

Trust unveils its new building



In 2006, in urgent need of more office space, the Trust obtained temporary planning permission from Barnet Council to use one of its two flats at 860-864 Finchley Road for this purpose. The resulting extra work space, though essential, was never entirely satisfactory, and it was realised that an extension would provide a far more practical solution. Construction began last year and, on Thursday 18 July this year, the doors of the new extension were opened to welcome Trust members interested to come and view it. Built on the site of the old, unsightly garages and shed at the rear of the main building, the extension provides essential modern filing capacity, with a rolling-racking system, work spaces, a meeting room, and space for the Archive Trust. The new space also means that the flat that had been taken over for office use, can now be returned

to its original function. The rental income from the flat, once let, means that the return on the investment in the extension should be in excess of any comparable potential property investment available to the Trust. It is currently undergoing minor refurbishment and will be ready to let this September.

The original Trust building was designed in 1935 by J.C.S. Soutar, one of the Suburb's principal architects. The building combined architectural distinction with financial pragmatism by providing both office space for the Trust plus two residential flats upstairs, intended to bring in rents to support the Trust's work for the Suburb. The extension design, by Ann Marsh of Castillo Design with additional input from Trust staff, closely follows the model of Soutar's original building, while being clearly subordinate to it. A very

high standard of craftsmanship was sought throughout, including porch brackets hand-carved to match those on the main building. A tour inside reveals a limited palette of materials, with oak parquet, tile skirtings, and glazed doors to continue the style of the original office. The extension is insulated and serviced to modern-day standards and the traditional timber windows have integral double-glazing.

The construction cost was £275,000 (exc. VAT); the entire cost was financed from the Trust's own funds, and not from the separate Scheme of Management fund which is collected via the annual Management Charge. Although the total square footage is no greater than the previous space that included the flat, the new layout is clearly a vast improvement and considerably more practical and efficient. Construction work was carried out by R.A. Neve & Company.

'Making Sense of Suburbia'

On May 11 Rupa Huq of Kingston University spoke at the annual event organised by the RA in memory of Michael Rowley, at Friends Meeting House. Author of a number of books on Suburbia, her focus was on change. The conventional view of suburbs as uneventful places has to be revised following the riots of Bristol and Liverpool in the 70s, and Tottenham last year.

The divide between inner and outer London suburbs has been lessened by the tube train which enables riots to go viral, but also enables culture to travel. No longer is theatre limited to the inner city, and some suburbs now take a life of their own as separate towns, Croydon being an example. Other suburbs started as independent towns, swallowed up by the expanding metropolis, and now reviving in their own right, as has Salford with its Lowry centre and Imperial war museum.

The talk was in conversation with Vesna Goldsworthy, Alan

Walker and the audience. Vesna mentioned her country of Montenegro, with a population only double that of Barnet, and drew from that the potential for Barnet to develop as a centre of its own. The audience responded that it already has several such centres, being an amalgamation in the 60s of Hendon, Finchley, Barnet and other Suburbs each with a Town Hall and local museums. Ealing similarly has the contrasts of mock Tudor garden estates with Hounslow's immigrant area.

The audience brought the discussion round to Hampstead Garden Suburb. Jocelyne Wakefield contrasted the quiet of her stroll to the event, seeing hardly a soul in the streets, with the bustling centre of a small French town, and felt that Central Square was missing something. Others said that this was near the shopping centre that Unwin had planned but was never built as the Dame would not have pubs in the Suburb, and the early residents

preferred a continued line of terraces to a throughway behind their grand houses. Now that the French market visiting Temple Fortune had led the way, perhaps there was potential for the Suburb to live up. The Summer event, pioneered for the Centenary year, and now an annual Fun Day, showed what could be done, as did the Millennium fireworks with their near-annual repeats. The Garden Suburb theatre in Little Wood, and now the amphitheatre in the new Lyttelton playground may be part of a revival of what the audience defined as an essential 'beating heart' for a suburb to have a life of its own.

Discussion continued over tea, when it became clear that for the audience, the key interest in the annual event was whether it resonated with Suburb experiences and potential. Rupa was thanked enormously for bringing a new perspective to Suburbia, and Alan Walker for organising her visit.

School exam warning

The Henrietta Barnett School is giving advance warning of their entrance exams dates. The exams take place on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 September from 7.30am-5pm. All visitors will leave the school by 6pm, so there shouldn't be any problems in the evening.

The school aims to keep disruption to a minimum but is

aware that, in the past, some disruption has been experienced by residents due to the volume of people dropping their daughters off and picking them up again. This year the school has requested assistance from the community police to help manage parking and traffic flow. Visitors are encouraged to use public transport where possible and if not, to be

considerate when driving and parking. Whilst these measures have been put in place, unfortunately the school has no means of guaranteeing that everyone will behave responsibly.

It is hoped that this advance warning will help to minimise any inconvenience encountered by Suburb residents on these days.

KEARA CONNOLLY

Fair for Combat Stress

One of the Suburb's most popular and worthwhile fundraising fairs will take place on Saturday 2 November at the Free Church Hall. Combat Stress supports servicemen and women returning from duty with mental health issues (you may have seen their work mentioned on a recent BBC Panorama programme).

Martin Bell will open the fair at 11am on 2 November and you will be able to buy a large range of goodies until 3pm as well as learn more about what Combat Stress does (more details of the programme nearer the time). This year the small hall will also be open for the sale of all-day refreshments and lunches.

Any old family film?

The BBC is hoping to find some examples of pre-1939 film showing Suburb gardens.

If you think you have any old film that might be of interest please tell Micky Watkins of the Archive Trust. 8455 8813 or email mickywatkins@gmail.com.



Proposed study trip to Rothenburg

Why does the Suburb have a Great Wall? And why so many dormer windows? And why was half timbering and balconies part of the design of the buildings that flank the Suburb entrance from Temple Fortune?

The answer is that these are features you will find in Rothenburg, a medieval hill top town in Northern Bavaria. This is a town which Frank Unwin and his colleagues regularly visited on walking holidays at the time the Suburb was conceived.

Much more of the Suburb's design than many people realise is modelled the buildings in a town which Unwin clearly believed was a perfect model for community cohesion.

Most Suburb residents are aware of the debt the Suburb's design owes to Unwin but few realise the debt to Rothenburg. Even fewer have visited this charming German town to see for themselves the architectural features and design philosophy that links the two communities.

To remedy this consideration is being given to a two night/ three day study trip aimed at improving the understanding of the links between Rothenburg and the Garden Suburb.

Proposed for May 2014 the trip would be led by David Davidson, Architectural Advisor at the Suburb Trust and, as well as visiting the sights, the trip would include presentations

from officers of the Rothenburg municipality covering the town's history and architecture as well as its work on the conservation of historical buildings and well as from David on Unwin's visits. We're also hoping to visit at least one other of the small historic towns in this part of Germany.

To help us to plan the trip and estimate numbers, we would welcome expressions of interest. The intention is to book group travel for those who would like it but to allow those who wanted to combine the trip with other places in Germany to make their own travel arrangements.

To signify your interest or for more information, contact Jeremy Clynnes; rtreasurer@hgs.org.uk.

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