

The City Academy By Monica Blake



The City Academy in Homerton is the fourth academy in Hackney. The colourful new building received its first intake of 240 students on 3 September 2009.

Sponsored by the City of London Corporation and KPMG, the academy was designed by Studio E Architects. What is special about this building is that the Sorrell Foundation gave local school children the opportunity to act as clients during the design stage. By the end the pupils were clear about what they wanted: bright, flexible learning spaces; comfortable social spaces both indoors and out; and effective communication within the school and with the local community.

The academy was designed using sustainability concepts and practices. This approach relies on high standards of daylight and natural ventilation. Four light wells let daylight into the centre of the school and there are louvered openings for ventilation. Corridor atriums bring natural light down through the centre of the building allowing natural light to both sides of the classrooms, which have glass internal walls.

A glass secondary façade assists with dealing with noise generated by heavy traffic

along the street frontage without obstructing the flow of light into the building.

Minimising energy consumption was crucial to the project. An underground pump helps heat the building in winter and keep it cool in summer.

Photovoltaic panels on the roof capture enough solar energy to provide lighting to 50 of the classrooms. To save energy, artificial lighting is dimmed according to available daylight and switched off when occupancy is not detected. The corridor atriums allow warm air up to stop the classrooms overheating.

In general, reception to the City Academy has been positive. However, there have been a few disappointments. One person was dismayed by the 'traditional corridor style layout and the John Lewis type signage', and found the building to lack integration with the surrounds especially the historic setting of Sutton House. Others felt the library had been sidelined. On the plus side, there were plaudits for the consultation with pupils and the way the dining room had been organised to encourage socialising.

There was also an appreciation of the bright airiness of the building – a far cry from the

claustrophobic schools of yesteryear – and the state-of-the-art facilities such as the stunning laboratories and classrooms, a 450-seat theatre, a dance studio, a video-editing suite and a recording studio.

The building is on a site that once housed a range of educational institutions. After the Second World War, the site was cleared and a new school was built in the early 1950s. This school – Upton House – went on to merge with Brooke House (where Sir Alan Sugar was educated) to become Homerton College of Technology, whose old pupils included actor Bette (née Peter) Bourne and footballer Ugo Ehiogu. It was closed in 2007.

The City Academy is expected to reach its maximum complement of 1,140 students over the next four years.

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From Fever to Consumption: the Story of Healthcare in Hackney

By Lisa Rigg

Since November 2008 the Hackney Society has been working on the community history project 'From Fever to Consumption: the Story of Healthcare in Hackney'. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund this project has enabled local people to research, interview and learn about the history of healthcare in Hackney. To date we have trained 37 volunteers as researchers, picture researchers, oral historians and event leaders. Working with Dr Toby Butler, from the University of East London, training sessions have included: 'An introduction to the History of Healthcare in Hackney', 'How to use archives in History of Medicine research' with Maureen Roberts at the London Metropolitan Archives, 'Introduction to Oral History' with Dr Graham Smith from the Oral History Society, and 'Sound Editing and Digitisation'.

This training has enabled volunteers to research and interview former staff and patients of The Mothers' Hospital, St Leonard's Hospital, Hackney Hospital and the John Scott Heath Centre. The oral historians have travelled across England interviewing nurses, midwives, doctors, administrative staff, Salvationists and patients. This has resulted in 28 oral history interviews totalling 30 hours of material, which will be deposited at Hackney Archives for public use. Extracts of these interviews are currently being uploaded to our new website which will be launched in March 2010.

In this special issue of Spaces we've published some of the research that has been produced during this Heritage Lottery Funded project.

The Hackney Society would like to thank the following people who have volunteered their time and been employed on this project: Peter Archard, Anny Ash, Patricia Bennett, Toby Butler, Inge Clemente, Chris Dorley-Brown, Gopal Dutta, Elena Findley-de Regt, David Francis, Karen Fredericks, Tony Gillett, Ian Grant, Glory Hall, Dianna Hunt, Claudia Jessop, Sue Kinder, Jack Latimer, Evie Learman, Natasha Lewer, Margaret Kennedy, Alex Kitchener, Rachel Kolsky, Imogen Magnus, Hannah Parham, Maureen Roberts, Ann Robey, Graham Smith, Virginia Smith, Michael Somwaru, Marion Try, Suzanne Waters, Amy Wedderburn, Ben Worpole and Ken Worpole.

St Leonard's Hospital, Kingsland Road

By Hannah Parham

St Leonard's Hospital, Kingsland Road was built in 1863-6 as the workhouse of the parish of St Leonard, Shoreditch. It replaced an earlier building on the site dating to 1777, which was considered to be in poor condition and overcrowded. Indeed, circumstances were so squalid that the workhouse featured in an article in the medical journal *The Lancet* in 1865, causing a public outcry. Exposés such as this led to the Metropolitan Poor Act in 1867 and prompted the reconstruction of many urban workhouses. Plans for rebuilding St Leonard's were drawn up in 1862 by one William Lee of St Michael's House, Cornhill.

The first part of the new workhouse to open was that housing the Parish Relief Office facing Hoxton Street in 1863. The remaining workhouse buildings were completed by 1866, the foundation stone to the main frontage block on Kingsland Road having been laid in March 1865. Some building materials (probably the London stock bricks) from the old workhouse were reused. A new infirmary and dispensary were built in 1872, followed by a laundry, nurses' home, and mens' and womens' receiving blocks in the 1890s.

From the outset the workhouse and the workhouse infirmary were housed in separate buildings, reflecting the practice of distinguishing between able-bodied and infirm paupers (the so-called deserving and undeserving poor). By the late 1920s the two were separate institutions known as St Leonard's House and St Leonard's Hospital respectively. The workhouse closed in 1930 and the whole site became a hospital, thought to be the first in London to admit air-raid victims in the Blitz. St Leonard's Hospital remains in NHS use.

Yet while the purpose of the infirmary outlasted that of the workhouse, the fate of the original buildings was the inverse. Almost no buildings survive relating to the infirmary: some were bombed in 1941; the rest were demolished in 1993. In contrast the main



Hall/chapel.

workhouse building on Kingsland Road (Block A) is relatively unaltered, as is the perpendicular range to the rear (Block B). Block A originally housed the workhouse's administration offices, day-rooms, and female inmates; Block B contained the dining hall, which doubled up as a chapel, and accommodation for male inmates.

The majority of early 19th century workhouses were built in a restrained, classical style as prescribed by late Georgian taste and the limited budgets of the parish unions. By the 1860s, fashion had moved on, but the conservatism of the unions and the continued need for economy meant that austerity persisted in the design of workhouses well into the mid-century period. Where land was more plentiful, workhouse architecture could be ambitious, and many built in the northern industrial towns were of an order of grandeur that surpasses that of St Leonard's. Nevertheless, for an inner-city workhouse, originally sandwiched between a public house and a terrace of houses, St Leonard's punches above its weight architecturally.

Block A is in the French Second Empire style, popularised by the opening of the pavilion-roofed Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria Station in 1860, and widely deployed in mid-century town halls, railway stations and commercial buildings. Characterised by plentiful use of carved stonework and tall mansards with patterned slate coverings and decorative iron cresting, this was an expensive style and thus was rarely used in buildings for the poor. Yet in Shoreditch, the compactness of Block A's street facing elevation permitted a concentration of architectural exuberance which would have been too costly on a larger building. Observe, for example, the clever use of stone dressings to give the impression of lavishness without the expense of facing the entire elevation in ashlar. Inside Block A are surviving original features, including a grand staircase and some fireplaces and panelling.

Block B is more austere and is characteristic of the bleakness long-associated with Victorian workhouses. Inside is the hall/chapel, which was at the centre of institutional life. Here meals of bread and cheese or gruel were served, with meat thrice weekly, and daily prayers said. The dual use was not uncommon, again an indicator of the thriftiness of Boards of Guardians, but its good state of preservation at St Leonard's is notable. At meals and at prayers, the inmates sat on long benches, all facing forwards; the men to one side and the women to the other. The absence of interconnection between the western and eastern sections of Block B, save via the hall/chapel, is further evidence for the principle of segregation in the workhouse, separating husbands from wives, and parents from children.

Such privations were to ensure that the workhouse, funded by local ratepayers, only supported the truly destitute, and not the merely indolent. The rules, uniforms and regimented existence designed to deter the work-shy principally served to compound the misery of the suffering, however. Charles Dickens was one of many writers whose undercover reports in the London newspapers revealed 'the little world of poverty enclosed within the workhouse walls'. The 1881 census recorded that of the 676 inmates of St Leonard's, around half were widows or widowers and around 70% were over 60 years old. The oldest resident was 91-year-old Margaret Kennedy, a laundress from Ireland; the youngest one-year-old Clara Ashton, who, like the majority of inmates, had been born locally.

Even the most cursory examination of the conditions in London's Victorian workhouses questions the desirability of preserving the surviving buildings of such miserable institutions. Yet Block A is one of the most distinguished edifices on Kingsland Road, alleviating the poverty of the streetscape to a far greater degree than it ever did that of its inmates. Its award of Grade II-listed status by English Heritage in June 2009, along with Block B and the façade to the former Offices for the Relief of the Poor facing Hoxton Street, was surely warranted. Forthcoming decisions about the future of the former workhouse buildings must now pay heed to their special historic and architectural interest.



Block A in the French Second Empire style.

The former Poor Relief Offices were clumsily refurbished, with just the façade preserved to cloak the mediocre new build. Yet the usual conservation principle, that a building is best preserved in the use for which it was intended, can hardly be applied here. Instead, a new use is required for the rest of the former St Leonard's workhouse that begins a new and more uplifting chapter in the building's life.

Hannah Parham is a Heritage Protection Advisor for Listing at English Heritage.



The rear elevation of Block B.

Planning proposal for the St Leonard's Hospital site

City and Hackney Teaching PCT and East London NHS Foundation Trust are planning to redevelop the St Leonard's Hospital site to improve and increase the range of health services available, and build a new mental health unit to replace existing provision at Homerton University Hospital. Log on to: <http://www.eastlondon.nhs.uk> for more information about the mental health unit and <http://www.cityandhackney.nhs.uk/about-us/st-leonard%E2%80%99s-redevelopment.aspx> for more on the primary care resource centre.

Long-term residents in Hackney, especially those living in or around Clapton, will probably remember The Mothers' Hospital in Lower Clapton Road. All that remains of *The Mums'*, as the hospital was commonly known, is Maitland Terrace, the original early Victorian villas that constituted the hospital's façade located at 153-163 Lower Clapton Road.

The Mothers' Hospital, Lower Clapton Road (1913-86)

By Ken Worpole

Like many others conceived in East London during the Second World War, I was born in a castle: Willersley Castle, near Matlock, Derbyshire. This grand building – though infested with mice according to my mother – was commandeered by The Mothers' Hospital in Hackney between 1940-6 as part of the civilian evacuation of London, particularly of children and young mothers.

The Mothers' Hospital in Lower Clapton Road was part of an extensive network of social provision provided by the Salvation Army in Hackney from the late 19th century until the present day. The large maternity hospital, formerly a home for unmarried women, was opened in 1913 by Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Louise, and finally closed in 1986, having registered 123,909 live births during its operation, including our own children: one born in 1969, and the other in 1971.

The hospital occupied a prominent frontage in Lower Clapton Road with a pillared entrance gate, and two distinctive arches leading to and from the main hospital grounds at the rear. Originally it had been built to serve the unmarried and the poor in Hackney, though after the Second World War it was incorporated into the National Health Service. The Mothers' Hospital retained its distinctive religious identity long after, as my wife soon discovered, when hymns were sung in the wards on a Sunday evening, and sermons offered.

In many other ways it was very 'old school', though this was as much a reflection of the era as of the religious – indeed missionary – ethos of the hospital itself: fathers were discouraged from visiting for too long, or even holding the baby for fear of 'germs', let alone attending the birth. At nights some babies were wheeled in their tubular steel cots into the bathroom, where they spent the night away from their mothers, whether they cried or not.



Yet the low-rise, chalet-style layout of the ward buildings helped create more of a cottage hospital effect than was evident at the other Hackney hospitals. There was also extensive tree planting in the grounds which, according to another friend whose children were born there in springtime, were full of blossom and cheerful as anything. Our two were born in winter months, alas, and my memories of both births involved trudging in the rain or snow across Hackney Downs at dusk, to catch official visiting hours. My wife obviously had the harder time, and shortly after our second child was born, she and other mothers launched a campaign for the improvement of maternity facilities in the borough, a community initiative which brought some success.

Architecturally, The Mothers' Hospital was a mixture of styles. The frontage was not original but consisted of a gap-toothed row of early Victorian houses, behind which a 2.75-acre site was used to develop a series of six bungalow wards and an isolation block. The six 'cottage' blocks, as they were also called, were connected by a colonnade to the entrance building. Trees, shrubs and flowers were planted between the buildings, and at the far end was an ornamental garden. Ground floor plans of a typical bungalow ward show a six-bed ward, a four-bed ward and a two-bed ward serviced by a ward kitchen, toilets and bathrooms, in addition to the labour room.

The wards were designed to 'face north and south, thus ensuring that they shall, during the larger part of the day, receive full benefit of any sunshine that may be available'. Originally the different wards were designated for different groups of mothers: married, unmarried, and one 'it is hoped, to be used by Jewess mothers, for whom we should have special arrangements made'.

Neither the original architect of the scheme, Alexander Gordon FSI, LRIBA (with medical expertise provided by Dr Donald Mackintosh of Glasgow's Western Infirmary), nor the Salvation Army were ever satisfied with the improvised frontage, however, and tried

continually to raise funds to demolish the early Victorian houses and build something more imposing in their place. In the annual report of 1936, opposite a photograph of the existing hospital façade, it is stated that:

'Here is the Hospital's shabby, inadequate façade. We are sorry to see it, and none of our well wishers will look upon it with pleasure. These drab mid-Victorian (sic) houses were adapted as a makeshift when the Hospital was built.'

They had a 'dream frontage' in mind, one shown in an aerial artistic impression by Gordon himself, circa 1928, which shows a five-storey monolith, a huge brick tabernacle in the Frank Lloyd Wright/Chicago style, behind which the garden bungalows appear to belong to a different world altogether.

This grand new building was never to be, though The Mothers' Hospital added a distinctive presence to Lower Clapton Road for

nearly a century. When the hospital was incorporated into the National Health Service in 1948, the bold lettering on the front of the building was changed from THE SALVATION ARMY: THE MOTHERS' HOSPITAL to THE MOTHERS' HOSPITAL (SALVATION ARMY). Today the memory of its place in Hackney's history is retained in the name of the new housing development: The Mothers' Square.

Ken Worpole is author of many books on social history, landscape and architecture, including Dockers and Detectives (2008) and Modern Hospice Design (2009). He is professor at London Metropolitan University. He has lived in Hackney since 1969. This essay originally appeared in Hackney – Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored: 40 Buildings to mark 40 Years of the Hackney Society (The Hackney Society, 2009). To buy a copy of the book email bookorders@hackneysociety.org

Ivy House, Mare Street (1890-1912)

By Peter Archard

Less well known is Ivy House, the Salvation Army's maternity hospital and precursor to The Mothers' Hospital. Ivy House was located at 271 Mare Street, on the site currently occupied by Job Centre Plus, which stands on the corner of Richmond Road and Mare Street.

The Salvation Army opened Ivy House in 1890. The rented premises consisted of a large four-storey early Victorian villa or 'homestead'. Between 1890 and 1912 approximately 4,300 babies were delivered at Ivy House with the majority of the mothers being referred from outside Hackney. To begin with Ivy House functioned as a lying-in institution and rescue home for unmarried mothers.

The lying-in institutions of the mid-18th century were the earliest specialist hospitals to appear in England. During this period women generally gave birth at home, where there was less risk of infection, but for many, in particular the poor, servants, and unmarried or abandoned women, this was not possible.

The Salvation Army argued that in the absence of such provision unmarried mothers faced giving birth in the workhouse and ran the risk of taking to prostitution as a means of surviving. As such The Salvation Army sought to fulfil two closely interrelated functions as part of its work with unmarried mothers: rescuing them morally and socially through evangelical and social work.

From 1894 until it closed in 1912 Ivy House functioned only as a maternity hospital. However, the hospital worked in close cooperation with a network of ante-natal and postnatal facilities in Hackney, including the Receiving House at 259 Mare Street; Brent House, a home for pregnant unmarried mothers, in what is now Brenthouse Road; and 'The Nest' and 'Cotland', two homes for mothers and their babies, in Springfield Road.

Ivy House had 26 beds and was staffed by eight to ten trained midwives and nurses, and a further 16 domestic staff. All were Salvation Army recruits who were committed missionaries: their routine included evangelising the mothers through prayer and bible study. The majority of the mothers were eventually placed in middle class homes as employed domestic workers. A significant part of their wages was destined to the upkeep of their babies who were placed in the care of foster mothers, some of them Salvationists.



The Midwives Act 1902 brought the practice of midwifery under the control and regulation of central government. Under the Act, the Central Midwives Board (CMB) was charged from 1905 with ensuring practising midwives complied with the required professional standards. The CMB certified the Salvation Army Maternity Hospital at Ivy House as a training school for midwives. However, the London County Council, on inspecting Ivy House in 1906, found the facilities to be inadequate. Indeed, the Salvation Army itself recognised that the hospital was overcrowded. It was in this context that the Salvation Army transferred its maternity hospital to Lower Clapton Road in 1913.

Dr Peter Archard is a historian who wrote a PhD on the Salvation Army and its work with the homeless. His research on Ivy House will be published on the project's website. He lives in Hackney with his wife and family.

Hackney Hospital, January 1988

By Chris Dorley-Brown



As artist-in-residence at the nearby Homerton Hospital I was given privileged access to what remained of the recently decommissioned Hackney Hospital. Over two sunny winter days the Gothic workhouse infirmary buildings and Modernist maternity

block were sharply illuminated and completely deserted. The overwhelming atmosphere was one of melancholy tinged with a faint menace. The contact sheets from the seven rolls of colour negative film, now heavily annotated, show a forensic approach as I recorded the dereliction and collected evidence of past attitudes to 'health and social care'.

The brisk, orderly, maternal efficiency alongside a paternal scientific wisdom was a powerful, tangible residue. Pools of cold light on heavy linoleum peeling back – the glue stinking of decay. I tried not to breathe too deeply: this was the era of Legionnaires' disease. The corridors blocked by piles of broken furniture. Solitary wheelchairs, their sagging seats cradling a toxic-gravy as if their last passenger had expired unable to escape this apocalyptic scene.

High-ceilinged wards, devoid of beds. Abandoned operating theatres with their huge mirrored lamps still hung from the ceiling conjured up scenes from *Carry on Nurse* or *Doctor in the House*, doleful post-war dramas with their obligatory bedside scenes. A brass plaque declared 'HACKNEY HOSP MORTUARY HOURS 1.00-2.00 DINNER'. This seemed willfully comic. A laminated sheet with pictograms for 'doctor', 'nurse', 'minister', 'bed', 'smoke' lay



Corridor of maternity wing, 1988.

disused on the floor. Doors – their enamel plates denoting Sisters, chapels – was this place the remains of a religious order? I moved through wards and corridors, systematically photographing, afraid that the opportunity would be snatched away, or that I would awake from a dream. People were born here, people died here, an endless sequence of traumatic 'events'. I was overloaded by emotional memories. I thought of Mum and Dad, my own birth, my own death. Twenty-two years later the photographs still resonate with the strange atmosphere of those two days. If nothing else, the images seem to bear witness to the detritus of an age where hospitals shifted their emphasis away from faith and towards science in search of a cure.

'E' Block: the lost maternity wing

By Lisa Rigg

On 2 May 1951 the very first mother to give birth in the new maternity block of Hackney Hospital was presented whilst still lying in bed with a silver christening cup by the Duchess of Gloucester. This opening took place some 14 years after Sommerville Hastings, Chair of the London County Council, approved the new block for maternity cases at Hackney in 1937.

Originally, it was planned to contain 74 maternity and 12 ante-natal beds arranged over four storeys. Designed by the LCC Architects' Department, the building attempted to meet the wishes expressed by both the fledgling Ministry of Health and recent innovations in midwifery. The modern practice of midwifery, like nursing, was still



in its early days. Hackney Hospital was planned just one year after the establishment of a government-funded midwifery service in 1936. The new maternity wing had ambitions to be at the forefront of modern architectural design and midwifery practice.

Ninety years earlier it was estimated that 25% of mothers admitted to the general lying-in hospitals of London died from puerperal sepsis. Many women, quite rightly, considered lying-in and maternity wards to be death traps. This resulted in many mothers preferring to give birth at home – a trend that continued up until the 1950s. It was during the 1840s that a Viennese doctor observed that the mortality rate in wards where doctors delivered babies was much higher than in wards where only midwives worked. He discovered that doctors were coming directly from the post-mortem room and attending the mothers without even washing their hands. But, it was not until groundbreaking research in the 1920s that scientists proved the link between diseased matter and infection.

In early 20th century Hackney, there were a great number of women, including the poor, servants and unmarried or abandoned women for whom the 'choice' of a home birth would have been out of the question. Institutions like the Mothers' had been set up to provide a safer place to give birth. In addition many girls in the East End suffered from rickets – a disease that led to the softening of bones resulting in deformity and pelvic abnormalities. For these

Left: First woman to give birth in the new wing, 1951.

women a caesarean in a hospital would have been required. The arrival of a modern, hygienic and safe environment in which to give birth would have been a remarkable improvement to the unsanitary conditions of Hackney's many slums.

During the inter-war period maternity provision improved with advances in ante-natal care, child welfare and analgesia during labour. By the 1920s and 1930s maternity wards became increasingly common in general hospitals, and after the Maternity and Child Welfare Act 1918, municipal maternity hospitals, homes and clinics were established that attempted to put patients at ease in small rooms rather than large wards. In a Health Standards Committee report, published in 1934, it was recommended that maternity units be provided for all abnormal cases, particularly those in an unsatisfactory home environment and for first-time pregnancies. For 'normal' pregnancies it was recommended that women should pay a proportion of the cost. It also stated 'the use of adapted houses for the purpose should no longer be encouraged'.

Despite these recommendations, the main justification for the establishment of maternity wings and hospitals was to provide a place for the teaching and practice of midwifery. In the inter-war years specialist hospital architects emerged. They were the perfect vehicle for Modernist design. In 1936 an extension to the German Hospital was completed by Burnet, Tait and Lorne, who in 1933 had established themselves as leading hospital architects with the completion of the Royal Masonic Hospital in Ravenscourt Park. Their extension was pivotal, with balconies, large windows and 'ocean-liner modernism' that created a clean and hygienic image for healthcare.

Hackney like many general hospitals was an eclectic mixture of architectural styles. The new 'E' Block maternity wing, built on the site of the old lunacy wards of the former workhouse, was the third building to be erected during the 1930s. Located on the west side of the site, near Barnabas Road, the L-shaped plan was probably determined by the enclosed nature of the site with the Old Nurses Home and 'D' Block on either side. The estimated cost of the building was £71,255, including furniture and equipment. The cheapest tender of £45,188 was accepted from W H Gaze and Son Ltd for the building work.

Like many advanced institutional and government buildings the new maternity wing had a steel frame and was faced in bricks with steel casement windows. Two external, white, cantilevered staircases located on the south and west elevations provided attractive fire escapes, and an unusual faux concrete porte-cochere, or carriage porch, at the main entrance added to its visual impact. On the west-facing façade large curved metal windows stretched over three storeys. These rounded, projecting 'rooms' were solariums – a common feature in 1930s architecture where 'light' and 'air' were all important. The provision of a solarium conveniently situated next to the nursery was another recommendation of the Health Standards Committee. At the time it was thought that mothers and babies should be exposed to radiant heat as it was seen as beneficial when recovering from illness. Today, light therapy is a common treatment for neonatal jaundice.

On the top floor there was a receiving-room and four ante-natal wards, each with four beds. There was also an examination room, a doctors' room, and a comfortably furnished day room and balcony solarium. The delivery section was in the west wing of the fourth storey. There were three first-stage rooms, four labour rooms



The abandoned Maternity Block, 1940.

with Chassar Moir beds (with one room larger than the others for operative delivery), and an operating room. There was also a night nursery and a special milk kitchen. The baby baths were designed so that the nurse could have her feet under the bath and thus be directly above the baby for convenient lifting. One of the floors was intended as an isolation floor and the ground floor was devoted to complicated cases, such as those requiring caesarean section. The principles of separation and classification had been developed at The Mothers' Hospital and applied at Hackney Hospital.

The wards were designed to never contain more than six beds. Each ward had observation windows in the doors. Other innovations included light signals for mothers to summon the attention of nursing staff, individual wall-lamps and cubicle curtains for rooms where there was more than one bed. These design features seem commonplace today, but at the time this would have been considered cutting-edge design. The flooring was a mixture of rubber tiles and terrazzo paving. Yellow and pistachio green glazed wall tiling was used to provide a 'clean' and modern feel.

Due to the outbreak of the Second World War work stopped. In 1949 a report from the site engineer stated: 'The main contractors are proceeding with the cleaning of the building and the adjacent grounds, and the stocktaking of the materials left on site when the work stopped in 1939'. By the time the wing opened in 1951 the number of beds had increased to accommodate 109 mothers (including one bed for eclampsia).

Hackney Hospital was an example of the progress made in maternity care during the early 20th century, but its use as a maternity unit was short-lived. By the time Pam Hibbs, a former nurse at Hackney, arrived in the mid-1970s the maternity wing had already been converted into medical wards. The block was demolished sometime between 1988-92.



Rear elevation of the new Maternity Block from south-west, 1940.



John Scott Heath Centre, Woodberry Down Estate, Green Lanes

By Virginia Smith

On 14 October 1952, the Woodberry Down Health Centre on Green Lanes, Hackney, was opened in a blaze of national publicity by Labour MP Mr Somerville Hastings, a former President of the Socialist Medical Association. Socialist medicine had for years promoted the idea of local health centres as the main providers of preventive healthcare, and the Woodberry Down Health Centre was intended to be the prototype for a new kind of 'comprehensive' health centre that would be built throughout the country – a radical element in the new National Health Service created four years earlier in 1948. It was the first, and certainly the largest, purpose-built health centre in Britain. We now know it as the John Scott Health Centre.

The 1.5-acre site was situated in the south-west corner of the Woodberry Down Estate, a flagship residential and community development for the new Labour-controlled London County Council. The planning of model houses and flats, and of the model Woodberry Down Comprehensive School, and the equally comprehensive health centre, started in 1948. The Woodberry Down Health Centre designed by the LCC Architects' Department was a U-shaped building next to the Stoke Newington west reservoir, two storeys high with the façade facing Green Lanes. A separate day nursery was built at the back, with a play area facing the reservoir. The health centre was severely modern and 'hygienic' in style. The building was based on a modular grid built of concrete faced with stone, designed to allow for maximum flexibility of the internal partitioning. The exterior was pierced with large metal windows to admit as much natural light as possible, including numerous light-wells on the flat roof bringing light into the second storey from above. There were two main staircases made of aluminium and tinted glass, with high windows. The main floors were made of durable marble terrazzo; the corridors were covered



Above left: East elevation. Above: planning the centre.

with hard-wearing rubber linoleum which cut down sound, with corners curved to throw off dust. Lawns, trees and flowerbeds surrounded the building. The health centre was finished relatively quickly at a cost of £155,000 – a large budget under post-war conditions. Many of these features remain intact, especially on the second floor.

Inside, a 'unique' experiment was taking place. 'For the first time in the history of the public services five health units were to be brought together under one roof'. These consisted of medical practitioners units on the ground floor with a large communal reception area and entrance onto Green Lanes. The other wings housed dental surgery, school health, child welfare, ante-natal care, and a remedial exercise and child guidance unit. Each unit had examination rooms, treatment rooms, and waiting rooms. There was a canteen, a lecture hall, and a large doctors' common room. The canteen, the night-doctor's flat, the caretaker's flat, the operating theatre and the telephone exchange (all on the second floor) have gone as the pressure for space has grown. With some internal changes to the ground floor in 1994, the building is currently the base for a large NHS primary healthcare team, which also assists the two fully-staffed group practices (Cedar and Heron) and one single-handed GP. The centre offers a phenomenal range of clinics and services: a child health clinic, chiropody and foot health clinic, physiotherapy, family planning, an immunisation clinic, ante-natal classes and exercise classes, speech therapy, alcohol

counselling, counselling for Turkish people, carers counselling, a Sure Start toy library, young people's sexual health, enuresis, dermatology, dental services, an early intervention team, and dental services. In the rear car park, on the site formerly occupied by a renal dialysis unit, is a new group practice (The Sanctuary) serving refugees and displaced persons. The flourishing day nursery has many of its original features and its original entrance door is intact; an early-years centre has been built on an adjoining site.

The Woodberry Down Health Centre never became a prototype, and no more purpose-built health centres were ever built as part of this initiative. Medical politics trumped socialist medicine; most doctors jealously guarded their single-handed practices, and group practice was slow to arrive. GPs did not want to work in state-owned health centres, and refused to back them. Even the first Woodberry Down doctors kept up their 'own' surgeries elsewhere, while one doctor thought that the doctors' common room was 'a waste of public funds'. The management of the building was transferred from the LCC to the London Borough of Hackney in 1965, when it was renamed the John Scott Health Centre, in memory of the LCC's last Medical Officer of Health, Dr John Scott, who had also been in charge of staffing and establishing the Centre after 1952. It is now run by the NHS City and Hackney Teaching Primary Care Trust.

The building itself has been a success. It was so ahead of its time, it was able to adapt to changing circumstances. The fact that it has doubled or trebled its staff capacity over the last 50 years, and has continued to provide precisely those frontline preventive and remedial services for which it was intended, is a tribute to the foresight of its medical planners and architects. But its future is by no means clear-cut. It currently falls under the Woodberry Down Regeneration scheme, where the demolition and re-development of the entire Woodberry Down Estate is planned. The first plan stated that the John Scott Health Centre would be demolished, with a new Woodberry Down Health Centre built on a site opposite St Olav's Church near Manor House tube station.

When it was realised that it was listed Grade II the demolition plan was scrapped, but no other plans for the Centre have yet been proposed. The Woodberry Down Primary School, also listed and from the same LCC Architects' Department, is to be refurbished and extended; the same principle could also apply to the John Scott. But the John Scott lies on the southern boundary of the development and serves a wider area, so it is still planned to build a new health centre to serve the proposed 10,000 population further north. The exterior of the building will soon be going through a much-needed maintenance and repair programme. This includes replacing worn original Crittall metal windows and repairing stone surrounds.

Whilst the threat of demolition has been averted, the Primary Care Trust's lack of resources to sensitively restore the building could be its ultimate downfall. From interviewing patients and staff I have learnt that this is a well-loved building in desperate need of a friends' group, or something similar to help care for it over the long term so it survives another 50 years.

Dr Virginia Smith is a medical historian and is an honorary fellow of the Centre for History in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She was previously a Fellow of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. She is the author of Clean: a History of Personal Hygiene and Purity (OUP, 2007).



Doctors' common room.

Publications

Anna Letitia Barbauld: Voice of the Enlightenment by William McCarthy is a superb biography that brings a radical Stoke Newington writer (1743-1864) to a new audience. A review will appear in the next issue of *Spaces*. Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press | ISBN: 978-0-8018901-6-1 | Price: £32.00.

King Dido by Alexander Baron has been reprinted with an essay about Baron's life by Ken Worpole. This classic thriller of underclass crime set in the East End where Baron grew up is one of Baron's best novels. The police collaborate with racketeers to keep an uneasy peace, periodically broken by vicious street wars. Dido Peach comes to prominence running protection rackets by breaking the unwritten rules of the underworld. His fall is just as spectacular, shaking even the callous and vicious world he lived in. Publisher: Five Leave Publications | ISBN: 978-1-905512-81-2 | Price £9.99.

The Shoreditch Tales by Carolyn Clark and Linda Wilkinson is a collection of tales of everyday life in Shoreditch. Combining living memories, historical documents and photographs of residents this book brings to life Shoreditch's turbulent past. Publisher: Shoreditch Trust | ISBN: 978-0-9563222-1-0 | Price: £9.95.

Social and Cultural Survey of Shoreditch and Hoxton by the General Public Agency describes the area's distinctive character and identity, and includes interviews with many residents and key players in the community. The report was launched by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation following its move to Hoxton. *Copies are available on request from: info@gulbenkian.org.uk*

Splitting the Atom on Dalston Lane by Aaron Williamson is an account of the Do-It-Yourself Punk Movement in March 1977 – with an introduction by Iain Sinclair. Publisher: The Eel Fanzine | Price TBC.

Building Watch

96 Clapton Common to be demolished Stainforth House, an early 19th century villa at 96 Clapton Common, will be demolished despite protests from the Clapton Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, the Hackney Society and the local community. Locally listed Stainforth House and 98 Clapton Common (listed Grade II) are the last remaining examples of the suburb developed in Upper Clapton by the Tyssen family from 1820 onwards. Originally this type of detached villa was to be found on both the east and northern sides of Clapton Common – these two buildings are the only examples still to survive. The building falls within a proposed conservation area that has not been designated.

Clissold Park Clissold Park has received £4.46 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore Clissold House and a section of the New River. Plans also include the renovation of the two lakes and animal enclosure, as well as the creation of a new play area.

Bishop's Place gets the green light Foster and Partners' 51-storey tower between Norton Folgate and Worship Street has been given planning permission by Hackney Council's Planning Sub-committee. On 4 November 2009 this controversial scheme, which was revised in order to accommodate the threatened Light Bar, will still see the demolition of part of the site and the removal of historic cobbles to the back of 233 Shoreditch High Street. Meanwhile OPEN Shoreditch claims that the Planning Sub-committee has breached the Council's own code of conduct because of a conflict of interest. They plan to complain to the Council's Standards Committee. *For more information about the scheme visit www.cabe.org.uk/design-review/bishops-place*

Improvements to Clapton Terrace Work on this Georgian terrace has been completed under the DIY Streets scheme. The scheme enables local people to decide on improvements to their neighbourhoods. Residents of Clapton Terrace voted for a speed table to slow down traffic, the installation of communal bins, tree planting and the creation of a green area.

St Mary's Lodge New architect plans have been drafted to save St Mary's Lodge, a historic Victorian mansion on the corner of Lordship Road and Manor Road in the Lordship Park Conservation Area. Local campaigners have been working to save this iconic, near derelict, building for the last decade. Plans were presented to the Stoke Newington Conservation Areas Advisory Committee in November 2009 and were welcomed. Committee Chair, Mark Douglas, said: 'Our Committee was pleased to see the draft proposals to keep the St Mary's Lodge as part of a community re-development of the whole corner site'. Plans will go for formal approval to Hackney Council and public consultation in the new year.



New Lansdowne Club, 1942.

New Lansdowne Club, 195 Mare Street

By Laurie Elks

The New Lansdowne Club at 195 Mare Street is one of Hackney's most important secular buildings, and also one of its longest-running 'buildings at risk' sagas of recent times. Listed Grade II* it appears to be an early Georgian house but research carried out by Jon Bolter, which appears in *Hackney History* (volume 12), shows that it dates from the 1690s. It is of exceptional importance as one of only two houses surviving from Hackney's period as an Arcadian suburb for the merchant classes of London, and also for its associations with Elizabeth Fry. Fry's charity, the British Ladies' Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners, acquired the house in 1860 to rehabilitate discharged female prisoners and train them up for domestic service. Acquired by a working men's club in 1913, the building enjoyed a period of benign neglect, with virtually no modernisation until the club moved out in 2004.

Ownership then passed to Mr Huynh Long who obtained consent in the same year to a scheme entailing the demolition of a 20th century performance hall at the rear of the house, and the construction of flats and a Vietnamese cultural centre in this space. Work was due to commence in August 2005, but by the Spring of 2006 *Spaces* reported that the commencement of works was said by the Planning Department to be pending whilst the Section 106 agreement was being negotiated.

sound judgement and a good visual sense. The group will require a chair, vice-chair, secretary and ordinary members. It will meet approximately eight times this year in the evening.

No experience necessary, but a keen interest in planning and the local built environment a must. Training will be provided. *To find out more or to join the group call 020 8806 4003 or email planning@hackneysociety.org*

Planning Sub-group

The Hackney Society are looking for people to form a voluntary Planning Sub-group to meet once a month. The aim will be to comment on large-scale planning applications, heritage policy documents, local consultations and planning applications that affect listed buildings outside conservation areas. We are looking for individuals who are able to work in a team, possess

By 2007, concern was being raised by the Central and South Hackney Conservation Areas Advisory Committee that no work was in train and the house was fast deteriorating. According to a briefing note by the Planning Department in October 2007, 'It is taking a little time to resolve outstanding design and implementation issues before work can start in earnest'. In November 2007 a joint visit by Hackney Council and English Heritage led to an agreed schedule of urgent works, including roof repairs, clearance of gutters, capping leaking water pipes and securing all windows. In January 2008, Hackney Council said that Mr Long had secured a development partner, but that it was unclear whether he had secured finance to carry out work previously promised.

Despite the urgent repair works, deterioration continued apace with the building appearing to have been poorly secured leading to serial episodes of squatting and occupation by drug users. In early 2009, windows on the front elevation were observed to have suffered gross damage as well as being left open so as to apparently invite further episodes of squatting. In October 2009, the building was squatted again by a collective who expressed themselves as having 'interest and experience in delivering community projects, running social centres and restoring historic buildings'. This group invited the Hackney Society to view the building. This visit presented a scene of devastation with collapsed ceilings, rubble, stolen fireplaces and dry rot, which threatens the main staircase. Hackney Council however seems to take a more sanguine view of the building's future. Ray Rogers, former Head of Conservation and Urban Design, considers the damage to the historic character of the building to be less severe than its appearance suggests.

According to Cllr Guy Nicholson a meeting took place with the owners on 20 October 2009 to 'discuss a programme to progress the works, including a timescale for discharging conditions on both the planning application and Listed Building Consent'. The owners are reported by planning officers to be incurring significant expense on preparatory steps (a good sign) and are said to have given a completion date for restoration works of March 2011. In a letter responding to criticism of Hackney Council's passivity Cllr Guy Nicholson stated that 'we should be encouraged that events are now clearly moving towards a positive conclusion' adding that 'should things still go awry please be assured that the Council will take appropriate action to secure a future for the building'.

Mr Long now has a development partner, Geoff King of Riverdale Developments (London), who in turn has appointed a new



Interior staircase, 2009.

architect, Mike Levey from Alan Camp Architects, to design the proposed new build to the rear. Revised plans for this have recently been submitted to Hackney Council for consideration. With regard to the designs for the restoration and refurbishment of the house this is still in abeyance pending a formal submission by David Archer Architects. Members of the Hackney Society will hope that these recent developments do not give us a misplaced sense of optimism. Hackney Council must surely be open to criticism, moreover, for its willingness to accept assurances as substitution for actual restoration activity, both at the New Lansdowne Club, and at the equally threatened St Mary's Lodge in Stoke Newington.

Moreover, the Council's reluctance to take enforcement action that could culminate in compulsory purchase surely gives a signal to recalcitrant owners that no sanctions will be exercised against foot-dragging. We understand that it takes time and a lot of money to find appropriate new uses for historic buildings like the New Lansdowne, but it is now coming up to six years since the Club moved out. In this time the owner has repeatedly failed to produce acceptable restoration proposals whilst failing to protect the building against damage, which will greatly increase the eventual cost of restoration. Cllr Nicholson's assurance to take 'appropriate action should things go awry' may yet be called upon.

Since 2005, the Hackney Society has been campaigning to save this important historic building. To find out more about the history of the New Lansdowne Club visit www.hackneysociety.org and click on 'campaigns'. Currently c.230 people have signed our petition. *Please log on and add your name at www.ipetitions.com/petition/newlansdowneclub/index.html. If you have an opinion about this building please add your comment on the website. We will aim to publish some of them in the next issue of Spaces.*

Hackney Society News

The Hackney Society has been awarded a grant from Team Hackney to provide advice to residents about planning issues related to the historic environment. In October 2009 we appointed Lisa Rigg as Community Planning Development Officer. The project will reinstate the Hackney Society's Planning Sub-group and produce a number of resources including an advice pack and a special edition of *Spaces*. We will be holding community advice sessions in 2010 and attending community events and festivals. *For more information email planning@hackneysociety.org*

Noticeboard

Memorial bench for Gerald Laufer

A new bench in Millfields Park commemorates community activist Gerald Laufer, who died in 2007. A plaque for the bench was funded by people from the Millfields Park User Group and the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group.

A new Banksy

Weeks after the Council painted over one of the artist's works in Stoke Newington Church Street, a mural by the elusive artist appeared in Homerton High Street. Positioned between two phone boxes, the new artwork shows a boy crying because his toy car has been clamped.

Thanks to Kopykat for sponsoring this issue

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76 Rivington Street, London EC2A 3AY
Tel: 020 7739 2451 Fax: 020 7729 5925
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Edited by: Lisa Rigg and Monica Blake

Layout by: design@gloryhall.com

Contributors: Peter Archard, Monica Blake, Chris Dorley-Brown, Laurie Elks, Kevin Moore, Hannah Parham, Lisa Rigg, Ann Robey, Virginia Smith, Ken Worpole

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

T: 020 8806 4003

E: info@hackneysociety.org

W: www.hackneysociety.org

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Hackney Society events

Bare, ruined choirs

Thursday 14 January 2010, 7pm

Book launch with Nick Holder, David Solman and Ken Worpole

To celebrate the Hackney Society's new publication, *Hackney - Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored*, three contributors take a walk through the landscapes and architectural remains of the borough's nonconformist conscience, from Abney Park Cemetery to St Augustine's Tower, and from tin chapels in Dalston to Anna Barbauld's house parties and reading groups in Church Street. Wine provided.

Stoke Newington Bookshop,
159 Stoke Newington High Street, N16.
FREE to members, £3.00 to non-members

Shoreditch Prototype House

Saturday 30 January 2010, 2pm

Tour with Tessa Cox and Oliver Bulleid, Cox Bullied Architects

This low cost, low energy building was developed by the architects to create their own house and studio. It was designed using principles transferable to larger schemes and locations. Booking essential as places limited.

Meet at 4 Crooked Billet Yard, E2.

FREE to members, £5.00 to non-members

The Lost World of the Hackney Coffee House: a Tale of Hot Liquid, Gossip and Blurred Identities

Monday 22 February 2010, 7pm

Talk with Dr Matthew Green, Historian

A caffeine-fuelled evening with Matthew Green on Hackney's 18th-century coffee houses and the stories that were narrated there, including readings of unpublished extracts from the diary of Dudley Ryder, womanising student and coffee addict, and Hackney's answer to Samuel Pepys. Coffee provided!

Meet at Venetia's Coffee Shop,
55 Chatsworth Road, E5.

FREE to members, £5.00 to non-members

The Sunken House

Saturday 27 February 2010, 2pm

Tour with Ed Reeve, Owner

This inky black house, designed by Adjaye Associates, is the latest addition to Hackney's Victorian and Georgian streetscape.

Meet at 75a De Beauvoir Road, N1.

FREE to members, £5.00 to non-members

Beating the Bounds of the Games in Hackney Wick

Saturday 20 March 2010, 11am

Walk with Lisa Rigg

Our now bi-annual hike around the heart of Hackney Wick and the edge of the Olympic site continues for those of you who missed the last one.

Meet at the gates of Gainsborough Primary School, Berkshire Road, E9.

FREE to all

Rowe Lane

Saturday 27 March 2010, 2pm

Tour with Marcus Lee, FLACQ Architects

Come and visit this award-winning timber-framed house in the back streets of Hackney.

Meet outside the Round Chapel, Lower Clapton Road, E5. £5.00 to non-members



Hackney - Modern, Restored, Forgotten, Ignored

40 buildings to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Hackney Society. Edited by Lisa Rigg and written by 40 authors, the book seeks to draw attention to good-quality modern architecture, recent restoration projects, buildings that have been lost, and buildings that are currently at risk from neglect or demolition. Lavishly illustrated with over 155 historic and contemporary photographs. Thirty-six of these are reproduced in full colour. Price: £14.95 (£10.50 members).

To order email
bookorders@hackneysociety.org

Please check our website for up-to-date information and additional events that are organised throughout the year. Most of our events are free to Hackney Society members and £5 to non-members. For special and joint events there may be a charge for members. Please book as some events have a limited number of places. To book contact Lisa on 020 8806 4003 or email lisa@hackneysociety.org