



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2026

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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Is this the greenest church in Britain?



Solar panels on the roof of St Paul's West Hackney – picture Tom Campbell

The government's energy department is suggesting that this accolade has been earned by St Paul's West Hackney in Stoke Newington Road. And no one's arguing. Its 104 solar panels, four air source heat pumps and storage batteries mean that for most of the year the church's electricity bill is zero. And it's all thanks to Stokey Energy, a grass roots organisation that has a dozen or more big solar installations in the borough to its credit.

The group was founded in 2019 by Daniel and Steve Epstein and Tom Campbell. It has no core funding but raises money as projects come up. Much of the £170,000 cost for St Paul's came from the London Legacy Development Corporation, benefiting from Hackney's role as an Olympic borough. Other funds came from the church itself and Hackney Council's Community Energy Fund (HCEF), funded by developers' carbon offset contributions.

St Paul's is not even its biggest project so far. Several schools have benefited including Jubilee Primary School in Cazenove with 130 panels and Lauriston School with 120. (By comparison, a typical domestic installation can be 10 to 12 panels).

And it's not just about the energy; schools love learning about solar and often choose a climate change or environmental champion from the pupils.

Stokey Energy has learned from the experience of other such groups around

the country but unlike some, that lease the installation, when Stokey Energy provides panels to a school, the school owns the installation with nothing more to pay. Jubilee School has already saved £16,000 on its energy bill.

It has recently secured a grant from Hackney Council for feasibility and planning work to put solar on the roof of the Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye Museum) in Kingsland Road, or rather its 1998 horseshoe-shaped extension. The museum, based around an almshouse built about 1715, is the only non-ecclesiastical Grade I listed building in the borough and that listing brings challenges.

The interpretation of planning restrictions in Hackney limits where solar panels are permitted and this provides Stokey Energy with one of its major stumbling blocks.

"The commitment to community energy from Hackney Council has been very strong ... the problem has been not the funding

Inside

- 01 Stokey Energy
- 02 Cleeve Workshops
- 03 Fairchild's Garden Restored / Women from Hackney's History – the film
- 04 Underneath the Arches
- 05 Shoreditch Park's mystery posts / The importance of Shoreditch CAAC / Would you go on Grand Designs?
- 07 Ash Grove Bus Garage / Clapton Station building restored
- 08 Noticeboard / Publications / Events

and their support but there is a systemic problem around planning, and we have made this clear to councillors and we have chewed government ministers' ears off about this," said Campbell in an interview.

It meant that a plan for solar panels on the roof of the Rio Cinema in Kingsland High Street was refused by the council in 2021 and others, like the listed Hackney Empire, are reduced in scale. The theatre has 80 panels thanks to the group but Campbell said it might have been 100.

The decision on the Rio cited what to some appeared to be questionable grounds that they would be "an obtrusive and incongruous addition that would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the Dalston Conservation Area and the special historic interest of the listed building of the Rio Cinema."

The group is also beginning to chalk up success in another direction: what it calls Green Streets. If neighbours get together to decide to instal solar on their houses, they pay the cost but Stokey Energy will negotiate discounts with suppliers. (That's unlike the Walthamstow scheme in the film Power Station that's been showing in Hackney, where a community raised funds to pay for the solar installations.) Stokey Energy has done about 20 homes so far but hopes for more and in the future, the aim is to get enough people in one area to network their installations to share the benefits, said Campbell.

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www.instagram.com/hackney_society/



“If we can get enough people locally then we can get quite good discounts,” he said. “The big win, and we’re not there yet, would be to have almost like a local energy grid.”

“The cost per panel, per kW, has come down a huge amount but it’s the installation and the labour that still costs. So if you can get a good reputable company to do a few at the same time in the same area, we can really get the costs down.”

Where it can, Stokey Energy uses Hackney-based architects, sustainability

experts, electricians and solar installers and has begun offering work experience to local youngsters. At the Betty Layward Primary School in Clissold Road, several former pupils helped with the work under supervision and after safety training. All the work is signed off by a qualified electrician.

Some of the professionals do the work pro bono. The architect who worked on St Paul’s did not charge. Others work initially for free, getting paid only if funding materialises.

Paul Bolding

Left, Installing solar on the roof of Betty Layward School – picture Tom Campbell

Right, Solar panels on the roof of the Hackney Empire – picture Tom Campbell

Hackney’s Heritage at Risk: Cleeve Workshops

To begin what we hope will become a series highlighting built heritage at risk in Hackney, I was tempted to go big: a stately civic edifice perhaps, or a landmark church or chapel, or a notable house. Instead, I’ve chosen Cleeve Workshops, a modest single-storey row of former light industrial units in the angle of Boundary Street and Calvert Avenue in Shoreditch.

Their main claim to fame is as the only part of the pioneering Boundary Estate in Hackney, the rest being just over the borough boundary (the clue’s in the name) in Tower Hamlets, originally Bethnal Green. The estate was begun in 1890, with the workshops being added to the development in 1895–98 to a design by architect Reginald Minton Taylor of London County Council. Cleeve Workshops was listed at Grade II in March 1988.

Unfortunately, the building has been on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register (HaRR) for well over a decade. Initially this was on account of decay to the fabric and long-term vacancy of multiple units. Some repairs were made in 2015–16, and Listed Building Consent was obtained in July 2019 for a scheme to refurbish the workshops and add further workspace plus toilets. Around this time, Hackney Council

was made aware of ‘multiple incidences of unlawful works’ to the building, prompting it to consider enforcement action. By 2022, planning applications for a revised programme of restoration works had been submitted, but at the time of writing these are still to be determined. The Hackney Society’s Buildings at Risk Group heard in its November 2025 meeting that the HaRR priority level for the workshops is set at D, meaning ‘Slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented’, because the roofs still need replacing or upgrading. In other words, by comparison with many at-risk heritage assets in Hackney, the work needed to get Cleeve Workshops removed from the register is straightforward and not on a huge scale.

Cleeve Workshops plays host to a diversity of independent businesses. You can find out more about them and the listed



Cleeve Workshops – picture Rob Briggs

building online at <https://cleeveworkshops.com/>. Why not pay the place a visit when you’re next in Shoreditch, to admire the historic workshops and support the small businesses that call them home?

A guided walk centred around heritage at risk in Shoreditch, featuring Cleeve Workshops and a host of other buildings, is planned as a Hackney Society event for this summer. Look out for more details in the coming months.

Rob Briggs

Fairchild's Garden restored

Hackney Council has refurbished a small public garden in Hackney Road near Columbia Road to make it more welcoming.

A range of work included relocating a memorial plaque to Thomas Fairchild (1667-1729), regarded as one of the leading nurserymen of his day, who operated in Hoxton and Shoreditch.

Fairchild was among the first to understand sex in plants and he was the first to create an artificial hybrid, a cross between a Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*) and a Carnation (*Dianthus caryophyllus*). It was known as Fairchild's Mule.

The area was originally part of the graveyard of St Leonard's Shoreditch, which Fairchild attended and where he was buried. In his will, he left money for the preaching of what became known as "The Vegetable

Sermon", still delivered every Whit Sunday. The garden was renamed to bear Fairchild's name in 2017, the 350th anniversary of his birth.

The main contractor in the £750,000 project was Blakedown Landscapes which said it "... has transformed a previously under-utilised and uninviting area into a welcoming, low-maintenance, and versatile space that seamlessly connects with its surroundings and caters to the needs of the local community."

A range of informative texts and images have been cut into limestone and granite, including one on Fairchild's Mule.

The stonework was carried out by Hardscapesurfaces and design by Ares Landscape Architects.



Thomas Fairchild



Thomas Fairchild's Garden – pictures Gary Manhine on behalf of Hackney Council.



Women From Hackney's History - the film

When Janet Chapman asked me if I'd be interested in making a film from the Hackney Society's books 'Women from Hackney's History' (1 and 2), I was intrigued and said 'yes' pretty quickly. The brief was simply to find a way to tell the stories of a handful of the remarkable women of more than 200 in the books. Together with Sue Doe and Nina Sprigge, we came up with a plan.

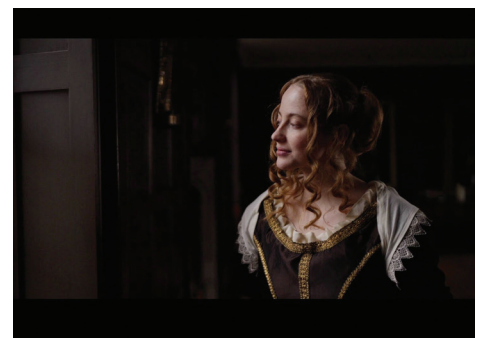
The film comprises a sequence of personal stories spanning 300 years of Hackney's history. Collaborating with the Tower Theatre, we sourced all our actors via Nina from there. Each actor is personally invested in the stories which have been written by myself and Nina. Stories include Shoreditch-born 19th-century illusionist and magician Georgiana Eagle (played by Lucy Moss), an early 20th-century young woman

called Daisy Waite from Hackney Wick who escaped a life of servitude (played by Rosie Barwick) and the pioneering Indian barrister Cornelia Sorabji, who ended her days in Hackney. She's played by Sangita Modgil.

We've used a variety of known and lesser-known Hackney buildings and venues for the location filming. Without the actors' and the locations' goodwill, there would be no film.

Although these are Hackney stories, as I'm editing it, I'm getting a strong sense that despite it being set in the borough, we're telling not just a local story, but also a national and international one. But is that really a surprise? It's one of the key reasons many of us want to live here.

The film will premiere on International Women's Day, Sunday 8th March, at the Rio Cinema. Tickets available on the Rio



Ivy Thorne as Bridget Bendish, the granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell. She lived in Stoke Newington in her teens and early 20s – picture Barney Snow

website. Clara Ludski, featured in book 1 and played by Nina is the founder of the Rio, and we will be unveiling a plaque to her there soon.

Barney Snow

Underneath the Arches By Laurie Elks

One Friday summer evening a few years back, I beheld an odd sight in Hackney Central. Young men in dinner jackets were sauntering up and down Bohemia Place accompanied by their girlfriends. On enquiry I learned that they were students at a posh school in Finchley enjoying their end of school prom night after completing their A Levels. Having grown up in that part of London, at a time when I thought Hackney a rather dangerous place, I smiled inwardly at the changing fortunes of place.

I enthused about Bohemia Place as it then was in *Spaces 66*, celebrating its grungy charm and its very “Hackney” assortment of businesses including a bike repair shop, a refill store and home brew club as well as its markets and events whose fame obviously extended far and wide. It’s easily forgotten that not long before that, the Bohemia Place arches hosted car repair workshops and other light industrial uses, frequented by rather tough looking men and psychically remote from the shops of Mare Street nearby.

The Arches were and are the freehold property of Network Rail but in 2019 they sold their commercial estate on long lease to the property investors Telereal Trillium and Blackstone. Their joint venture, ArchCo, is now wholly owned by Blackstone. The Bohemia Place arches were let on an interim basis to Hackney Walk¹, developers of the Fashion Hub. Hackney Walk created the vibe which attracted the bright young things but, I am told, found a lack of tenants able to pay, shall we say “realistic” rents, and in any event, ArchCo have now taken the Bohemia arches under their direct control. ArchCo have made applications for Arches 2-8 (granted) and 9-12 (pending at the time of going to press) for consent for *flexible commercial (Class E (a), (b), (d) & (g) (iii)) and Drinking Establishment (Sui generis) uses*, their Design and Access Statement can be viewed on the Hackney Planning Portal under 2024/0648.

ArchCo’s contractors have been hard at work refurbishing the arches for letting and their marketing blurb advertises 12 new F&B units in “one of London’s most dynamic neighbourhoods, known for its creative energy and thriving food culture ... it’s the perfect place to grow your brand”. The hoardings illustrate scrubbed up units occupied by hypothetical businesses: “Coffee Culture” and “Artisan Dough Bakery”, and patronised by young people strolling by, but perhaps not the place for



Arches undergoing refurbishment – picture Paul Bolding

Finchley Prom nights in the future.

Meanwhile, the wonderful Argun Stationers have been caught in the slipstream of ArchCo’s ambitions. Argun occupy Arch No 1, with the front entrance in Mare Street, and not at the time of writing, the subject of any planning application. ArchCo however believes that all 12 units should be let for Food and Beverage businesses. They have invited Argun to move out and proposed to Argun to relocate to the former Nike unit in Morning Lane which they described as a “vibrant” location, to which an appropriate response might be “as a dead cat”. Argun was founded 33 years ago by Argun Imamzade and his personal story is told in *Child Migrant Voices in Modern Britain – Oral Histories 1930s to the Present Day*². His business has gained a well-deserved loyal following over the years and has understandably declined this very resistible offer. Indeed it is hard to understand ArchCo’s apparent determination to shift Argun from their present location. Discussions are continuing. It seems very unlikely that ArchCo could actually terminate Argun’s business tenancy on redevelopment or other grounds so Argun appear to have the better bargaining position. We wish them well and *Spaces* readers may wish to express their support by signing the petition at <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/support-argun>.

So what of the 11 (or possibly 12) Food and Beverage Units which ArchCo is offering at “modern” rents? I’m sure ArchCo know their business but I am doubtful whether

12 “Coffee Culture” or like businesses sitting all in a row will fly in Hackney Central and indeed I understand that Arches 2 and 3, which have been on the market for some time, have had no takers at the time of writing. Maybe grungy can transform seamlessly to trendy as at Covent Garden but then again maybe not. Might we get a semi-desert of underlet units redolent of Dalston Square? An instructive parallel may be seen in Hackney Wick where the grungy Food and Beverage businesses grow and thrive while the curated units by the Here East centre have suffered indifferent take-up.

ArchCo are proprietors of many other railway arches in Hackney. As private owners they are free, within the constraints of planning law, to do as they wish with their estate. We hope, however, that they will work more with the grain of the place than they appear to be doing here.

ArchCo were approached for comment.

Footnotes

1 Or to be precise, an associated company of Hackney Walk

2 Bloomsbury Press

Shoreditch Park's mystery posts

The Buildings at Risk Group is keen to hear from anyone who knows about the historic cast iron posts that stand beside the oval path in the corner of Shoreditch Park immediately south of the Britannia Leisure Centre in the Dorothy Thurtle Garden. When were they placed there? Where did they come from?

We know they have not stood in their present position for all that long. Shoreditch Park was a creation of the 1960s-70s. Historic maps often mark posts of this kind, but show nothing of the sort at the location, not even after the first

iteration of the Dorothy Thurtle Garden had been created by 1975.

The posts bear the initials of St Leonard's Shoreditch, the parish (specifically the vestry) that originally erected them, which means they cannot have come from all that far away. Three also display dates in the 1840s, demonstrating their age.

It is regrettable that the area of the former parish/borough of Shoreditch has suffered the removal of at least ten listed gun posts in recent decades. One thought is that some were relocated to Shoreditch Park to form a well-intentioned, but planning law-contravening, themed collection.



Shoreditch post – picture Rob Briggs

Please email buildingsatrisk@hackneysociety.org if you have any information you think can shed light on the matter.

Rob Briggs

The importance of Shoreditch CAAC

London has long been characterised by its mixture of history and modernity. The city can be viewed as a living organism, continuously generating layers of built heritage which make up the urban fabric we inhabit. With these successive layers of development comes a collection of new ideas, technologies and challenges to the status quo. From this, the architecture of London is alive with a rich and complex constructed landscape.

Architecture affects more than just those who commission and occupy buildings. A successful city's texture includes the opportunity for members of the public to criticise, analyse and support the fabric of the place they inhabit through public scrutiny and informed debate.

The Shoreditch Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is one of these mechanisms, providing agency for the local, informed community to critique proposals for new architecture in the area. Like Hackney's other CAACs, it offers independent advice to the council on planning proposals, a crucial role in historically and culturally rich areas facing redevelopment pressure

like Shoreditch. The CAACs' independence allows them to provide impartial advice focused on heritage value rather than political or short-term development priorities.

In Shoreditch we cultivate specialist knowledge of local history, architecture, and townscape character to ensure that proposals respect and enhance the distinctive qualities of conservation areas. These include South Shoreditch, Underwood, Hoxton Street, Hackney Road, Regent's Canal (Section 1a) and Pitfield Street.

By offering informed scrutiny and a community-based perspective, the CAAC acts as an important counterbalance to devel-

opment pressures, supporting sustainable change while safeguarding London's historic and cultural identity.

Conservation is a radical act. It is not simply the 'preservation' of the old, but an adaptive and creative device which continues to move forward with the permanent state of change we witness across London today. Bodies like the CAAC allow members of the public with an interest in the built environment to give critical feedback to the council on new developments within the conservation areas of Shoreditch. Community feedback through the Shoreditch CAAC plays an important role in the ongoing engagement with the cityscape we inhabit.

For more information and to join the Shoreditch CAAC, please get in touch by emailing info@hackneysociety.org

Toby Pullen, Shoreditch CAAC

"Emotionally and psychologically draining"; would you go on Grand Designs?

Since Grand Designs, the self-build home TV programme, began on Channel 4 in 1999 it has featured just two houses in Hackney.

The most recent, in Maury Road, Hackney Downs, appeared, when the original programme aired in 2024, to have been a disaster. It was a new-build on the cramped site of two former garages and included a four-metres deep basement.

Problems with quality of the cement used meant the basement could not be occupied when the initial programme was made. The couple, Graeme and Mel, faced the challenge of how to fund the remedial work.

Continued overleaf



Left, Kevin McCloud (r) with Graeme and Mel at the Maury Road House – Picture Channel 4

Right, Kevin McLeod (l) and John Flood – Picture Channel 4

When the “revisit” programme was shown in April 2025, the striking red house told a different story entirely.

In that programme, architect and house owner Graeme Williamson explained that after mediation, the company responsible had borne the cost of repairs. Issues were resolved by adding an extra layer to the basement and the family were using the house as intended.

Williamson says of the house on his website: “Twin House is an experimental project for a contemporary family unit, challenging preconceived notions of spatial hierarchy and home through a reappraisal of cohabitation and collaboration.”

The other Hackney home featured in Grand Designs was a rebuild of a Victorian terraced house in Wilton Way in central Hackney more than two decades ago. The owner was John Flood and we asked him to write about his experience of Grand Designs:

“In 2002 I planned to rebuild my house at 9 Wilton Way. It was dark and badly organised with little storage space. Previous owners had modified it, and it was a mish mash of different styles from the Victorian to modern. Our architects proposed an open flowing structure capturing the maximum of light.

Because Hackney was so heavily media populated, we heard through the grapevine that Grand Designs was desperately looking for a Victorian terrace house in London for Series 3. Following initial conversations we agreed to participate. Kevin McCloud came as we were packing before demolition and carried out the first interview: why were we doing this? What were we doing? What was the budget? Had we any experience of this? (No, as I was a law professor and my then wife was a lawyer.)

We proposed a dramatic rebuild knocking everything down except the front wall (conservation area). The Grand Designs system is to have Kevin come once a month with a full crew to interview owners, architects, and builders. It takes a whole day. In between his visits a cameraman and director come to film progress and do onsite interviews. I didn't find it too disruptive and I enjoyed talking with Kevin as he could be quite combative, which I liked.

Naturally problems surfaced. A key one was a falling out between the German architects and the English builders, for

all sorts of reasons. Perhaps the main one was that the architects were sticklers and wouldn't let any sloppy work pass. I effectively became a mediator/project manager in order to keep the peace, which was tiring and demanding as I could never lose my temper with anyone. The project had to keep moving at all costs.

We used German roofers and window specialists, which the builders didn't like. But that was the agreement. We suspected the builders of attempting to sabotage the roof – it leaked but all was fixed in the end. However, by the time the programme was to be edited and prepared for transmission we were not complete. The garden hadn't been done, some internal furniture hadn't been installed yet all the major work had been completed.

I'll mention two points rarely if ever discussed on the programme: the programme makers forgot to issue a contract with us until about four months into the filming. They sent us their standard contract and, as we were lawyers, we amended it to make it fairer to us. Channel 4 wasn't too happy but could only negotiate as they had committed too many resources. We got a contract that suited us, which I believe became the basis for all future contracts with GD. We didn't get paid for that.

The second point is the bargaining power of the Grand Designs brand. I negotiated the purchase of the contents of the house: kitchen, bathrooms, lighting, furniture etc. The connection with the programme meant I was able to get discounts of between 30 and 100 per cent (ie free) on everything. As it pays no real fee, one makes it up on buying nice stuff for heavily discounted prices. I didn't know this going into the programme; I learned it along the way. It was better than getting a fee and all suppliers were listed on the programme's website.

When it finally went out, we watched in trepidation since we didn't know how it would be edited. Good, bad, incompetent or what? How would we look? Ultimately, they were kind to us, and it was presented well.

A couple of years later, in 2004, Grand Designs, returned for a “revisited” programme as we'd done the garden and finished the internal fitting out. I remember in the final interview I equivocated over whether I would want to do something



Above, The Maury Road house – Picture Paul Bolding. Below, The Wilton Road house – Picture Paul Bolding

like this project again. It was emotionally and psychologically draining. I was exhausted. But I would and have done so. Involving the programme had the benefit of chivvy along the builders when they got lazy: “They're coming to film tomorrow...” At one point the builders tried to withdraw their participation but were told it was too late. They didn't come out of it too well. I felt the film crew were allies of a sort.

I have since discovered people in all parts of the world who have seen the show and commented to me. The viewing figures were 5 million for the first programme and 6 million for the second. Since then, it's been shown countless times on syndicated channels.”

The original and “revisited” programmes on the Wilton Way house can be seen on YouTube. Enter “hackney terraced house revisited” in the YouTube search. The Maury Road Grand Designs programme “Hackney Revisit 2025” can be seen on www.channel4.com.

Ash Grove Bus Garage

Many members will remember our unsuccessful fight, along with the Twentieth Century Society, to get Ash Grove bus garage listed. It opened in 1981, the first new bus garage for London in 27 years. Nick Perry described the “prismatic glazed roof structure which protects two sets of five perpendicular triangular roof trusses – 48m and 54m in length – whose ends are exposed and delicately balanced on stanchions that peek over the wall on Sheep Lane” in his article in Spaces 80.

So it's good now to be able to see a thriving market upstairs on the last weekend of each month, as well as a host of artists' and makers' studios hosted by Hackney

Depot. On 30th and 31st May there will also be guided tours as part of Hackney History Festival.

Still on buses, the London Bus Museum is running a **Route 38 Heritage Day** on Saturday 14 March between 10am and 5pm. No need to book and it's free. A 10-minute service will run between Victoria and Hackney using Routemasters as well as the earlier RT buses alongside the usual vehicles (normal fares apply). Route 38 has been operating since 1912.

Details: <https://www.londonbusmuseum.com/route-38-heritage-day-2/>

Hackney Depot – picture Janet Chapman



Clapton Station building restored

A waiting room and other parts of Clapton station on the London Overground have been restored by Arriva Rail London (ARL) with funding from Transport for London (TfL) and the Railway Heritage Trust (RHT).

The centrepiece of the project was the revival of the building on platform 1, which has been closed to the public since the 1980s and had fallen into severe disrepair, with structural damage, water ingress and accumulated waste. Now fully restored, the building houses a waiting room, viewing gallery, accessible toilet and employee facilities.

Amongst the waste, workers unearthed remnants of Victorian furniture. While one bench was beyond repair, two have

been returned to their former glory after meticulous restoration and now sit in the waiting room for customers to enjoy. This room also includes functioning vintage weighing scales, complete with original 1950s advertising.

The old switch room has been repurposed into a fully accessible toilet with baby changing facilities, alongside a gallery that celebrates the station's past. The space features original British Rail electrical signage and vintage lighting, including lanterns and industrial bulkhead fittings.

The station entrance has been refurbished and signage imitating the old British Rail style has been created.

Clapton station was built by The Great Eastern Railway and opened in 1872. It now serves trains on the Overground's Weaver Line between Liverpool Street and Chingford.

Lifts are to be installed at **Dalston Kingsland station**, the Department for Transport has confirmed. A published list of 23 stations moving to the detailed design stage under the Access for All scheme included the station.



Left, Clapton Station waiting room with heritage sign – picture Peter Alhadeff. Right, Clapton Station waiting room – picture Peter Alhadeff

NOTICEBOARD

Guiding course begins

As Hackney Society members know, Hackney has a wide range of varied, diverse and interesting history. Early in the New Year the first training course for Hackney Guides began. The course consists of classes in history and guiding practice weekly at Shoreditch Town Hall, and regular walks with trained guides and assessors in order to practice their skills.

The course is run by myself as course director, more than ably assisted by the vastly experienced John Finn as course tutor. We are both trained guides and saw the need for more individuals trained to highlight Hackney's stories. We have guest speakers who have an extraordinary amount of knowledge of Hackney between them: Margaret Willes, Julia Lafferty, Sean Gubbins, Caron Lipman, Yvette Reifor, Lesley Thompson and Laurie Elks.

The 19 students will undergo two practical exams and a range of written assessments in July. Badges will be presented in September, hopefully by the mayor at the Town Hall.

The course is supported by the Hackney Society.

Sue Doe

Morgan Sindall named to refurbish King's Hall

King's Hall Leisure Centre in Lower Clapton Road has closed for refurbishment lasting three years after Morgan Sindall's London business was appointed to carry out the construction work.

The £68.7m development includes refurbishing the centre's existing large pool, as well as the construction of a new large pool and a smaller teaching pool.

The existing façade and entrance will be repaired and glazed bricks and balustrades that are important elements of the Grade II listed building's heritage preserved.

The work also includes new-build features, including a cycle store, a double-height sports hall, a new accessible entrance from Clapton Square and a sauna and steam room.

The design work was led by FaulknerBrowns. Morgan Sindall also built the Britannia Leisure Centre in Hoxton.



Kings Hall Leisure Centre in Lower Clapton Road – picture Louise Goodison

Stirling Prize for East London practice

Wetherford Watson Mann, an architecture practice based in Coate Street E2, has won the prestigious Stirling Prize for Appleby Blue Almshouse, a charity development in Bermondsey.

The £25.1 million social housing complex for the over-65s rethinks the traditional sheltered housing model to promote social interaction as well as care and shelter.

Wetherford Watson Mann previously won the Stirling Prize in 2013 for its revamp of the 12th-century Astley Castle in Warwickshire.

The practice's work in Hackney has included Brickfields, a business centre housing 98 studios located next to Hoxton Overground station, and the Hackney Wick Masterplan with Karakusevic Carson Architects.



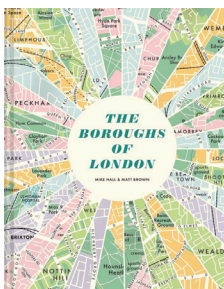
Appleby Blue Almshouses – Picture Matt Brown -Flickr

Publications

The Boroughs of London (Hardcover, Batsford, £30)

by Mike Hall and Matt Brown

Detailed maps and commentary, facts and anecdotes on each of the London boroughs. "...a rather wonderful and illuminating combination of history and travel guide. I couldn't commend it more highly," Mike Paterson, London Historians.



Hackney Society Events

Hackney History Festival

We're busy gearing up for the third Hackney History Festival, running throughout May, now proudly under the Hackney Society banner, and have a great line up taking shape. From the community orchestra performing in front of a film outlining 100 years of Hackney History to an exhibition of Hackney Mapped, as well as four days of talks on 9 and 10 and 16 and 17 May, there

will be walks throughout the month, film screenings and chances to see inside many iconic Hackney venues.

To be notified first when tickets go live, sign up at hackneyhistoryfestival.org and if you'd like to help with stewarding or helping in any way, please email hackneyhistoryfestival.org.

Hackney History Festival **MAY 2026**

3RD HACKNEY HISTORY FESTIVAL

Hackney Archives Sat 9 May
Sutton House Sun 10 May
Round Chapel Sat 16 May
Chat's Palace Sun 17 May

Satellite events throughout May

Join us for a range of exciting talks, walks, films, quizzes & tours!

hackneyhistoryfestival.org/

Other events

Sat 28th Feb
Haggerston School visit

Sat 7th March
Wikipedia editing

Sun 9th March
Premiere of Women from Hackney's History Film, Rio

Wed 18th March
Liza Fior at Dalston Curve Garden

Wed 17th June
Community Architecture in Hackney + AGM at HTA Design

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