



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

SPACES 2021

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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The Library House



© Heiko Piggel / Macdonald Wright Architects

The Library House at 211 Northwold Road was completed in 2020. It is a crafted, low energy building adjacent to Edwin Cooper's Grade II listed Clapton Library. Designed by Macdonald Wright Architects, the two-bed, two-storey terraced home has an internal floor area matching that of the average UK dwelling (84m²) and sits on a compact plot with a secluded walled garden to the rear.

Constructed using a glazed white clay brick contrasted with weathered Corten steel, The Library House has been designed to echo the proportions and character of its neighbours. The Northwold Road façade maintains the coping level and window proportions of the adjacent cottages, knitting together and balancing the composition of the existing streetscape elevation, while the vertical russet-coloured Corten steel plane acts as a formal separation of the red brick library and white cottages.

The Library House was designed and constructed to meet the AECB Building Standard (Association of Environment

Conscious Building, based on the Passivhaus Standard and formerly known as the 'Silver Standard') far beyond the current requirements of UK Building Regulations and conceived in principle as a prototype for urban infill affordable sustainable homes.

The house is heavily insulated and triple glazed. It achieves an annual space heating demand of 17kWh/m² annum and a low heat load of 750Watts to maintain 20°C in the winter, with most new houses in 2020 requiring about ten times that amount. This performance is achieved through detailed, well-insulated external building fabric; avoiding thermal bridges; incorporating

triple glazing; a Passivhaus front door; an airtightness of 1.3 ACH@50Pa; and a whole house mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery (MVHR) system.

The building also includes a highly efficient solar photovoltaic system of ten panels, collectively producing 2.8 KW, with a super insulated water tank which is Bluetooth linked to the inverter and topped up before surplus electricity is sent to the national grid. Additional top-up heating is provided with an Amptec electric boiler as the house has been designed without reliance upon gas. Fresh air is maintained both passively in summer and using MVHR in colder months. All appliances are A rated or better and all lighting is low energy. The house was commended in the Hackney Design Awards 2020.

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Dalston Eastern Curve Garden By Laurie Elks



Hidden behind an inconspicuous fence next to the acclaimed Hackney Peace Carnival Mural, many *Spaces* readers will know the Dalston Eastern Curve Garden, a miraculous Tardis-like green oasis. It sits in the heart of Dalston, long since the most open space deprived part of Hackney, and currently subject to intense development pressure and a rising population.

The garden sits on the curve of the former railway linking Hackney Central to the Broad Street line. Most is owned by Criterion Capital, owners of the adjacent Kingsland Shopping Centre, and part is owned by Hackney Council which also owns most of the adjoining sites.

The garden was first planted in 2010, mostly with fast-growing species including birch, cherry and hazel designed to shield the intense urban surrounding environment. A photo taken in 2011 for *Spaces* (Issue 31/32) shows a space still dominated by its built-up neighbours. Ten years later, it is a sylvan paradise with birch the dominant tree species. Planting success brings its own attendant problems, particularly the overshadowing of planters originally sown with sun-loving fruit and vegetables. Shade-loving plants such as Japanese Anemones

and *Persicaria* are doing well – sun lovers are struggling a bit!

The garden has been managed since 2012 as a social enterprise headed by Marie Murray and Brian Cumming, who were part of the team that set up the garden. There is a licensed café and bar which, before Covid, provided over 90% of revenues. The income, but not the challenges of managing the space, was brought to a halt by the pandemic, but such is the good will attaching to the garden that a crowdfunding campaign brought in £25,000 on its first day and has now passed its target of £100,000.

Happily, the future of the garden is now much more secure than in times past. It appeared most threatened when Hackney Council launched its infamous Dalston Quarter consultation in 2017. This effectively relegated the garden to a green pathway



2011



linking the unloved Dalston Square to the planned Kingsland Shopping Centre development. This proposal prompted over 2,000 responses demanding retention of the garden in its present form. Clearly taken aback by the force of the reaction, Hackney responded by launching the 'Dalston Conversation' resulting in the new proposed Dalston Plan. Whilst open to criticism on some points (particularly the lack of planned affordable housing), the new plan puts open space at the fore and supports retaining the garden in its present form.

Criterion Capital meanwhile are pressing ahead with proposals for the redevelopment of the Kingsland Shopping Centre: phase 1 covering the enormous car park and the Matalan building; phase two the existing shopping centre. Criterion inevitably are planning an intense development with 500 homes but they recognise the importance of open space and have publicly committed to retaining the garden as well as some courtyard open spaces as part of their new scheme.



The garden team are planning to create more productive spaces. A sunny open area behind the stage, currently used for storage, will be transformed into a kitchen garden, including espalier fruit trees grown along an adjacent wall. It will also include outdoor learning spaces, a greenhouse, a pottery and an outdoor kitchen. The garden team are currently planting 15,000 bulbs for flowering next Spring. They also hope to enhance biodiversity by planting on strips of land beyond the garden's boundaries, and to work with adjoining site owners (particularly Hackney Council) to ensure that neighbouring developments are proportionate in scale and do not create a canyon effect.



The garden is increasingly widely recognised. It has been recently shortlisted for two Open City stewardship awards and listed as a GLA site of 'Local Nature Conservation Value'; and it is now very much on the tourist circuit. But the project's roots as a social enterprise remain at its heart – volunteers play an essential role in looking after the garden; and a new programme of assisted gardening for vulnerable adults will be launched next Spring. A new charitable structure is also being established to assist future fundraising.

Like many of Hackney's open spaces the garden exists because people fought for it and we should be grateful and proud for what has been created.

Noticeboard

Windrush sculptures



Marble and bronze sculptures to commemorate the Windrush generation have been unveiled in the Narrow Way.

Created by Veronica Ryan, the sculptures of custard apple, breadfruit and soursop were inspired by childhood trips to Ridley Road Market. The works were commissioned by Hackney Council as a symbol of honour, respect and commitment to the Windrush generation, their legacy and contribution to life in Hackney. The sculptures were produced by Create London, and with funding from the Henry Moore Foundation and support from the Art Fund and Ryan's galleries, Alison Jacques and Paula Cooper.

Shoreditch Park

Children have helped design new play areas as part of a £350,000 redesign at Shoreditch Park which aims to get them closer to nature. Their suggestions included a slide and a rooftop space to relax at the new play centre in the park. Shoreditch Park was created in the 1980s after temporary homes put up after wartime bomb damage were cleared.

Olive School



New school streets are to be created to reduce traffic around the Olive School in Lower Clapton Road. This follows

the school, a former police station, being allowed to accommodate all 630 pupils on the one site. Previously the school's pupils were based at three different places around the borough.

Saint Michael and All Angels



The Grade I-listed Saint Michael and All Angels Church in Shoreditch is to get a new lease of life. The deconsecrated church of 1865 was designed by

James Brooks. It has been empty for over a year. Mark Street Depository Limited aims to open up the space and put in a mezzanine layer and lift.

Museum of the Home

People demanding the removal of a statue of Robert Geffrye at the Museum of the Home are calling on the public to boycott the venue. At a demonstration organised by Hackney Stand Up To Racism and affiliated

groups, protesters urged the public to stay away from the museum until it removes the statue.

Clapton Pond

The play area of Clapton Pond is to be refurbished. It will be closed to the general public whilst the works are taking place. The area is due to reopen in early November.

Rewilding Clissold Park

An exhibition called Rewilding Clissold Park is on display at Newington Green Meeting House. Curated by Richard Crawford, the exhibition showcases cyanotype prints, botanical illustrations and photographs of the rewilding 'triangle' inside the park.

Sturts Yard

Sturts Yard in Hoxton is to be redeveloped. A self-storage warehouse will be demolished, along with an 1860s former iron works and gun factory. The scheme includes two blocks of two and seven storeys, hosting a self-storage business, offices, café, public spaces and new homes.

Open House

Hackney Town Hall was one of ten London landmarks recently given a ceramic green plaque to commemorate its long-standing participation in the annual Open House Festival. The building was opened in 1937 and restored in 2017. This year, because of the pandemic, it offered online tours. The Dalston Eastern Curve Garden was also given a green plaque.

Ridley Road Stories



The second part of the documentary exhibition Ridley Road Stories is on public display at Hackney Central bridge Mare

Street. The photographic exhibition is a public archive of Hackney's African and Caribbean communities on Ridley Road. It is produced by the storytelling collective Future Hackney.

Stoke Newington Town Hall

Hackney Council has lodged an application to remove asbestos from the ceiling of a large function room inside Stoke Newington Town Hall. The 1930s Assembly Hall is closed for maintenance and is off-limits to the public. Work is needed to provide emergency support to the hall's ceiling.

Hackney Society Events

As Covid restrictions have reduced, we are planning more events in person, as well as online. The full 'live' event experience cannot be found on a screen, but we have seen that online events reach a wide audience and include people who would, for whatever reason, not be able to join

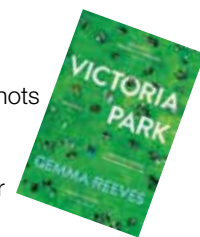
us at a face-to-face event. If public health conditions change we will adjust this balance accordingly.

As set out at the AGM on 22 September, we have re-introduced charges for members and guests. The revenue gained helps us to cover any costs incurred, for example with venue hire, or extra online technology.

We will notify Hackney Society members by email of forthcoming events. Non-members can register on the home page (hackneysociety.org) to be included on our emailing list. There will also be event details and links on the home page

Publications

Victoria Park by Gemma Reeves consists of 12 snapshots of the area on the Hackney-Tower Hamlets borders, one for every month from October through to the following September. Allen & Unwin, £8.99.



Leukaemia: Dispatches from the Front by Upper Clapton resident Hazel King details with dry humour a journey from Homerton A&E, through five months at Barts including stem cell transplant, to world travel. Self published, £6.99 (available via Amazon).



The Roles We Play by East London architect Sabba Khan explores themes of identity, belonging and memory. Myriad Editions, £18.99.



East London Food (Second Edition) by Rosie Birkett and Helen Cathcart updates the first edition, which came out five years ago. It includes over 40 personal interviews and 24 new entries. Hoxton Mini-Press, £30.



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

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