



The Hammersmith Society

2023 Awards

Nominations

With the red beacons on top of construction cranes all around us, there's a lot of building work going on in the borough – but this year, not a lot of completions.

Southerton Mews, at the Glenthorne Road end of Iffley and Southerton Road, is a residential redevelopment of the long standing Thatcher's garage premises. This unusual site includes mews houses tucked between the end of the gardens of the terrace houses each side, where garage car parking was before. This provoked major concerns from the nearby residents, and though recommended for approval by planning officers, it was over-ruled and refused at planning committee. But it was then approved at appeal. On Southerton Road the scheme extends the existing terrace, creating an uncontentious if bland frontage, we can see little of the mews houses because this is a gated community, with no public access. Amazon probably has a key. The security concerns are understandable, but gated communities tend to remain detached and don't play a part in the common interests of the neighbourhood.

It's the same story with the mews development at Paradise Gardens, bottom of Ravenscourt Road, and at Pearmain Court on the former Goldhawk Industrial Estate, and at Beech Terrace on Goldhawk Road.

The former Salvation Army Tabernacle building on Dalling Road, close to King Street, brings a wonderful grand dimension to an ordinary domestic street, a true disrupter of terrace house norms. This is a neoclassical building which has probably been with us for over 100 years, but was nominated this year for its recent transformation and renovation into a place for community events, with fresh paint, shining joinery. The building brings a quiet richness and variety to the street and we applaud its retention and its conservation – and the support it brings to community interests.

1 Wood Crescent is a recently completed substantial building on the outer ring of the expanded former Television Centre alongside Wood Lane. Television Centre is still work-in-progress, with some areas bustling with life and activity – and some areas of arid contemporary tidiness. The bustle hasn't yet reached this part of Wood Crescent, but this new building deserves consideration – the built form is expressed as separate geometric elements, bringing visual interest and disguising its overall bulk, the main entrance is marked by an elegant 2-storey set back and colonnade with ground level shops. Construction is in solid material, a welcome relief from the shiny glass and aluminium of the surroundings.

Askew in Bloom – something of a contrast to the scale of Wood Lane. Askew Road has become a thriving high street, joining Goldhawk Road opposite Ravenscourt Park, boasting more than 4 brand name pocket supermarkets and popular coffee shops and a wholesome butcher – and a strong local and business community. This has brought about a wonderful display of enterprise and urban pride. Around many of the trees on the pavement there is now a little flower garden, carefully created and beautifully maintained and regularly watered. No corner or empty space is safe from the enterprise, transforming areas of neglect into tiny pocket gardens, bringing life, colour and care to the street scene.

The Hoxton Hotel is on the west side of Shepherds Bush Green, the former site of the undistinguished office building which housed the main post office. The new building completes a transformation of the west side of Shepherds Bush Green, and together with the Westfield Shopping Centre and the comprehensive re-landscaping of the green this marks a very significant urban improvement of a historic area in the capital. The project had a tricky planning history: consent in 2017 was challenged at judicial review and quashed at judicial review, citing technical shortcomings in the officer's report to the planning committee. With amended technical data but no design change full consent was granted in 2019. Pennard Road which runs behind the Hoxton site, have had a difficult time with the sizeable developments taking place close to the end of their gardens, irrespective of compliance with planning codes.

The new building sits comfortably in its context, and deeply recessed brick framed openings bring a the regularity which resonates with the design and materials of the its neighbours. The building is appropriately self-effacing, holding its own without diminishing the ego of the Dorsett hotel alongside. At ground level it's a different story, where a cinema-style canopied entrance brings a bumptious welcome to visitors, a counterpoint to the restrained entrance to the Dorsett next door.

Past chairman Tom Ryland was closely involved in the design development stages of the project, successfully influencing the design of the 3 roof storeys to avoid overwhelming the orderly brick elevations below.

Presentation of the Awards

Each year the committee organises a tour of the award nominations. It's a wonderful occasion, always uplifting to see examples of special quality in architecture and civic design. We should remember that good design needs careful nurturing and cosseting to survive the tortuous path of development and construction, and we should appreciate the huge effort which is needed to achieve the high standards we look for in the project nominations.

Our MP Andy Slaughter, kindly agreed to present the awards.

The Jane Mercer Award

The Jane Mercer Award is intended to single out smaller schemes which have improved the local environment, and this year it is awarded to Askew in Bloom. These flowerbeds are sometimes called guerrilla gardening, and we should give notice that any interference in the scheme by the Council will bring about an automatic and immediate wooden spoon award.

We are pleased to ask Olena O'Leary and Bryan Furlong from Askew in bloom to collect their award.

Hammersmith Society Environment Award

Our top prize, the Hammersmith Society Environment Award, is awarded for the Hoxton Hotel building. We are pleased to ask the client and the architects EPR to collect their award.

This year we found no nominations deserving of the Tom Ryland Conservation or Nancye Goulden Awards.

Wooden spoon awards

Ada Lewis House

In 2019 the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency – and yet in 2020 they gave planning permission for the demolition of sound early 20th C sizeable brick building, Ada Lewis House near Barons Court station - including the felling of a number of mature trees on the street frontages. The application made only passing reference to the ecological consequences of demolition, and showed no alternative schemes which would retain the building structure and the embodied energy in the original building. There are many good things about this project and the affordable accommodation it will bring, but if the climate energy is to be taken seriously, demolition on this scale should only proceed after it has been properly demonstrated that alternative, less wasteful approaches have been fully explored.

Clean Air Neighbourhoods

A lot of changes are taking place in the name of Clean Air, - but air measurement reports consistently tell a story that air quality has been steadily improving for years, without these special measures being proposed. According to DEFRA, the government monitoring body, pollution in the borough falls within their *low* classification for over 96% of the time – we would all be thrilled if the NHS or education won such a high rating.

Misinterpreted air quality science has led to the Fulham Clean Air Neighbourhood road closures, the Brackenbury road restriction proposals which have now been set aside, and random LTNs (low traffic neighbourhood) road barriers and their associated fines and penalties. The problem is not peculiar to our local borough, but this is where we live - and we implore Hammersmith – and their fellow boroughs - to step off the clean air bandwagon. Of course there are traffic and cycle issues to be solved – but not in the name of air quality.