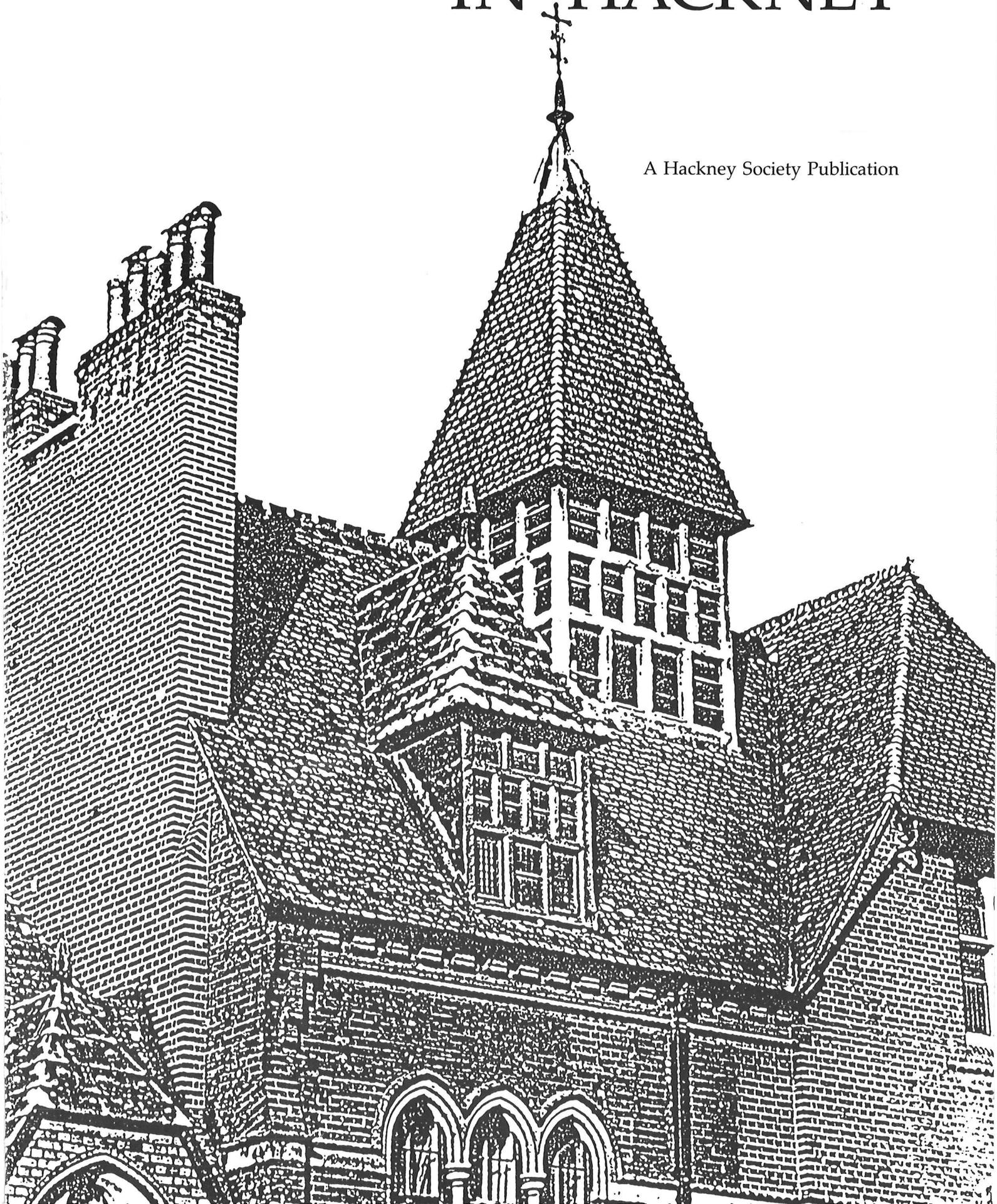


# BUILDINGS AT RISK IN HACKNEY

A Hackney Society Publication





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170 Lansdowne Drive. A fine detached house neglected by the GLC, and still without a future.

*Cover:* The roof of the parsonage to St. Columba's Church, Kingsland Road. The spire covers the lantern to a very impressive staircase.

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## IMPORTANT NOTE

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## THE DECLINE AND DECAY OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The most famous buildings to be demolished in Hackney are probably those of the Trowbridge Estate. Northaird Point, the 'Leaning Tower of Hackney', in its brief period of notoriety in November 1985 served as a timely and telling image of the failure of post-war housing development. As the redevelopment programme continues the annual demolition parties have become a local tradition as the next tower block bites the dust.

Yet while media and Council attention has been focused on Trowbridge there were other buildings quietly falling down all over the borough. Walk around any part of Hackney and you will see them; the run-down and decaying properties, the empty boarded-up buildings and the vacant unused sites. Their demise may be less spectacular. It is often the result of simple neglect or carelessness, almost demolition by default. But ultimately their destruction is equally certain. Many of these are good, solid buildings which could be perfectly serviceable and habitable. Some of them are fine buildings of architectural and historic importance. Some are even listed buildings which are supposedly statutorily protected from such a fate.

The crucial and ironic difference between these older buildings and the modern estate of Trowbridge, is that these buildings have a future and a use. The demolition of Northaird Point was an acknowledgment that the building had failed in practical and human terms. These older historic buildings by contrast have proved their worth on both counts. Furthermore their renovation makes good economic sense.

The ground floor of the east wing of Sutton House.



However both their neglect and their potential value seems to have gone largely unnoticed. This report is concerned with the decline and decay of historic buildings in Hackney. It is based on a survey and research undertaken by the Hackney Society in 1985-6 to try to establish the nature and extent of the problem.

Historic buildings are an important resource not just for historical and cultural reasons but in social and economic terms too. Some of the buildings in the report are redundant buildings. However with the greater majority of those we looked at the problem was underuse not redundancy, housing being the most obvious example. These buildings have a capacity for renewal. They could be providing valuable homes, offices and

workshops instead of standing empty and decaying. This is a waste of usable space, as well as causing the destruction of our irreplaceable heritage.



The entrance to Haggerston Library.

Historic buildings make up less than 6% of the total building stock of the country.<sup>1</sup> This refutes arguments that they hinder new development. Their neglect contributes to the poor quality of the environment, reinforcing images of urban dereliction and decay. In the regeneration of the inner city historic buildings have a small but important part to play in making them better and more humane places in which to live and work.

This report is a cry against waste, mis-use and unthinking destruction. It is a plea for action, funds and interest; addressed to central government, to local government and to people in Hackney to help improve the local environment.

The report began with a survey of threatened buildings in the borough to try to assess the extent of the problem. 150 buildings were surveyed taking note of their age, condition and usage. 116 of these were drawn from a much larger survey conducted in 1980. At this time all of these 116 were derelict. Their condition was then compared between 1980 and 1986. Other buildings were brought to our attention as being at risk and 34 of these were surveyed. These figures are laid out in Appendix I.

Looking at the figures in the table there have been a relatively small number of demolitions. Most of these buildings have not suffered from comprehensive redevelopment. However the number of buildings whose condition is similar or worse clearly illustrate that the historic buildings legislation isn't working, and that problems other than wholesale demolition now threaten our built heritage. The number of restorations is heartening. Unfortunately these include a number of unskilful restorations. Poor renovation can be its own particular form of vandalism, as damaging to a building as complete abandonment.

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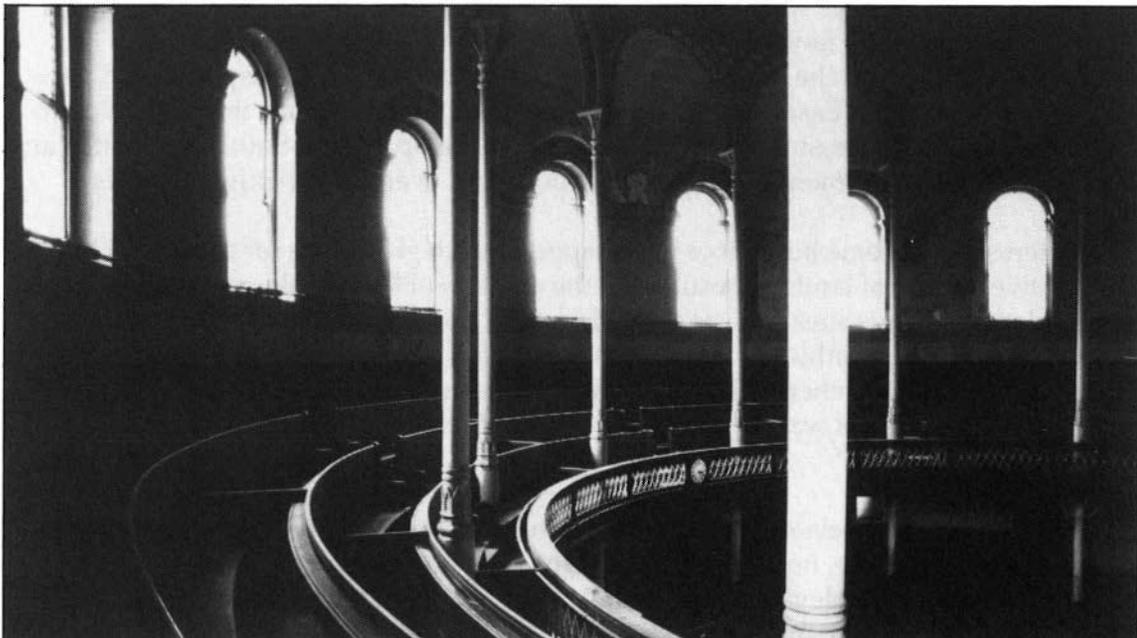
In this report we have tried to choose a representative selection of buildings from the survey to act as case studies. These are organised in terms of building types. Appendix II consists of lists of all the other buildings surveyed in each category, plus some buildings which we were informed about after the survey was completed. The table of figures from the survey should in no way be taken as exhaustive. There are far more derelict historic buildings in Hackney than this. Furthermore the figures do not convey the variety and complexity of ways in which we found buildings to be 'at risk'.

When we began the survey we used a broad definition of the term 'at risk', meaning any building whose future existence was uncertain. The rotting, empty buildings which we have been discussing are the most obvious examples. But it is not simply a question of physical decay, buildings are also affected by changing social and economic circumstances.

Pugin wrote that, 'The history of architecture is the history of the world' (1843). Certainly this proved to be the case in microcosm in researching this report. The historic buildings in the area and their present condition provide a remarkably accurate picture of the changing fortunes of the borough in the past, as well as indicating some probable future trends.

The buildings in the survey can be divided into three categories of 'at risk'. There are the big, institutional redundant buildings such as churches for which new uses are particularly hard to find. These are encountered throughout the country. Secondly, there are the large number of buildings which have either been demolished or are at risk from physical decay. These too are not peculiar to Hackney, but the high numbers of quality abandoned buildings are a product of the area's extreme poverty and depression all through this century. The scale of the problem is such in Hackney that it is not

The upper balcony of the Round Chapel, Lower Clapton Road.





The roof terrace of the 1936 building in the German Hospital, with St. Mark's Tower visible in the background.

simply a case of individual bad landlords or wicked developers or any of the other traditional villains in the conservationist cannon. Scenarios such as the crumbling Georgian terraces on Kingsland Road or the empty premises on Mare Street are the legacy of years of poverty, under-investment, dilapidation and chronic depression in the local economy. Not all neglect of property is wilful in Hackney, often owners simply can not afford the maintenance which their buildings require.

The third kind of threat we identified is of a completely different character and is indicative of the changes which are just beginning to take place in the borough. This is the problems posed by new development pressures in the area. These became increasingly evident in the course of writing the report. As the City expands and new centres are growing in East London, developers have started to turn their attention to Hackney. The main pressures are for commercial development in South Shoreditch and for residential development throughout the borough, even on old industrial sites.

This interest is welcome but it does have aspects which give cause for concern. The speculative buying of land has resulted in the creation of land banks and the accumulation of huge sites such as the Ridgeway's Tea site and the Pitfield Street site, this encourages monolithic development in large lots.<sup>2</sup> The excessively speculative nature of some of the schemes has resulted in some poor quality design which does nothing to enhance the surrounding area, despite the very substantial profits being made from them.

The new interest in Hackney will bring many historic buildings back into use and give them a new lease of life, but there is always the attendant danger of poor or over-restoration. New development is welcome but not if it is unsympathetic and does not improve the local townscape.

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This is where the Council should be giving a lead. Both in setting high standards for new design and renovation, and by providing funds and encouraging the restoration and care of historic buildings. Yet it is often the Council who create and compound the problems. They are clearly not carrying out their duties. A DOE directive states that with regard to historic buildings in their own care, local authorities should, 'set an example to other owners by making a diligent search for a new use and, if necessary, a new owner.'<sup>3</sup> The example set by Hackney Council is not inspiring. Some of the most scandalous cases of indecision, neglect and waste in this report are among Council owned buildings (see 85 Stoke Newington Church Street, Haggerston Library, 191 Stoke Newington High Street). The Council own an extremely high proportion of property in the borough, far more than they can renovate themselves. However rather than searching for a new users they are reluctant to dispose of buildings, and so they stand empty and rotting.

When it comes to fulfilling the other functions provided for in the legislation the Council is equally lackadaisical. The Borough itself provides no funds for the maintenance or restoration of historic buildings, as it may do under the 1962 Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act. The only money which is available in Hackney comes from the Urban Programme. The Council has also refused to give its share of money – only 12½%, towards Town Scheme grants, which can be used to improve a whole area, the rest of the money being provided by central government. It has been slow to fulfil its statutory duty to designate Conservation Areas, which are informed by a similar idea. Its failure to do this means that a co-ordinated approach towards conservation of historic buildings becomes impossible, leaving instead only an ad hoc responsive planning policy. The same result arises from the Council's denial of 1962 Act money and the consequent reliance on Urban Programme funding. The latter necessitates a short term and far less flexible approach to the planning and funding of urban conservation projects, because of the DOE's one year programme requirements.

The historic buildings legislation is essentially provisional. It can only work with political determination, goodwill and sufficient funds. All of these are absent in Hackney. The number of enforcements or repairs notices that have been issued in the borough is very small. The Council's failure either to provide an encouraging and creative lead in conservation or to fulfil its financial responsibilities is tantamount to a demolition policy.

Hackney Council need to realise the valuable asset the area has in its historic buildings. They have a future and a great potential for improving the urban landscape. They bring interest, variety, good design and humane values to an area with more than its share of post-war disasters. Our historic built environment is important and worth caring for. Once gone it can never be replaced. Action is needed now before some of these buildings deteriorate beyond the point where they are usable and safe. It is time that we started looking after our historic buildings and being proud of the best of what we have in Hackney, rather than turning our backs on fine buildings and abandoning them to slow but sure destruction.

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1 John Fidler, formerly Buildings at Risk Officer, English Heritage

2 For more on this see *South Shoreditch: Historic and Industrial Buildings*, Hackney Society 1986

3 Circular 12/81: *Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*

### 31–41 NEW NORTH ROAD

Walk past this Grade II listed Georgian terrace today and you'll have trouble in identifying it. It has recently been renovated and turned into flats. However behind their smart new facade lies a dramatic story which is well worth repeating in this report.

Prior to refurbishment the terrace had been left empty for several years whilst its owners developed the valuable site behind. The houses rapid descent into almost complete dereliction was made more poignant by their proximity to the Planning Department which is only about 5 minutes walk away. They provided a telling example on the Council's very doorstep of its reluctance to act against wilful neglect of listed buildings, by not serving either repairs notices or enforcements on the owners.

But the worst was yet to come. If you thought that the most severe form of vandalism a building could suffer was the gutting of internal features, think again. In this case not only were the houses deprived of all fireplaces, cornices, shutters etc. but also of their rear walls! This occurred sometime after listed building consent had been received for the residential scheme, but before building work actually started. A truck of uncertain origin was backed through the carriage arch. Its drivers then proceeded to demolish the back walls as well as removing all valuable features from inside. The previous owners of the site, who were still in possession of No.'s 31-35, took 3 days to report the loss. This was despite the fact that their offices at the time directly overlooked the site.

Unfortunately the renovation has not been an entirely happy one. The Borough permitted massive rear extensions to the houses as part of the scheme. These have unbalanced the proportions of the terrace and resulted in a substantial loss of character.



This destruction in 1984 of the rear walls was deliberate.

The terrace is flanked on the left by the offices of Dottridge Bros, suppliers to the funeral trade.

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### 127b STOKE NEWINGTON ROAD, N16

This is an interesting Greek Revival building which is to be found down a passageway behind the main street facade of Stoke Newington Road. The house was built at least before 1828 and possibly as early as 1810. It is the only surviving house of a group of four known as the 'High Houses'. It has a fine Doric entrance portico and it still retains surprisingly good internal features. The house was first of all called 'Eden Hall' and later on became known as 'Oak Lodge'. It has been occupied for a variety of purposes including use as a school and a booksellers in the 19th century. For most of this century it has been used as a warehouse and workshop.

As the only remaining 'High House', No.127b is particularly important as a remnant of an earlier street line. The present road layout dates from Victorian times but this house shows us the Georgian building pattern, in which large houses stood well back from the road surrounded by considerable grounds. The house is now a very rare survivor from this Georgian development hemmed in by the later building around it. The only other example nearby is Palatine House.

In 1986 it seemed certain that the building was going to be demolished to make way for a mixed office and factory development, after the DOE had refused to list it. This was in spite of several appeals and the fact that it had been listed prior to 1973. It may only have been missed off the list of that year due to an oversight. It is not uncommon for historic buildings to suffer from the somewhat arbitrary nature of the listings procedure.

In 1987 a scheme to convert the house into flats was approved. In December whilst building work was in progress the front facade collapsed. This was because insufficient care was taken to ensure the stability of the structure even though both the adjacent buildings had had dangerous structures notices served on them. This kind of case is becoming all too common, with contractors and architects with insufficient experience of historic buildings taking on delicate and difficult structures sometimes with disastrous consequences.



The front of the building prior to collapse during conversion works. The entrance porch is in the Doric style.

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### 85 STOKE NEWINGTON CHURCH STREET, N16

This is a Grade II\* listed Georgian town house built as part of a terrace of four in the 1730's. It has been owned since the 1950's by the London Borough of Hackney. They originally acquired the house in order to demolish it and extend their Refuse Department's depot which lies behind. Although this was never carried out, their commitment to the building has remained at a similar level ever since. The building has been vacant since the mid-1970's, and its present decline is wholly attributable to Council neglect from this time on.

This is particularly scandalous as the house even now contains many very fine original features. These include a pedimented doorcase (now partly in store and the rest stolen); a finely carved wooden staircase with elegant curved handrails; and one timber-panelled room which has remained virtually intact from the 1730's, apart from the loss of its fireplace. The physical condition of the house is deteriorating rapidly and visibly at present. The roof has collapsed as has most of the top floor. The back of the building will almost certainly have to be rebuilt due to the extent of water damage. Possibly most worrying of all is the dry rot which is affecting the roof. The structure of the terrace is such that the roof timbers are continuous between the various properties. The continuing neglect of No.85 therefore is threatening not just one house but the whole terrace.

The Council in just ten years have managed to jeopardise the existence of a building which had remained substantially intact and had retained a great deal of its original character for 250 years – a remarkable achievement in its way. They have now sold the building with a covenant ensuring it remains a single family house, in order to avoid the damage caused by conversion. This is a welcome move, but a very belated recognition of the building's true worth. The renovation task facing the new owners is massive and it is not yet clear that the future of this building has been assured.

The rear of the house during rebuilding.





The doorcase of the house in all its glory in c1890's . . . and today. It is now undergoing restoration following theft.

A rear room with timber panelling of c1740. This photograph was taken in 1983 since which time there has been a major water penetration.



### 9 SANFORD TERRACE, N16

This house has been standing empty and rotting for a very long time. It is part of a Grade II listed late 18th century terrace. The rest of the terrace was restored in the early 1970's, but No.9 remains a decaying wreck which blights the houses surrounding it.

The owner, having been abroad for many years, is now back in the country and is hoping to restore the building. This is a welcome but long overdue development.



A very disappointing end to a fine terrace.





## ATLAS WORKS, BERKSHIRE ROAD, E9

The Atlas Works is an unlisted factory dating from 1863. It is situated in the Hackney Wick area which was first industrialised in the 18th century. By the 1860's it was a significant industrial area with an unusually high density of industrial buildings by London standards. The Atlas factory is one of the very few surviving examples from this period. In the latter half of the 19th century the area particularly specialised in the starching, dyeing and chemical industries. These developed as a result of its situation on the River Lee coupled with its isolation which allowed for the siting of noxious trades with poisonous waste products. The Atlas factory was a dye works which produced the first commercial aniline dyes. Traces of these dyes are still visible embedded in the structure of the building.

Some parts of the original factory of 1863 still exists, but the majority of the building we see now dates from the 1880's. The exterior of the Works has attractive detailing in blue industrial brick and is in a vaguely Arts and Crafts manner. In 1983 one of the 1863 buildings was demolished. This included the frontage of the original factory which was topped by a large stone statue of Atlas. The eastern range which is still standing now forms the only surviving part of the 19th century industrial frontage of the Hackney Cut.

The factory's future has been uncertain for some time and it will almost certainly be demolished to make way for a new housing scheme. This will be a sad loss as the Atlas Works form what is now a virtually unique survival from the important 19th century industrial landscape of Hackney Wick.

The Atlas Works with the typical Hackney tower blocks (the Trowbridge Estate) dominating the landscape. The rear of the factory backs on to the Hackney Cut which lead to London Docks.



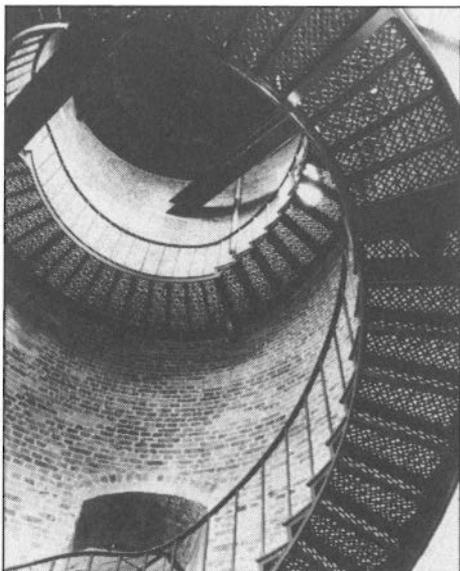


## STOKE NEWINGTON PUMPING STATION, GREEN LANES, N4

The soaring towers and imposing fortress appearance of the Green Lanes Pumping Station make it one of the most dramatic and immediately striking buildings in Hackney. It is listed Grade II\* and at present is well maintained and in good condition.

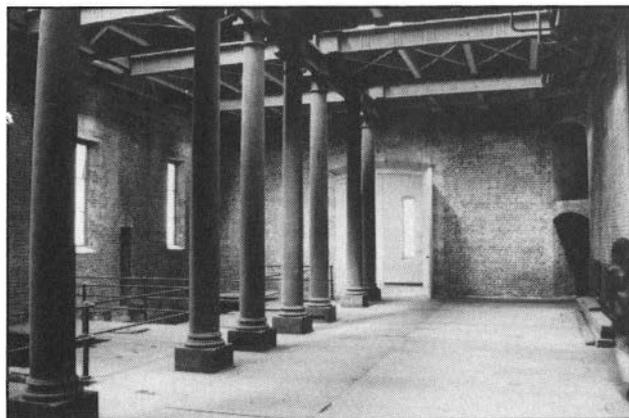
The nature of the threat to this building is not physical but rather social and economic. It was built in 1854-56 as the pumping station for the New River Company by Chadwell Mylne. The river itself and the surrounding reservoirs and filter beds are extremely important industrial and historical landmarks. The New River was formed in the late 17th century by Sir Hugh Myddleton to bring fresh water to London. The Pumping Station was built following the cholera epidemic of 1846 when it was enacted that all water for domestic use must be filtered. The Pumping Station was based on Scottish baronial prototypes and is a most ingenious design. The main castellated tower contains the chimney stack, whilst the flywheels of the steam pumping engines slotted into the monogrammed buttresses visible along the flank wall.

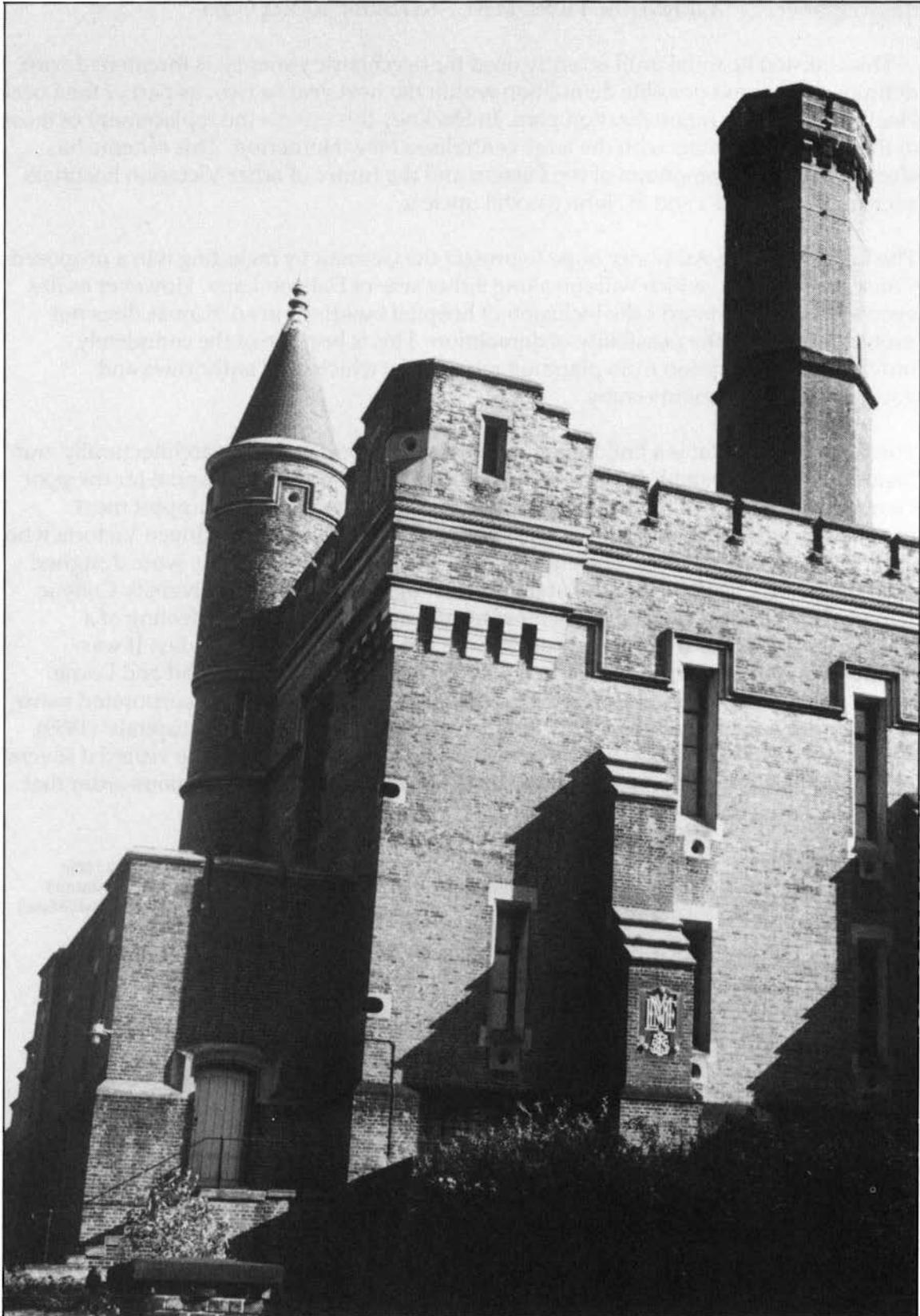
The Pumping Station is no longer in use and the Thames Water Authority are closing the whole water treatment plant in a few years time. The future of the complex is very uncertain at the moment. To try to protect the area the Borough has declared the pumping station and the adjacent reservoirs to be a Conservation Area. A new use will have to be found for the 'castle', as the building is known locally, and this will not be easy. It is not only churches which become 'problem' redundant buildings, many large institutional and industrial buildings fall into the same category. The Pumping Station provides a particularly graphic example of a building which has clearly outlived its original function, but one which for its historic and architectural value must be kept. It is a well-loved local landmark and one of the supreme examples of Victorian aggrandizement of functional building types. It can be found mentioned as such in many text books on 19th century architecture, for example Dixon and Muthesius's 'Victorian Architecture'.



The interior staircase in the south western turret.

In the pump room the engines have been removed, but the support structures remain.





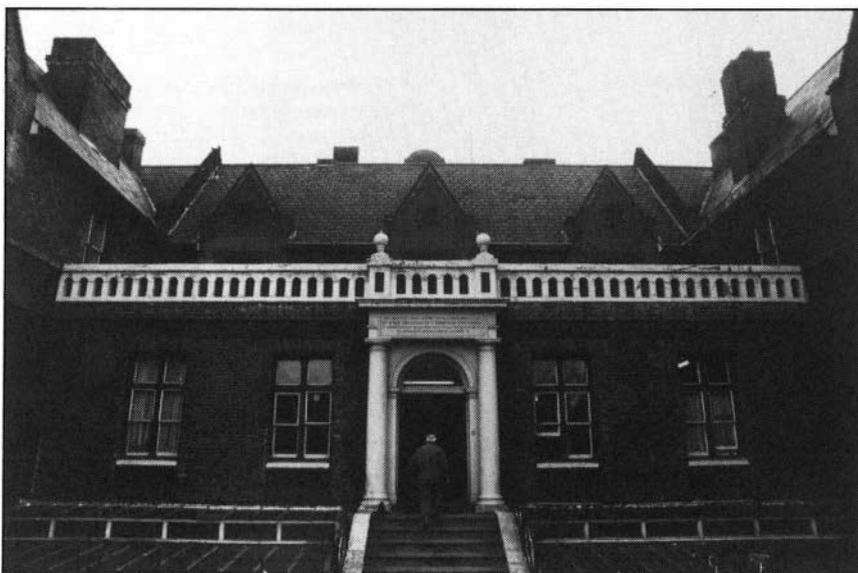
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### GERMAN HOSPITAL, RITSON ROAD, E8

This unlisted hospital until recently used for psychiatric patients, is threatened with definite closure and possible demolition within the next year or two, as part of the Local Health Authority's rationalization plan. In Hackney this entails the replacement of most of the existing hospitals with the large centralised New Homerton. This scheme has already led to the demolition of the Eastern and the future of other Victorian hospitals such as St. Leonard's and St. John's is still unclear.

The Local Planning Authority hope to protect the German by including it in a proposed Conservation Area, which will run along either side of Dalston Lane. However as has been seen at St. Leonard's the inclusion of hospital buildings in such areas does not protect them from the possibility of demolition. This is because of the completely unwarranted exemption from planning regulations which local authorities and government departments enjoy.

The German Hospital is a building of considerable importance both architecturally and historically. It was established in 1845 as a voluntary subscription hospital for the poor German community of the East End. It attracted considerable royal support most especially from King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, but also from Queen Victoria who agreed to be its patron. The present buildings date from 1863-64. They were designed by Professor T.L. Donaldson, the first Professor of Architecture at University College London. He gave the buildings a semi-rural air and something of the feeling of a country house rather than an institution, which it retains even to this day. It was enlarged in 1876 and there is a marvellous 1936 extension by Burnet, Tait and Lorne. When it was built it was considered a model hospital and its design incorporated many of the improvements suggested in Florence Nightingale's 'Notes on Hospitals' (1859). The hospital has very close connections with Florence Nightingale. She visited it several times, and undertook her own training in Germany with the same religious order that ran the hospital in Dalston.



NOTE: April 1988:  
church, hospital and  
extension listed Grade II

The Victorian main  
entrance and (*right*) the  
extension photographed  
when it opened in 1936.

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## HAGGERSTON LIBRARY, KINGSLAND ROAD, E8

Haggerston Library was the first public library in Shoreditch. It was funded by John Passmore Edwards the newspaper publisher and philanthropist, who was responsible for building many of the libraries that arose from the Free Library Movement. The idea behind this was to bring books to the people, by establishing small local libraries open to all. Passmore Edwards was particularly active in East London. He paid for the Pitfield Street Library, Hoxton as well as several libraries in Whitechapel, Stepney, Poplar and East & West Ham.

The Kingsland Road Library is distinguished from most other Passmore Edwards libraries by not being in the Arts and Crafts manner. This is because when the library first opened in 1893 it took over an existing building, which was about ten years old. This was extended in 1896, but in a style which continued the neo-Baroque design of the original.

Today the library which was established with such noble aims is in a sorry state. It is unlisted. It is owned by the Council who have left it vacant and exposed to the weather to the point now that it will cost circa £¼ million to repair. The problem of buildings falling into disrepair whilst vacant is particularly acute in cases of non-residential Council property. While these buildings are empty they are looked after by the Valuers department who have no funds for maintenance. The buildings inevitably deteriorate and the final cost of restoration is always higher. The Council are now willing to sell the building and several schemes are under consideration. However, whether any new owner will be able to do more than retain the front elevation remains to be seen.

The newspaper reading room.



Reference Room on the first floor.



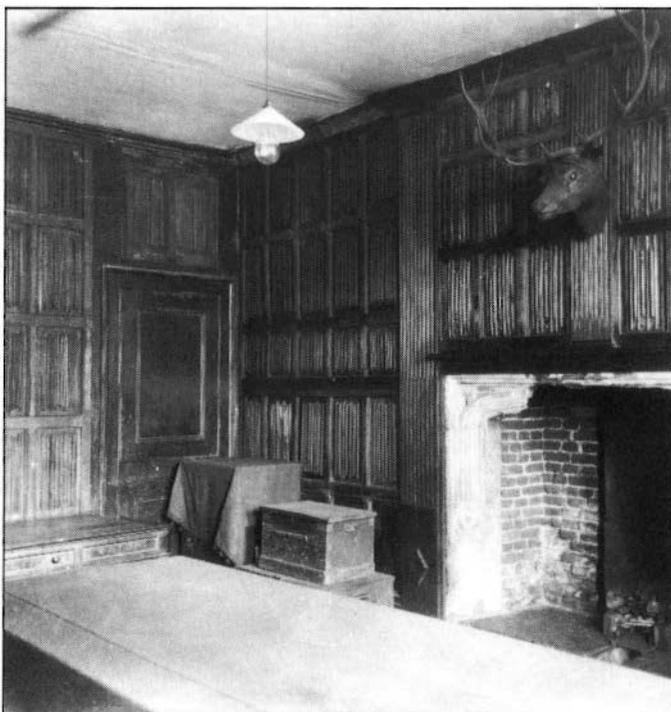


## SUTTON HOUSE, HOMERTON HIGH STREET, E8

Sutton House is a Grade II\* listed brick Tudor manor house. It was built early in the 16th century and although the exterior was substantially altered in the 18th and 19th centuries the original H-shape plan remains. So too do other 16th century features, such as the fireplace and some linenfold panelling. In the late 16th century Sir Thomas Sutton founder of Charterhouse School lived here.

The building has been owned since 1938 by the National Trust, but has not fared well particularly in recent years under their custodianship. They have allowed the building to stand empty since 1981 when the last official tenants moved out. In December 1986 the extremely valuable and irreplaceable linenfold panelling was stolen from the house. It was later recovered but the precious interior, which contains several other fine rooms from subsequent periods, has undoubtedly declined dramatically throughout these years.

In 1987 the National Trust considered selling off the lease on the building for speculative development. It was proposed that the building should be converted into private residential flats. However a vigorous campaign was mounted in opposition to the scheme. The Save Sutton House Campaign argued that the National Trust has a responsibility towards the building and could not just wash their hands of it. Furthermore the Trust's purpose is to make such buildings open to all and not just a privileged few. They pressed for community use of the building and the National Trust have now committed themselves to this.

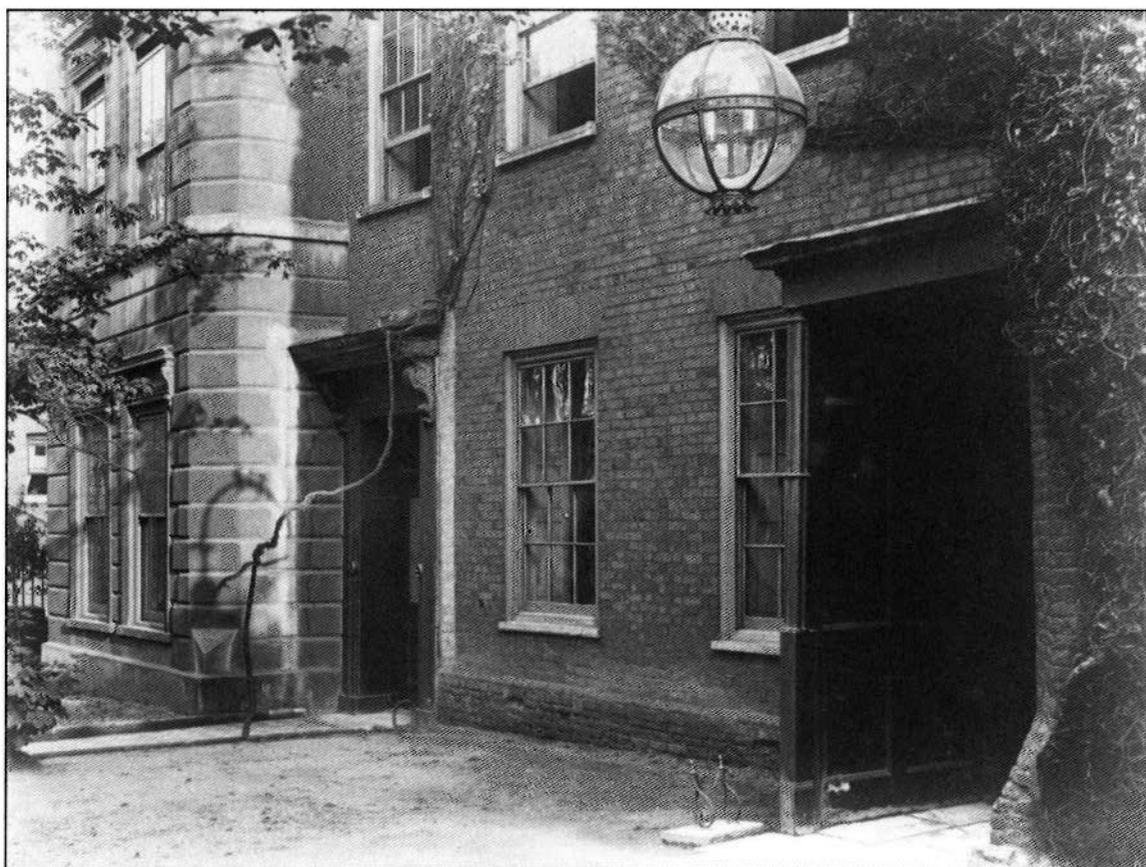


The original Tudor linen-fold panelling and fireplace in 1929 and the room as it looks today. This is what the National Trust can do for a building.





Sutton House is now barefaced and boarded up, but it was once an elegant looking building as the 1929 photograph below shows.



## 191 STOKE NEWINGTON HIGH STREET, N16

This is one of a group of three Grade II\* listed early 18th century houses, No.191 was built for a merchant probably between 1715 and 1728. It is a handsome brick building with some good internal features including the original staircase. It is the only one of the three not to have been restored. Summerson cites the group in 'Georgian London' as a good example of what he calls 'village development', one of the ways in which London's suburbs grew in the 18th century.

The house was owned by the DHSS until the early 1960's. They passed it on to the PSA who left it empty and allowed it to decay for many years. It is now owned by the Council who are trying to get the building restored. They have not helped their cause however by removing the temporary roof, which is the only protection the building now has against the elements, at various times. The building is in a very poor state and developers so far have been put off by the high restoration costs involved.

Last year a housing association expressed interest in the building but this scheme now seems to be in limbo. If something is not done shortly the building will deteriorate beyond the point of possible structural repair.

The roof of the house has collapsed and weather protection is now offered by galvanised sheeting supported by a temporary scaffold.





### LAYSTERNE SCHOOL, BRUNSWICK PLACE, N1

As the birth rate falls and school numbers decline, redundant educational buildings have become an increasing problem. Coupled with this is the isolation of schools such as this one (just behind Old Street) in areas which are no longer primarily residential and in which they no longer have a community to serve. Many of them have been taken over as adult education centres, but demand for these has probably now been filled.

Laysterne is a typical Board School. It is not an outstanding building nor is it listed, but nevertheless it is a good example of its type. It was built in 1885 and would therefore have been designed either by or under the aegis of E.R. Robson, architect to the School Board of London 1871-1889. These schools arose out of the Education Act of 1870, which for the first time effectively made education open to all. Robson's most famous work in the area is the Bonner Street School in Bethnal Green, one of the early schools and a fine Queen Anne building. By the 1890's the schools had become a recognisable and well established type. The later schools rarely equalled the outstanding designs of some of the 1870's buildings. Nevertheless they are well built, practical buildings which can fairly easily be utilised today.

This building has suffered by being involved in the financial problems of the Greater London Enterprise Board, to whom it was sold by ILEA in 1982. They left the building empty and uncared for. Today it is largely notable for the magnificent vegetation with which it is adorned. GLEB are no longer the owners of the school and there is an application in at present for a residential scheme. Whether this will founder as previous proposals have by not fulfilling the Borough's preference for industrial usage in this area remains to be seen.

Left unattended a building soon suffers from vandalism and fire damage.





### ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S VICARAGE, DALSTON LANE, E8

This Gothic Revival vicarage is the only surviving remnant of a late 19th century church which used to stand on this site. The vicarage, listed Grade II, survives as a statutory protected building, a security denied to the church itself. The history of the building is somewhat confused. The church was first opened in 1870, but there was substantial rebuilding in 1884-85. We do know that the designs for this were made by John Johnson, the architect of Alexandra Palace. The work was carried out by Dove's, the famous Islington builders. In the 1950's the church was declared redundant and subsequently demolished for a proposed but now forgotten road scheme. The parish was amalgamated with the neighbouring St. Mark's.

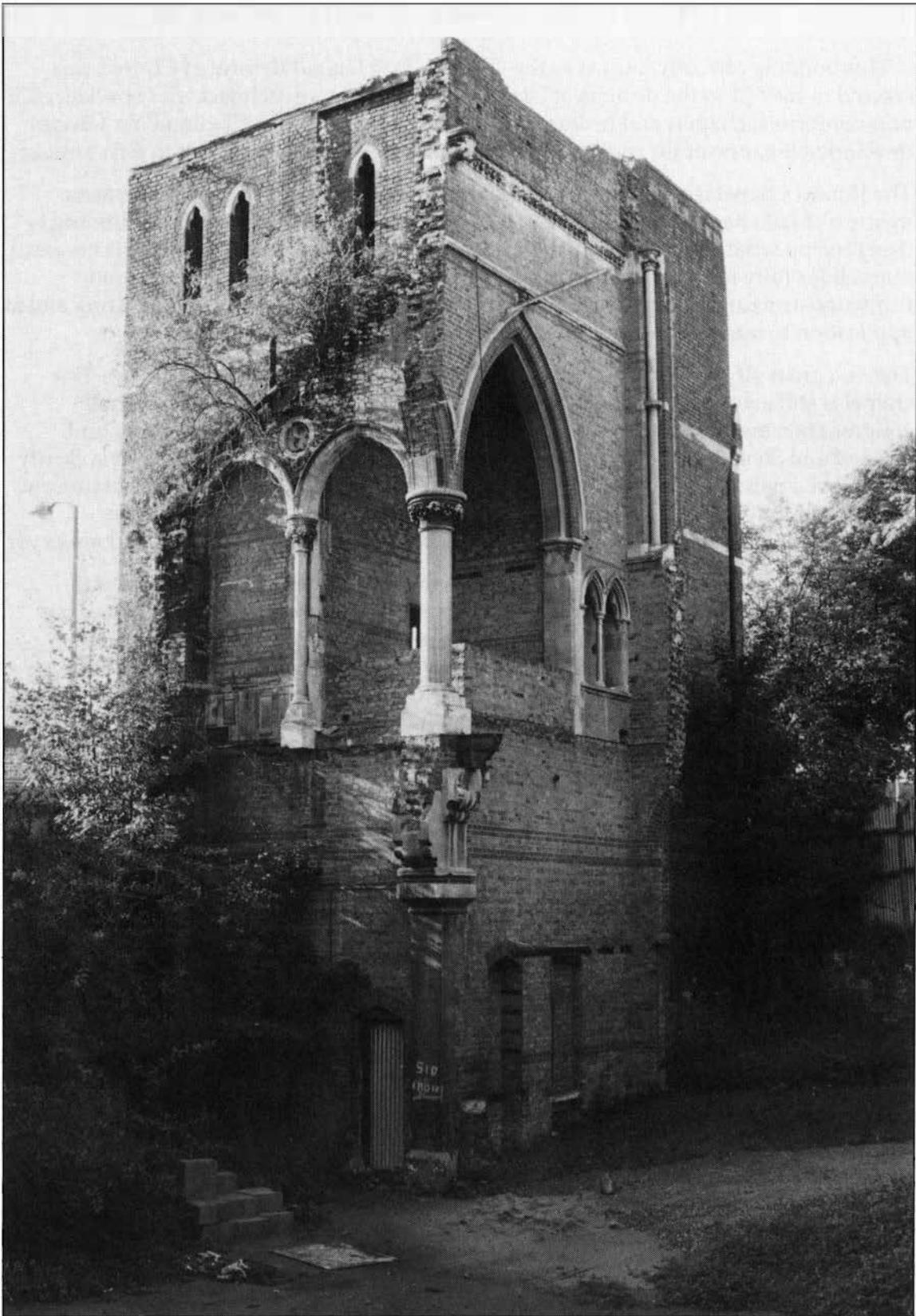
Since then the vicarage has been empty and has slowly fallen into disrepair. At present the remaining fabric is in surprisingly good condition. But it is imperative that the building is made water-tight as quickly as possible, as the rate of decay is accelerating rapidly. The vicarage is now owned by the Council who have taken no steps to do this or to look after it in any way whatsoever. It is vital that they do so as the building is in a particularly prominent position and casts a shadow of decay over the surrounding area.

Hackney Historic Buildings Trust commissioned a feasibility study which suggests using the building as both a commercial and residential community centre. This would suit the building's situation mid-way between the two parts of Dalston very well.

If Hackney Council really want to improve the environment of the borough they could make no better start than by renovating buildings such as this one, which at the moment advertise only neglect, decay and destruction. In January 1987 Brynley Heaven, Chair of Hackney's Planning Committee, announced that the site would be used for 'special needs' housing. It is not clear whether the vicarage will be retained in these proposals.



The two K2 phone boxes either side of the entrance have been replaced by modern aluminium boxes. The rear of the vicarage used to be connected directly to the nave of the church.



## ROUND CHAPEL, LOWER CLAPTON ROAD, E5

This building officially known as the Clapton Park United Reformed Church was erected in 1869-71 to the designs of Henry Fuller. He was an architect who specialized in non-conformist chapels and he built two others in the area. The Clapton Park Chapel developed into one of the most important centres of congregationalism in East London.

The Round Chapel is a magnificent building. Externally it is an engagingly eclectic mixture of Italianate motifs. But the real glory is the stunning interior. The building is designed on what is for a church, a most original horseshoe shaped plan. This creates a marvellous lofty internal space supported by a handsome and unusual exposed ironwork structure. Sadly the DOE do not share our enthusiasm for this building and an application to upgrade the buildings from Grade II\* was recently turned down.

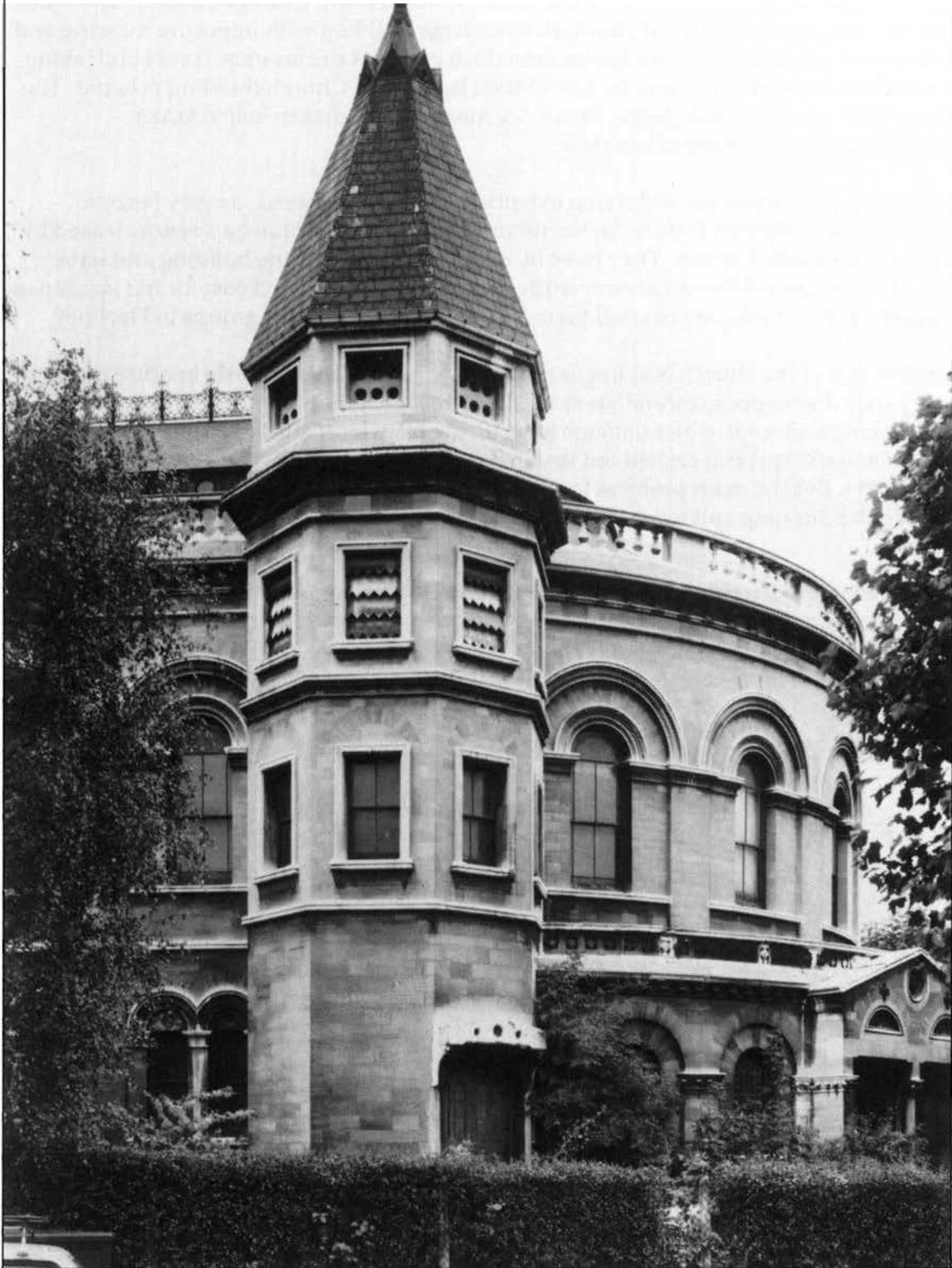
This is a great pity as the building needs all possible protection at the moment. The chapel is still owned by the United Reformed Church but they have a very small congregation and no longer hold services there. This leaves the chapel empty and unused and an increasing financial burden on the dwindling congregation. It is clearly in need of a new owner and a new role. The situation as regards its future is at present confused. There have been some alarming rumours circulating about possible conversion into flats, but there are no definite proposals or planning applications as yet.

Any scheme which is adopted must maintain the unity of the central space and if possible should allow public access inside the building. Few people have seen or are aware of the chapel's internal splendour. One proposal which would fulfil these requirements is as a new home for the Borough Archives, which desperately need a larger and more flexible building. Perhaps the Round Chapel could find a new role as the British Library of the East End?

Note: April 1988: listing upgraded to Grade II\* including specific descriptions of interior.

The interior is most detailed and impressive, as this 1977 photograph shows.





## ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH, KINGSLAND ROAD, E2

St. Columba's built in 1868-73 by James Brooks is one of the stars of Hackney's rich architectural heritage. The church is listed Grade A and the vicarage Grade I. The other two buildings in the group are both II\*. It is a large building with imposing massing and a clever use of detailing in the brickwork which enlivens the facades. It was built along with several others in the area as part of the Haggerston Church Building Scheme. The aim of this was to provide large, cheap city mission churches to help counter godlessness amongst the urban poor.

Today these churches are still trying to battle against godlessness, as they become increasingly irrelevant features in the urban landscape. St. Columba's is now leased by Christ's Apostolic Church. They have by no means neglected the building and have launched an appeal for restoration work. However the continued cost for the upkeep of a building like this is way beyond their means and those of most groups in Hackney.

The interior of the church building is particularly at risk. This is partly because of dry rot and partly due to poor restoration work. Despite large grants for the building the roof is still leaking and some water damage is occurring from loose gutters. The repointing of the brickwork has been carried out unsatisfactorily and destroys the unity of the elevations. But the main problem for St. Columba's and many churches like it will remain the draining and unremitting cost of maintenance and repair.

St. Columba's is a large complex. *From the left:* Church, Parsonage, Sister's House and School.





### ABNEY PARK CEMETERY CHAPEL, STOKE NEWINGTON, N16

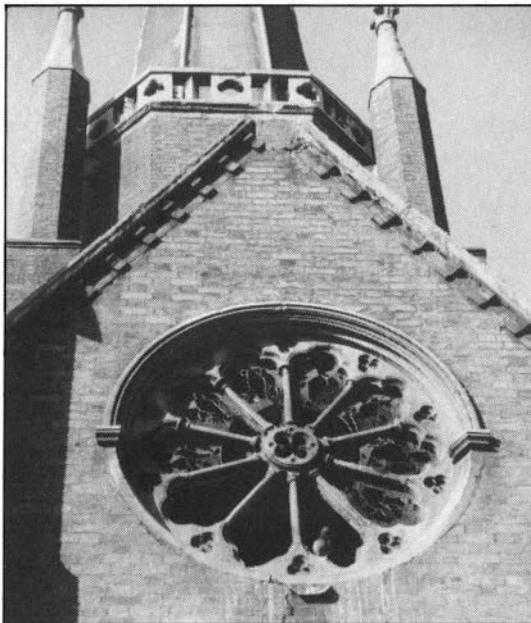
Abney Park Cemetery is one of the finest Victorian garden cemeteries in London. It was opened in 1840 and contains much remarkable funerary sculpture set in a romantic landscape. Among the famous people buried here are Issac Watts the dissenter and hymnwriter and General William Booth the founder of the Salvation Army.

The cemetery is a conservation success story. It was rescued from vandalism and decline by the joint efforts of Save Abney Park Cemetery association and the London Borough of Hackney. The latter took over the area in a terrible state of disrepair in 1979. Since then considerable work has been done in clearing the paths and bringing the vegetation under control. The main entrance front with its lodges has been restored and the side entrance iron gateway returned from safe storage.

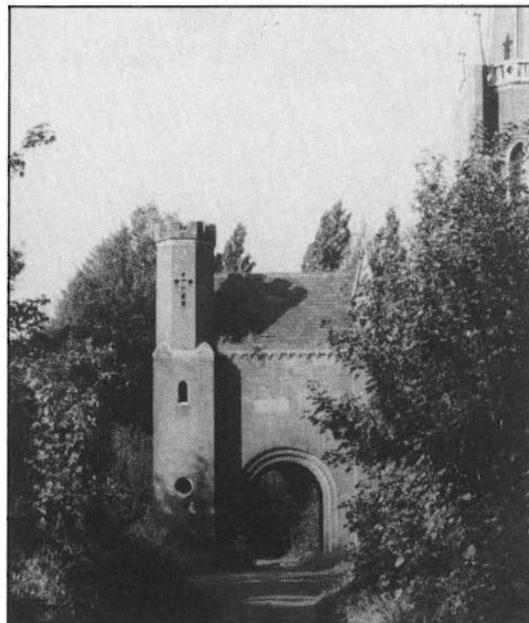
The chapel however remains in poor condition despite being a Grade II listed building and situated within a conservation area. It is now lacking a roof, has no interior left and is structurally unsound. The building was designed in 1839-40 by William Hosking the first Professor of Architecture and Engineering at King's College, London. It was a non-denominational chapel, built in what is a very late example of the picturesque style. The chapel acts as the main focus and central feature in the landscape composition. Its neglect therefore blights views from all over the park.

The Council are now carrying out emergency repairs to ensure the building's structural stability. Its future use still has to be decided upon. An imaginative scheme has been prepared by the Borough's own architects for the use of the chapel as an interpretative education centre. This scheme has been welcomed by the Hackney Society and by local residents, but it is by no means certain that it will go ahead. If it does then the Abney Park success story will really be complete.

The rose window at the east end.



The carriage arch at the front entrance.





## APPENDIX I

## HACKNEY SOCIETY BUILDINGS AT RISK SURVEY 1986

160 Buildings were surveyed:

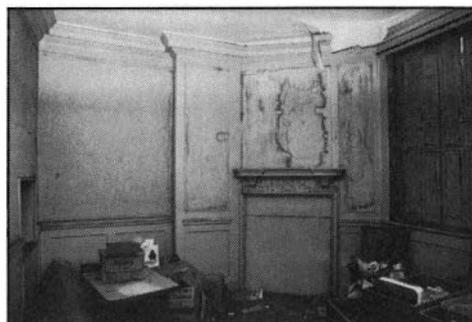
- 126 Buildings from Hackney Society's 1980 Survey (R. Moore). All these 126 were derelict in 1980.
- 34 Buildings not derived from previous survey, but discovered in the course of the field work to be at risk.

Condition of the 126 Buildings in the Survey between 1980 and 1986:

- 14 Buildings demolished (housing, commercial, industrial, Local Health Authority).
- 52 Buildings, condition deteriorated (all types).  
It is assumed that if a building was derelict in 1980 and was still derelict in 1986, its condition will have deteriorated.
- 7 Buildings, condition similar.
- 53 Buildings renovated (mainly houses).



109, 111 and 113 Stoke Newington Church Street.



The 18thC interior of Stoke Newington Church Street, currently being used for storage.



The Non-Conformist Chapel at 47 Balls Pond Road being used as a furniture warehouse.



12-20 Mare Street. The Crown Commissioners now propose to demolish these buildings.

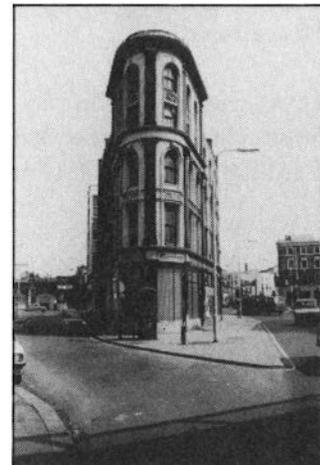
APPENDIX II

BUILDINGS SURVEYED, LISTED BY BUILDING TYPE

All buildings listed are currently at risk in some way, except where demolition or renovation is noted.

**Commercial**

10 Boot Street, N1	<i>demolished</i>
50 Brooksby's Walk, E9	<i>demolished</i>
52 Brooksby's Walk, E9	<i>renovated</i>
53-55 Clifton Street, EC2	<i>demolished</i>
2-8 Great Eastern Street, EC2	
73 Great Eastern Street, EC2	<i>unsympathetic renovation</i>
169-173 Hoxton Street, N1	
233-235 Hoxton Street, N1	<i>renovated</i>
237 & 237A Hoxton Street, N1	
198-200 Kingsland Road, E2	
346 Kingsland Road, E8	
358-360 Kingsland Road, E8	
532 Kingsland Road, E8	
554 Kingsland Road, E8	
12-20 Mare Street, E8	<i>demolition probable</i>
387 Mare Street, E8	
406 Mare Street, E8	
410-412 Mare Street, E8	
53 New North Road, N1	
24-26 Pitfield Street, N1	<i>demolished</i>
186-193 Shoreditch High Street, E1	
11 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16	
107-111 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16	
173 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16	
181-185 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16	
Lord Rayleigh's Dairy, 13-15 Sun Street, EC2	
95-97 Upper Clapton Road, E8	<i>renovated</i>
42-44 Wilson Street, EC2	<i>demolished</i>



6-8 Great Eastern Street, unoccupied. A flat-iron building of the 1870's.



188-190 Shoreditch High Street. Early 18thC survivors.

**Ecclesiastical**

Nonconformist Chapel, 47-47a Balls Pond Road, N1	
St. Bartholomew's Vicarage, Dalston Lane, E8	
St. Columba's Church, Kingsland Road, E2	
Round Chapel, Lower Clapton Road, E5	
Old Street Chapel, 324 Old Street, EC1	
St. Luke's Vestry House, Shepherdess Walk, N1	<i>demolished</i>
Abney Park Cemetery Chapel, Stoke Newington, N16	
St. Augustine's Church, Yorkton Street, E2	

### Institutional

Haggerston Library, Kingsland Road, E8  
Sutton House, Homerton High Street, E8  
191 Stoke Newington High Street, N16

### Educational

Laysterne School, Brunswick Place, N1  
South Hackney Upper School, Cassland Road, E9  
Cardinal Pole School Annexe, Victoria Park Road, E9

### Hospitals

Mother's Hospital, Lower Clapton Road, E5  
Eastern Hospital, Homerton Grove, E9 *being demolished*  
Ambulance Headquarters, Homerton Grove, E9  
German Hospital, Ritson Road, E8  
St. Leonard's Hospital, Hoxton Street, N1 *being demolished*

### Industrial

Atlas Works, Berkshire Road, E9  
Pumping Station, Green Lanes, N4  
Church Commissioner's Warehouse,  
New North Place, EC2 *demolished*  
Alite Foundry, Ridley Road, E8 *demolished*  
Testi and Sons, Waterworks Lane, E5

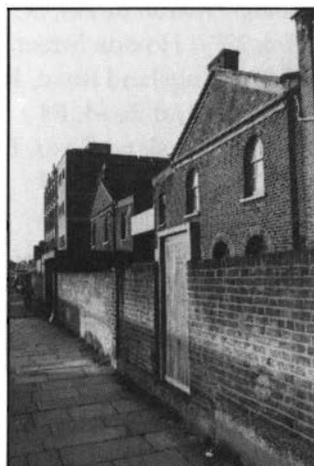
### Residential

At risk or demolished (since 1980)

80-86 Albion Road, N16  
116-118 Albion Road, N16  
95 Balls Pond Road, N1  
12, 16-17 Clapton Square, E5  
24-25 Clapton Square, E5  
1-7 & 33-39 Clissold Road, N16  
28-30 Gospall Street, N1  
170 Landsdowne Drive, E8  
13 Laura Place, E5  
126-128 Lower Clapton Road, E5  
143 Lower Clapton Road, E5



St. Leonard's Hospital, Hoxton, at risk from redevelopment.



The Alite Foundry, demolished in 1986.



207-223 Stoke Newington Church Street threatened by poor quality local authority 'renovation'.

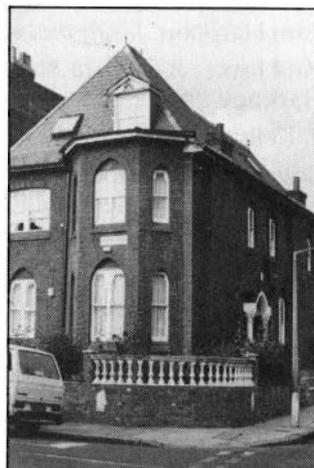
73 Mapledene Road, E8  
 195 Mare Street, E8  
 1-8 Micawber Street, N1  
 23-26 Micawber Street, N1 *demolished*  
 31-41 New North Road, N1  
 9 Sanford Terrace, N16  
 1-5 Shepherdess Walk, N1  
 Grove House & Grove Cottage, Stamford Grove East, N16  
 85 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16  
 207-223 Stoke Newington Church Street, N16  
 127b Stoke Newington Road, N16  
 13 Sylvester Path, E8

Renovated since 1980

109 Balls Pond Road, N1  
 37-69 Clapton Terrace, N16  
 42 Clissold Crescent, N16 *mainly renovated*  
 9-31 Clissold Road, N16 *unsympathetic renovation*  
 Chalmar House, 127 Dalston Lane, E8  
 182-184 Dalston Lane, E8  
 140-142 Homerton High Street, E8  
 172-176 Landsdowne Drive, E8  
 66 Milton Grove, N16  
 3 Parkholme Road, E8  
 7-13 Parkholme Road, E8  
 10 Rectory Road, N16  
 104-106 Shakespeare Walk, N16  
 116 Shakespeare Walk, N16



7-8 Micawber Street back from the brink. Renovation is now in progress.



Unsympathetic restoration of 42 Clissold Road following a fire.

The West Reservoir, Stoke Newington. Use for water treatment will cease in 1990.



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