



THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

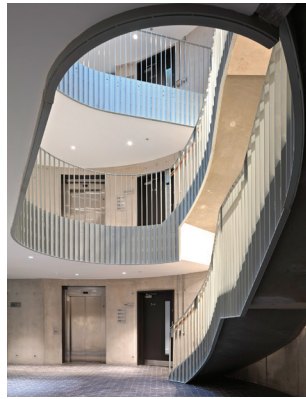
SPACES 2024

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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Frampton Park Estate

By Paul Bolding



Left, Taylor and Chatto Court © Nick Kane. Centre, Wilmott Court © Nick Kane. Right, Wilmott Court © Jim Stephenson

One of the winners in the last Hackney Design Awards is three red-brick, five-storey blocks filling land on the edge of Hackney Council's Frampton Park Estate in Well Street. Part of the site was once occupied by the Frampton Arms pub.

Taylor Court and Chatto Court and Wilmott Court were designed by Hackney-based Henley Halebrown for the council. Taylor Court and Chatto Court comprises 20 apartments on London Affordable Rent and shared ownership while Wilmott, further along Well Street, is part shared ownership and part private. The buildings introduce variety with loggias, decks and bridges and a remarkable half-arch in Chatto.

Award judges said: 'Henley Halebrown's Frampton Park trinity of infill housing blocks exemplify a sensitive and nuanced approach to estate densification. As "urban artefacts", these blocks respond thoughtfully to the existing post-war modernist estate, forming a new quadrangle offering seclusion and intimacy. Architecturally, they are exquisitely detailed - the fluted precast concrete skirting fits seamlessly together, meeting the warm red brick with carefully selected mortar. The maturity of the design and the social vision of the project hugely impressed the judges.'

Asked about residents' feedback, architect

Ravi Pattni of HHB, said: "It's very positive. Ones I've spoken to do like the scheme in general." Some of the top floor flats are duplex and Pattni said this was like a house in the sky. "They definitely felt like it was a house not a flat, which was very nice. Walking in, it felt like a house, which was an interesting experience."

Wilmott Court incorporates a striking open spiral staircase down the core. Jack Hawthorne, also of HHB, said residents there had developed a strong sense of community. "We'd like to think the staircase has a role to play in that. There are lots of different things that help foster that sense of community."

Taylor and Chatto take what was little-used, streetside green space and have created a courtyard around the remaining open area between the post-war Sherard House and Catesby House. Pattni said the remaining green courtyard, quieter because of the infill blocks between it and the road, was now used more than had been the case before. "We have created something

they didn't have before, bizarrely, by putting something new in the way," said Pattni.

Two parts of Chatto Court are linked by a huge arch in red brick. "It feels dignified and, to a degree, grand. And you can imagine someone living there taking pride in the fact that that's their front door effectively," said Hawthorne.

The project was designed before Stirling prize winner 333 Kingsland Road, also by HHB and also in strong red brick. Hawthorne said the colour was taken from the palette of the nearby post-war housing that the buildings abut.

The awards brochure said: "The dignity and wellbeing of residents is key, as is the capacity of a building to orientate inhabitants to the environment. Thus, some 90 per cent of homes are dual or triple aspect; the journey from street to home choreographed with loggias, courts, generous hallways and conspicuous staircases; and the requirement for outdoor amenity space the inspiration for an architecture at the threshold between domestic interior and urban landscape in all its guises."

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De Beauvoir Block nears completion



Photo: Paul Bolding

De Beauvoir Block

The Benyon Estate has begun work on extending and modernising a 1920s light industrial building at 90 De Beauvoir Road to complete the De Beauvoir Block, a complex of 75,000 square feet of commercial space. The development has smartened up this part of what is largely a residential street.

Number 90 is the last of a run of buildings from 90-100 De Beauvoir Road and smaller premises at 21, 23 and 23a Englefield Road to be converted. Conversion included adding pods on the roof of the main building. Architects Henley Halebrown did the design work (See Spaces issue 66).

"It has created a vibrant commercial centre to De Beauvoir ... I didn't realise how important it was for De Beauvoir but I think it has turned out to be very important," said Edward Benyon, manager of the Benyon Estate, in an interview.

In addition to his tenants, Benyon has allowed some local community groups to use the Block's facilities.

The Block has about 31 tenants of varying sizes, mainly from the creative industries. For small traders, it's a co-working space with 100 memberships ranging from use of the café and wifi to dedicated desks. "The

idea is that you can come into this building as a single person business and work your way ... to ... the pods upstairs which are about 300 sq ft and then increase up the larger units which range from 500 sq ft to 2,500 sq ft."

The buildings once housed industries from furniture-making to printing and cardboard boxes. Number 100 still bears the painted sign across the façade of Collins & Hayes, a luxury chair and sofa maker that still exists elsewhere. Benyon would dearly love to find out more about the past users.

The Estate also has about 235 residential properties including about 50 houses and flats on what Benyon calls old-style tenancies predating the 1989 leasehold reform.

The Estate's next big project is the former Travis Perkins site at 305a Kingsland Road, due to become a part six, part seven-storey

building of half co-living and half co-working space. It is the Estate's first venture into co-living, where tenants share facilities like laundry and kitchens.

Benyon says 70 percent of the Estate's four-bedroom houses are occupied by young sharers and this showed him what people needed.

"I think it's the way forward. It's not the solution to the housing crisis but I believe it is part of the solution and is targeting young professionals. Whether it provides for people who really need accommodation who are the key workers ... remains to be seen."

Both the Kingsland Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Hackney Society objected to the plans, which were approved in 2022. "A greater consideration of heritage, ecology and existing amenity is required to generate proposals that might fulfil policy, and avoid harm to this important, valued and historic environment," the society said.

The Estate owns some of the retail premises

in Southgate Road where the successful De Beauvoir Deli and other shops have contributed to raising the profile of the area. Benyon holds his hands up to the charge of gentrification.

Benyon, a descendant of the family that developed De Beauvoir in 19th century, feels strongly that he bears a responsibility towards the area's heritage. "It is increasingly difficult creating contemporary living – I should say occupying – in period property."

On the challenges of managing residential properties, he said: "I think when I started here we needed one certificate to let a house. Now I think we need 10."

To reduce the number of wires hanging from houses and holes drilled through walls, he has ensured all Estate homes come with high-speed broadband from Clearfibre already installed. Tenants have no entry or exit fees for the service.

And he is concerned about the proliferation

of "garden offices" as well as the possibility that solar panels will be allowed on roofs where they can be seen from the street. "If you start doing that you are opening the floodgates, I would have thought."

In residential property, the Estate has also supported local group De Beauvoir Welcomes Refugees by providing low-rent homes. "We've got two Syrian families, we've got an Afghan family, two Ukrainian families," said Benyon. It has also taken families from the council waiting list. "And we've taken a homeless family off Crisis to prove that the private rental sector could help the homeless. Everybody donated furniture and we got them into a house and now they've actually moved out. They've got themselves on their feet and they're great," said Benyon.

Edward Benyon has a passion for London's heritage and has followed his father William, who formerly managed the Estate, in working with the Heritage of London Trust. The trust has recently supported the



Edward Benyon

refurbishment of the Albion Square fountain. (See Spaces 81). "My role is to go along and make sure that our patrons are being well looked after," said Benyon.

He is clearly enthused by work the trust is now doing to restore the Wanstead Grotto, the remains of an 18th century structure that survives from one of the largest houses ever built in England. "I have seen little corners of London that you wouldn't know existed," he said.

Paul Bolding

Historic buildings in an era of climate change

The Hackney Society held a meeting in February to hear from two council officers about adapting historic buildings for the climate emergency. A packed room heard from Adam Dyer, conservation officer, and Louise Claeys, climate change officer about recent ideas on the topic. The many aspects of retrofits were explained, where a range of changes can be made to an existing building.

Dyer said the ideal approach was fabric first – dealing with the fabric of a building as far as possible – and decarbonisation second. Many changes like draft proofing – the number one measure – would not need planning consent. Others were roof insulation, refurbishment of shutters where fitted, floor insulation, window repairs or replacement with double glazing, and external and internal wall insulation.

On decarbonisation, solar panels would be possible in some areas and were becoming much more sympathetic in their design, less reflecting and darker, with matt finishes. Even in a conservation area, they would often count as "permitted development" if they were not obtrusive.

On listed buildings, this was "complicated", he said.

Kensington and Chelsea, he said, had taken a "really bold step" allowing solar panels on listed buildings without consent. Most councils were not doing that. It was uncharted territory. "We are all trying to figure the way forward on it," he said. It's not a "no" on listed buildings but case-by-case.

Hackney still requires listed building consent and this has recently been granted – with no objections – to voluntary group Stokey Energy for a major scheme on the roof of the Grade II listed Woodberry Down School. A listed house in Northchurch Road awaits a final decision at the time of writing.

On air source heat pumps that were on the ground and not attached to buildings, "On the whole from a listed building perspective we are fairly comfortable with them," Dyer said.

Summing up, the presenters' final slide said: "Retrofit of traditional buildings is absolutely possible but requires thorough preparation ... will likely be costly, disruptive and time consuming ... but will be incredibly rewarding! ...and will make a positive contribution to maintaining our global warming within liveable levels... Humanity will thank you!"



Photo: Google StreetView

89 Culford Road - the house underwent an extensive retrofit in 2010

Noticeboard

Hackney History Festival



The first Hackney History Festival takes place from 10-12 May with events featuring some of the borough's top historians. It includes around 17 talks, a pub quiz on Hackney's history and walks. Guided tours of important buildings take place on various dates in May. The talks take place at Hackney Archives, the Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye Museum) and Sutton House. It is organised by the Hackney Society, Hackney Archives, Hackney Museum and many others. See <https://hackneyhistoryfestival.org/> for details and booking.

Grant for central Hackney

The government has awarded Hackney Council more than £19m from its levelling-up fund to regenerate the town centre.

“Transport improvements in Hackney Central will improve traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, create more green space and provide new routes for pedestrians and cyclists,” it said in a statement.

It also referred to “improving Hackney’s heritage assets and high street” but it was not clear how the funds would achieve these aims.

The council has already decided to “create a green corridor through the heart of Hackney” as part of a scheme to redesign Pembury Circus and limit traffic in Amhurst Road between Pembury Circus and Hackney Central station.

Shark appeal



Sharks seen at Hoxton Docks

Hackney Council has lost an appeal over a plan by Hoxton art and architecture charity Antepavilion to display five model sharks on the Regent’s Canal. A planning inspector ruled the sharks would not harm the setting of the nearby Grade II listed Haggerston Bridge. He cleared the council of accusations that it was opposed to the sharks on artistic grounds.

Antepavilion appealed on grounds of non-determination but the council said it would have refused permission. The council had previously taken out an injunction against the display of sharks without planning permission. The case has rumbled on for several years and it was not clear whether or when the sharks would be reappearing. A single shark is sometimes to be seen on a canal pontoon near the group’s Laburnum Street premises.

Tomlinson Centre for hire



Tomlinson Centre

Hackney Council has added the Tomlinson Centre in Queensbridge Road to the list of venues it offers for hire on www.hackneyvenues.com. It joins Clissold House, Hackney Town Hall, the Glass House in Springfield Park and the newly restored Grade II listed Abney Park chapel on the list of places available for wedding receptions and parties. The refreshed website calls them “A collection of the most iconic venue spaces in East London”.

Stoke Newington Town Hall has been dropped from the list because of problems with the condition of the building. The Abney Park chapel began holding events earlier this year.

The Tomlinson Centre, named for Sir Mike Tomlinson, former chief inspector of schools for England, opened about 2010 after an extension to, and remodelling of, a four-storey Victorian Edith Cavell board school. It was designed to offer training facilities for staff working in education and children’s services in Hackney.

The original building still houses Queensbridge Primary School. It once housed the Building Exploratory.

Hackney Historians

The borough is lucky to have a set of keen, active and authoritative historians. One is Amir Dotan, who gives frequent talks on the history of Stoke Newington and invites other speakers to his events. Go to <https://stokenewingtonhistory.com/> to get on the mailing list for talks, which often sell out, and see recordings of past events.

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

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