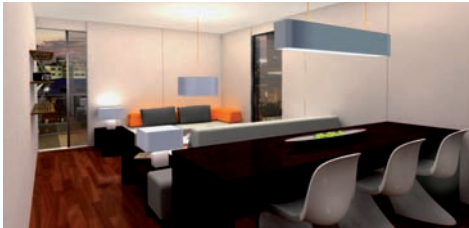


M-hotel



Pronounced *motel*, M-hotel is a new concept in hotel design. Designed by Tim Pyne, this prefabricated hotel hopes to be a solution to London's hotel shortage and the controversial practice of land banking.

Land banking is where land is bought, but not developed. The landowner holds on to the land, whilst waiting for land values in the area to rise. More often than not this results in parcels of land remaining empty and in a state of neglect for many years. Pyne would like to see this land used to better effect. M-hotel is a temporary solution to this problem.

M-hotel is more like an apartment than a hotel. It is designed to be rented by visiting businessmen and women who want a home-from-home environment for a couple of months. Once the formerly derelict site is due for more permanent development, m-hotel leaves town. The units may then be reused – although not necessarily as a hotel, but as sheltered or temporary housing that will benefit society in the longer term.

According to the London Development Agency's *Visitor Strategy*, 2,000 additional hotel rooms will be required every year for the

next 20 years in order to meet demand. This is a direct result of the many new office blocks that are springing up across the City fringe, where it is anticipated that there will be a massive rise in the number of European executives, all of whom will need a more welcoming and comfortable place to stay, for a longer period of time than is practical (or desirable) in an average hotel.

Pyne thinks the City fringe would be an ideal location for a M-hotel, where he has secured an eight-year lease on a piece of land in Sclater Street in Tower Hamlets. Renaisi, the regeneration agency, also thinks the M-hotel concept is a good one as there is lot of 'land banking' in Hackney, and not many hotels in the area. Work is due to start on the Shoreditch M-hotel in Summer 2008 and be completed by the end of the year.

For further information about Tim Pyne visit www.timpyne.com



contents

- 01 M-hotel
- 02 Urban design and conservation news
- 02 Park buildings
- 02 Stoke Newington gyratory
- 03 Healthcare in Hackney
- 03 Hackney's Big Green Map
- 04 Tree Watch: buildings v trees
- 04 Hackney Society news

Urban design and conservation news

By Ray Rogers

In December 2005 we published the *State of Hackney's Historic Environment*, a report that sets out the Council's responsibilities as a planning authority as well as its stewardship role in caring for the historic environment. This was followed by the 2006 Conservation Areas Review, which set out our programme for the review of existing conservation areas, and the designation of new conservation areas with the objective of providing up-to-date character appraisals and ultimately management guidelines for each of the borough's conservation areas.

The appraisal for Clapton Square Conservation Area was published in October 2007, and we have a further seven appraisals in the pipeline. Draft appraisals for South Shoreditch, Shoreditch High Street and Sun Street Conservation Areas will be released for public consultation in April 2008 followed in due course by Albion Square, Clapton Common and Victoria Park, which are currently in preparation. The draft De Beauvoir Conservation Area appraisal is currently at the consultation stage; this includes the use of an Article 4 direction to control incremental changes to individual properties.

In next year's programme we also hope to review the Kingsland Conservation Area. Kingsland Road has already felt the effects of new development and will come under increasing pressure as the new East London Line stations get closer to completion in 2010. How should we try to manage a conservation area that effectively becomes a development corridor linking Shoreditch and the city fringe with Dalston? The first step should be to gain a better understanding of the changing character of Kingsland Road.

Although the emphasis has had to have been placed on the review of existing conservation areas, we have also looked at the designation of new conservation areas, with priority given to those areas subject to the most intense pressures for change. The majority of these areas are Victorian and Edwardian residential streets which retain many of their original features. The special interest of these areas is susceptible to gradual erosion through piecemeal

changes, such as alterations to windows, rooflines and boundary treatments. These streets are increasingly recognised as making a significant contribution to the character and sense of place of Hackney, and to London as a whole.

One such area, the proposed St Mark's Conservation Area just north of Dalston, is currently at public consultation and, like the De Beauvoir area, contains proposals for controlling small-scale changes through an Article 4 direction. The area around St Mark's Church is notable for its well-preserved mid-Victorian houses, which are amongst the best in the borough. In October 2007 we designated the Regent's Canal Conservation Area because of its unique character derived both from the waterside setting and its place in Hackney's industrial heritage. The canal is also under pressure for new, mainly residential developments and the conservation area designation will help to set a context within which new development should be assessed. As a new departure we are also aiming to publish a short leaflet version of each new appraisal in an attractive coloured format, containing a map of the area with a brief description, as well as basic information on the planning controls that apply in conservation areas.

Hackney is fortunate to have a large number of people who care passionately about the historic environment. Voluntary groups such as the Hackney Society have an important role to play in protecting the borough's architectural heritage. The Hackney Society has been a long-term



partner in helping to protect the best of the borough's heritage and we look forward to working closely with it in the future.

Ray Rogers is Manager of the Urban Design and Conservation Team, which advises building owners and applicants on the care and alteration of listed buildings and the design of new buildings in conservation areas, and the Council on its statutory duties and powers regarding listed buildings and conservation. On a broader level, the team actively promotes good design in Hackney, through negotiations with individual developers and their architects, and by setting up the Hackney Design Panel and in the biennial Hackney Design Awards. The State of Hackney's Historic Environment report and conservation appraisals can be downloaded from www.hackney.gov.uk/ep-conservation-advice-512.htm

Hackney's Big Green Map

Since Hackney's Green Map was launched a year ago, almost 10,000 free copies have been distributed throughout the borough, with some requests being met from further afield, from Sheffield to Swansea.

Produced by Hackney Environment Forum, the map set out to encourage people to explore and learn about green initiatives in the borough and support

these green enterprises. With 140 organisations and places listed, including green spaces, architectural firms, conservation groups, green businesses, recycling schemes, and transport, the map is designed to help people plan a day out with friends or family.

Feedback has been very positive, from individuals and a wide range of organisations, and the map has also inspired at least one other borough, Islington, to develop its own version. Most of the print run has now been distributed so we are now looking for sponsors for a new updated edition. We would also welcome your suggestions for improvements to the map. Please email these to michael.calderbank@tiscali.co.uk. Of course, if you haven't yet got your own copy, please email mdouglas@gn.apc.org before it's too late!



Tree watch: buildings v trees – Hackney’s developing attitude

By Russell Miller



Most of us are familiar with the idea that trees can threaten buildings, but how many of us notice when trees are destroyed or damaged by buildings. The magnificent pear tree that overlooked Abney Park Cemetery from the back garden of 1 Stamford Hill must have been there at least a century before it was removed. Many may not have been aware of it, but those who walked out of the cemetery in the month of April were treated to its stunning wall of blossom.

This is one of the great problems of our age – we take the natural environment for granted, especially when profits can be made from the inflated housing market. Hackney is awash with developers rushing to build on any scrap of land. Trees are often the casualties of development. Many trees have already gone whilst others have

been handed a death sentence. Crowded in by buildings that have been built too close, roots crushed by heavy machinery, many trees are destined to fall to the chainsaw after building work is complete.

There is provision to avoid all this. The British Standard for managing trees on development sites (BS5827) is clear and balanced. If a modest tree obstructs a development it will not be saved, but the guidelines also provide that no tree approved for retention should suffer damage. Unfortunately it is hard to find a development site in Hackney that follows this standard. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 planning departments have a statutory duty to protect trees, something that Hackney Council is failing to do. This is a disaster for our local environment. The pear tree destroyed on Stamford Hill was inside a conservation area, where the development should have been under particular scrutiny. Nonetheless a planning application was granted permission without a thought given to the tree.

Once planning permission is granted even a TPO (Tree Preservation Order) offers little protection. If a TPO tree obstructs a development with full planning permission it can be destroyed. This is why permission

should be withheld until full land surveys and tree protection plans have been approved. However all over Hackney developers are busy building without these safeguards. The development at 142 Leabridge Road, is a good example. Huge plant machinery has severely compacted the soil around the mature plane trees on the north side of the Millfields Park. Though protected by TPOs, these trees are now at the mercy of the builders. Another short-sighted decision was to fell the mighty plane tree that protected Princess May School from the noise and fumes of Stoke Newington Road. Rather than rebuild a 1-metre high brick wall around the tree, it was decided to fell the giant that had for generations sheltered children on the playground from the sun. If you look closely as you move through Hackney you will see the carnage that is befalling some of the borough’s greatest assets. Hackney is steadily losing its great trees.

Russell Miller is Chair of the Hackney Environment Forum (HEF). If you would like to find out how to protect trees in your neighbourhood, or you would like further information about HEF contact Russell on 07758 326530 or email russell@km551818.demon.co.uk

Mystery donors at the Metropolitan Hospital

By Paul Bolding

A board in the lobby of the old Metropolitan Hospital, now the Metropolitan Business Centre in Kingsland Road, records the names of some of its benefactors and offers a fascinating insight into its history.

While a few of the names are recognisable, e.g. Prudential, Rothschild or De Beers, many are lost in the mists of time. Why the Daily Graphic Child Beauty Competition or Shoreditch Dance Committee gave money is unclear. One of the strangest benefactors is HM The King of Afghanistan, who donated money in 1928.

King Amanullah Shah had come to the throne in 1919 after assisting in the murder of his father. He led the army to its defeat of the British, which brought Afghanistan independence in that year. He was a liberal, westernised reformer who initially was popular. A backlash by conservative elements was crushed in 1924 but he travelled to Europe in late 1927 and it appears he never went back. He abdicated in 1929. Quite what his connection was with the Metropolitan is uncertain.

More typical is the Zunz bequest. Several London hospitals including St Mary’s Paddington and Great Ormond Street have wards named after Annie Zunz, the Irish wife

of German industrialist Siegfried Rudolf Zunz. He was inconsolable when she died in 1896 and established the substantial bequest in her name.

The Metropolitan was founded in 1836 and, after various homes, bought the Kingsland Road site for £5,896 in 1883. It had planned to build a new hospital in Bishopsgate but the land was taken for the Great Eastern Hotel and Liverpool Street station. This made the move urgent and before the new building was ready, a cottage and some shops at the corner of Kingsland Road and Enfield Road were used. The outpatients department was finally opened in 1885 and the main building in 1886.

It was originally called the Metropolitan Free Hospital but needed to raise funds from donors and the ‘Free’ was dropped. In 1896 it had 160 beds, 12 being reserved for Jews who had their own cook and a Jewish outpatient physician. In that year, 781 inpatients and 16,033 outpatients were treated. In 1934 the number of inpatients

treated at the hospital had increased to 1,981 and outpatients to 29,313, mostly from Hackney. By this time, special departments had been established in ENT (ear, nose and throat) and Gynaecology. A Tuberculosis Dispensary was linked to an inspection of schoolchildren arranged by London County Council. In 1948 the Metropolitan became part of the National Health Service and in the 1970s it had 146 beds. It was closed in 1977. The chimney of its boiler room still stands in Enfield Road. A nurses’ home in Enfield Road, was opened by Queen Mary of Teck, consort of George V, in 1927, as recorded by a plaque on one of the houses.

The 1870 Ordnance Survey map appears to show a row of fairly grand houses between Enfield Road and Peter’s Road (now St Peter’s Way). The site between the hospital and Enfield Road, now mostly a car park, is expected to be the subject of a planning application for a hotel shortly. *This article first appeared in the De Beauvoir Association’s newsletter in April 2008. For further information about this association please contact Paul Bolding at pbolding@blueyonder.co.uk*

Stoke Newington gyratory

GLA member Jennette Arnold claims that she has received equal numbers of communications from residents in favour of retaining the Stoke Newington gyratory system as she has from those opposed to it. If you feel – as a pedestrian, a cyclist or a driver – that the gyratory should be improved or done away with, please let her know by emailing jennette.arnold@london.gov.uk.

Park buildings

Sprunt – a landscape and architectural firm – has been employed by Hackney Council to assess how park buildings around the borough are used, and to come up with ideas for how some of them could be redeveloped. All of the buildings surveyed vary widely in condition with some park buildings being used daily, whilst others remain derelict or squatted in. Sprunt would like to hear park users' suggestions for how these buildings could be redeveloped, especially with regard to the building on Hackney Downs. Please email Nick Claessen at nclaessen@sprunt.net.

Healthcare in Hackney: a social and architectural legacy

On the 60th anniversary of the NHS the Society plans to develop a community history project that explores the social and architectural heritage of healthcare provision in the borough. The project will look at institutions that were founded in the mid-to-late 19th century, or that were pioneering during the 20th century. Institutions like the Mothers' Hospital, Hackney Hospital, St Joseph's Hospice, the French Hospital, the John Scott Health Centre and the Metropolitan Hospital will be the focus for a new publication, exhibition, website and teachers' resource pack. The project will also include talks, building tours, walks, reminiscence events and creative workshops. The Society is submitting funding applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Wellcome Trust. The Heritage Lottery Fund requires us to show that there is a need and interest from the community for this project; therefore we would like to hear from residents who support this idea, and would like to get involved. Please write to us or send an email to Lisa at lisa@hackneysociety.org expressing why you think this project is important, and what hospitals you would like to see explored.

Hackney Society news

Due to the Society's lack of funds the Management Committee has decided to move offices. Hackney Historic Buildings Trust has kindly offered us space at the Round Chapel – a great historic building on the Lower Clapton Road.



In February the Society had its first event of the year on board Daisy Barge, located on the Regent's Canal. Buried by the Blitz – an illustrated talk by the archaeologist Ian Blair – was attended by 25 people. The Society would like to thank Ian for an insightful and interesting evening, and a new corporate member, Vincent McCartney at Holborn Studios, who generously supported the event by providing a fantastic venue and snacks.

In March, we attended a grant surgery at the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discuss our new project *Healthcare in Hackney: a social and architectural legacy*. The HLF were positive about the project and have encouraged us to submit an application. We also have secured another corporate sponsor, Fullers Builders, a family building firm who specialise in listed building repairs.

On 31 March, Pond House – a grade II* building on Lower Clapton Road – was auctioned for £1.78 million. We hope the new owners will look after this wonderful 18th century building that is in desperate need of restoration and repair.

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

St Augustine's Tower

Tour with Laurie Elks, Hackney Historic Buildings Trust.

Saturday 10 May 2008, 2.30pm.

Venue: St Augustine's Tower, Mare Street, London E8 4RP.

St Augustine's Tower is Hackney's oldest building, dating from the 13th century. Recently restored, this bell tower is now open to explore. This event will give visitors the opportunity to 'ascend its great height' and capture the view from the rooftop. Tea in Sutton House afterwards.

Mossbourne Community Academy

Tour with Ivan Harbour, Architect from Rogers, Skirk, Harbour and Partners

Thursday 22 May 2008, 7pm.

Venue: Mossbourne Community Academy, Downs Park Road, London, E5 8NP.

This City Academy, which opened in September 2004, has won a number of awards for its radical approach to secondary school design. Booking essential due to limited number of places.

Public Houses in Hackney

Walk with Architectural Historian (TBC).

Monday 30 June 2008, 7pm.

Meet at the Cat and Mutton, 76 Broadway Market, London E8 4QJ.

Events are free to Hackney Society members and £5 to non-members. For special and joint events there may be a charge for members. To avoid disappointment please book a place as some events have a limited number of places. To book a place contact Lisa Rigg on 020 8806 4003 or email lisa@hackneysociety.org Please note that events are subject to change.

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