does not upload final comments to our website.

The Society was to participate in a public inquiry in early 2023, into refusal of planning permission at the Holborn Studios site, but the inquiry has been pushed back to September 2023.

In August 2022, HSPG, in conjunction with The Twentieth Century Society wrote to Historic England to object to an application to issue a Certificate of Immunity against Listing for the Ash Grove Bus Garage, and to advocate for its inclusion in the National List. The garage was one of five new garages designed by London Transport Executive (as was) rejuvenated Architects Department in the late 70s and early 80s and the first new garage in London for 27 years. Historic England did not share our view and recommended issuing a Certificate of Immunity. We wrote to the Secretary of State to request a review of the decision and this took a further 11 months to be considered. A Certificate of Immunity - which prevents the property being listed for five years - was subsequently issued. HSPG has asked the Council to 'locally list' the site. The Council has begun research and consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document (policy) for the site ahead of possible comprehensive mixed-use development to incorporate an electric-bus garage. The site is owned by TfL.

HSPG were delighted to be invited by Mooradian Studio to participate in Hackney House which mentored six lower sixth students from Mossbourne, around issues of the design of houses, and the availability of local resources, and the circular economy. In May 2022, Lisa Shell, Bernard Tulkens and Nick Perry accompanied the group on a walk around important sites in Hackney including Morning Lane, and finishing at Bernard's passivhaus project.

Significant schemes upon which we commented during the year include:

- A large number of applications for electronic advertising kiosks, the majority of which HSPG has objected to, on grounds of poor siting and high energy use, and have been refused by the Council many are now in appeal.
- A lesser number of telecommunications masts which are often also poorly cited on the public highway.
- <u>2022/0075</u> **Plusone Photo Workshop 5, 2 Long Street, E2 8HQ** [Appeal In Progress] *Erection of a part five-storey, part three-storey building over the existing parking area for use as office accommodation.*
- <u>2022/0720</u> Clapton Service Station, 137 141 Lower Clapton Road, E5 8EQ Demolition of existing structures and erection of a two storey building to form Supermarket

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- <u>2022/0166</u> Oscar House, 87 Upper Clapton Road, E5 9BU [Refuse] Proposed single storey roof extension providing 1x4 bed residential dwelling, together with introduction of balconies to the front facade.
- <u>2022/0225</u> Currell, Sales Office, 305 Kingsland Road, E8 4DL Variation of planning permission including: An additional storey of co-living accommodation within the consented volume to bring the number of rooms to 150; Consolidation of communal amenity spaces for co-living accommodation including provision of a gym; Alterations to sizes and types of co-living rooms;
- <u>2022/0692</u> **33 34 Newington Green, N16 9PR** [Granted] *Listed Building Consent for the installation of solar panels to the rear roofs*
- <u>2022/1165</u> **Telephone House, 69 77 Paul Street, EC2A 4NW** Demolition to ground floor level of existing building; erection of building to maximum height of ten storeys around a central courtyard to provide office accommodation
- <u>2022/1513</u> **40** Ickburgh Road, E5 8AD [Granted] Creation of a lightwell and bathroom vent fans to front elevation, installation of 2 new double glazed timber sash windows to the front basement and installation of Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) to the rear garden of the property.
- <u>2022/1597</u> **1 Fairholt Road, N16 5EN** [Appeal Dismissed] *Erection of part single- and part three-storey rear extension; with basement excavation; associated elevational changes; removal of residential use on site, with sole use of building as synagogue.*
- <u>2022/1423</u> Beaumont Court Upper Clapton Road, E5 8BG Erection of singlestorey roof extension above the existing mixed-use building to create 5 residential units, a rear extension to create a new stairwell and lift core from ground floor up to the new 5th floor in association with new residential units, external alterations to the front facade, refuse and recycling provision as well as a new secure cycle enclosures.
- <u>2022/1680</u> **Development House, 56 64 Leonard Street, EC2A 4LT** Demolition of existing office building and construction of a new ten storey office building with flexible retail at ground floor, terraces and other associated works.
- <u>2021/3084</u> **69** Amhurst Park, N16 5DL Change of use from a 6 bed dwelling to a school.
- <u>2022/2177</u> **42 Bergholt Crescent, N16 5JE** [Refuse] *Prior notification of proposed demolition.*
- <u>2022/1943</u> **195 Mare Street, E8 3QE** [Granted] Change of use to sui generis use, comprising residential unit on ground, first and second floors and community use with public access in the basement, including associated internal and external alterations, the erection of an escape stair and small outbuilding, landscaping and replacement of the front boundary gates and railings.



- <u>2022/2027</u> **195 Mare Street, E8 3QE** [Granted] Change of use to sui generis use, comprising single family dwelling on ground, first and second floors and community use with public access in the basement, including associated internal and external alterations, the erection of an escape stair and small outbuilding, landscaping and replacement of the front boundary gates and railings.
- <u>2022/1765</u> **449 Kingsland Road, E8 4AU** *Redevelopment of the site, including the change of use, refurbishment and extension of the existing warehouse building, to provide 1 dwellinghouse, 150sqm of community space. and 1,169sqm of commercial space.*
- <u>2022/0428</u> **123 Stoke Newington Road, N16 8BT** [Withdrawn] *Erection of roof extensions with front terraces at numbers 123-131 Stoke Newington Road to provide three additional units.*
- <u>2022/0963</u> Flat A, 64 Middleton Road, E8 4BS Demolition of mechanic's garage and erection of a two-storey 3 bedroom dwellinghouse.
- <u>2022/2467</u> and <u>2022/2467</u> **129 Pritchards Road, E2 9AP** [Refuse] *Erection of two additional storeys at fourth and fifth floor level to the rear of the existing building to provide 9 units.*
- <u>2022/2666</u> **17, Fleetwood Apartments, 2 Northwold Road, N16 7HG** [Refuse] Proposed replacement of 8 timber sash and casement windows with double glazed uPVC windows.
- <u>2022/2989</u> Mossbourne Victoria Park Academy, Victoria Park Road, E9 7HD [Refuse] Installation of security fencing along the southern elevation at Victoria Park Rd behind the existing boundary treatment.
- <u>2022/2756</u> The William Iv, 7 Shepherdess Walk, N1 7QE [Withdrawn] Change of use of the ground and basement floors from Public House to Commercial, Business and Service and of the first and second floors to a selfcontained residential unit.
- <u>2022/2932</u> Hackney Public Mortuary, Rear Of 402 Mare Street, E8 1HP [Granted] Internal and external alterations, including new extensions to north and south elevations (following demolition of existing extensions).
- <u>2022/1468</u> Land To The Rear Of, 1-19 Victorian Grove, N16 8EN Demolition of the existing buildings and erection of a part single, part 2, part 3 and part 4 storey mixed-use building containing 32 residential units and 351m2 of commercial floorspace.
- <u>2022/3055</u> Pop Up Food Bank, 11 Bohemia Place, E8 1DU Installation of 4x 20 ft metal containers and 1 no. 40 ft container along the perimeter of Bohemia Place Market car park. To facilitate 10 kiosks for start-up businesses.

9. Partnerships

The Hackney Society works with other organisations in Hackney. In particular, it is represented on the committee of Hackney History (formerly the Friends of Hackney



Archives) with whom we have an ever closer working relationship. The Society entered the eighth year of a reciprocal membership exchange with Sustainable Hackney. The Society retains a paid membership of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies.

10. Plans for 2023/24

One of the priorities for next year is a revamp of our websites and a review of our use of social media platforms. This was estimated to require at least £3000 of capital funds toward which we have already received a generous one-off donation of £500. The cost estimate will need to be revisited. Whilst we may be able to support this from our own funds, we still need a volunteer to co-ordinate the web project.

The reprint of *Women from Hackney's History* is selling steadily. Further research has provided more subjects and stories in this area, and a proposal has been developed for a second edition of the book. The film in which some *Women from Abney* tell their stories, has formed the basis of an Abney Park self-guided walk. Some of these stories should feature in the walks offered when the Park fully re-opens after restoration work.

Sue Doe has decided to stand down as Spaces Editor, not later than the end of the calendar year 2023. We are seeking a volunteer to take on the role of Spaces Editor.

A potential involvement in a new book project will require some funds and some time commitment, should this bear fruit. We continue to seek a trustee to lead on **Publications**.

The standard membership fee of £15 has remained constant for a number of years and is modest considering the benefits that may derive from it. Membership fees no longer provide the Society with any material surplus once the production expenses for *Spaces* and postage costs are deducted. The fees charged to members and non-members for events provide a useful income to cover the costs of staging these events.

Having resumed talks, walks and visits in person with some very popular events, we should consider the option of some events being available online if technical resource allows. The *Women of* Abney film indicates another area to explore. We are always interested in members' suggestions for future events. These factors will need to be considered by the trustees without Ray Blackburn, who is resigning after 9 years on the management committee. **We are seeking a trustee to take on the Events role**. Ray will continue to support the events programme for some time in the forthcoming year, and Laurie Elks remains a member of the events group.

Following the guided walk based on Springfield House and Park for the Springfield Park Celebration in June 2022, Hackney Council invited us to contribute to a series of walks based in the park. Julia Lafferty has agreed to deliver these walks in summer 2023.

The experience of increased online activity during the pandemic brought at least one positive change - wider engagement. We need to consider how we capitalise on that in the future and reach new audiences both inside and outside Hackney. As mentioned in the introduction, a project to engage members and the wider public in discussions



on the future shape of the Society has been on hold since the Covid-19 outbreak. This will need resurrecting in some form.

The Society is still looking to bring new voices and experiences into the committee of Trustees and encourages those with a passion for Hackney to join us and help shape the Society.

With no expectation of grant funding, and a continued lack of specialist trustee skills in this area, any further plans for the next year continue to be modest and focused on what volunteers can offer. We continue to seek to expand on those skills and apply for funding where appropriate and the return on the investment of time is sufficient.

We continue to be grateful for all membership contributions and loyalty in these circumstances. Membership fees and donations of all sizes allow us to continue to do what we do on a tight budget.

END OF ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23