

## Members' Winter Lecture Neo-Georgian Architecture

**The Trust's annual winter lecture was delivered in December 2022 by Dr Julian Holder, University of Oxford, on the subject of Neo-Georgian architecture.**

Julian opened by thanking the Trust for the invitation to give the lecture – and apologised for the four-year delay due to Covid! From the outset he seemed delighted to be there, and his enthusiasm for both the subject and the occasion was clear.

### Ubiquity

Julian noted how the Suburb is blessed with great examples of Neo-Georgian. Central Square has Edwin Lutyens' epic Grade I-listed churches facing each other, and Henrietta Barnett School (our venue for the lecture) has its cupola, mix of two-tone bricks and lines of sash windows. There were so many examples of the style on the Suburb that Julian

invited the audience to shout out if they saw their house appear on the slideshow.

After Unwin's departure as consultant architect to the Suburb came his successor J.C.S. Soutar, a man whose work often carried forward the Lutyens spirit. Other architects whose work added Neo-Georgian to the Suburb's vernacular architectural flavour included C.H. James, Herbert Welch, Philip Hepworth, Charles Cowles Voysey and Bunney & Makins.

Julian pointed out that, outside the Suburb, Neo-Georgian architecture is everywhere – and for that reason it is often not noticed or valued. He discussed the movement's commercial and municipal variants, such as town halls, fire stations and police stations, as well as the ubiquitous telephone exchange buildings, with their classical detailing and sash windows.

Further examples of banks and post offices were given, and it was plain to see the Neo-Georgian architecture is

represented on every high street, to the point of being overlooked. Less well-known are the interwar pubs he pointed to, which were built partly using the 'new' style to add a respectability and more welcoming environment which would attract women and families, and discourage drunkenness.

### An alternative path

Julian was keen to emphasise that modernism is not the only form of architecture which we should associate with the 20th century. Original Georgian architecture dates from the 18th and early 19th centuries, and Neo-Georgian looks back to this style, following its language to evoke a time of order and restraint. Julian explained that the movement was, for many, an architectural style with "good manners."

Neo-Georgian wasn't universally loved. In the 1930s, many examples were being trashed by the critics. The modernists of the early 20th century were big fans of theories behind art and architecture, and the Neo-Georgian movement seemed to lack such a doctrine.

*Continued on page 2*



Above: Heathgate (Soutar, 1921); Right: Winter lecture invitation; Inset: Dr. Julian Holder



# Members Winter Lecture continued

While Julian acknowledged that Neo-Georgian can be characterised as a style and period, he argued that it was also an approach. The movement was able to respond to new political and economic realities, such as the impact of the First World War, which led to an 'economy' in terms of materials and labour. And it wasn't always straightforwardly traditional. The typical telephone exchange from the 1920s juxtaposed a classical exterior with very modern technological innovations inside.

Julian closed by answering questions from the audience. One member pointed out the connection with Scandinavian architectural styles, and another wondered whether the 1951 Festival of Britain had

been a turning point for Britain's architectural development. It certainly normalised a style very different to the Neo-Georgian of earlier years.

We're grateful to Julian for travelling such a long way to see us and to deliver such an illuminating lecture, and to Trust members for giving their warm support.

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*We hope to run another winter lecture around the end of this year. As this is a Members' event we would encourage all residents to register, so that they can be notified of details as soon as it is announced. See the back page for details on Trust Membership.*

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Clockwise from top: Erskine Hill (Lutyens, 1911); Gurney Drive (Hepworth, 1931) Corringham Road Square (Parker and Unwin, 1909)

## AGM Report

The Trust's AGM was held in September last year at Henrietta Barnett School, shortly after the previous issue of Trust Times was sent out. The meeting was attended by a modest number of residents, and subjects which were raised included the Trust's plans for Central Square following its recent acquisition. Once the official business of the meeting was concluded, those in attendance had the opportunity to hear from three residents standing for the two vacant positions on Trust Council.

The full Trust Council comprises four members who are residents of the Suburb, elected by Members of the Trust. The other four trustees are non-residents appointed by relevant professional bodies. This year there were two resident trustee positions vacant, as existing trustees came to the end of their initial three-year terms.

Three candidates stood for the two positions, with a postal ballot deciding the outcome following the AGM. The votes were counted and verified by the Trust's auditors, Menzies LLP. 237 valid ballot papers were received, with nine rejected papers.



HGS Trust AGM at Henrietta Barnett School

Maralyn Roberts received 132 votes, Gren Manuel received 151 votes, and Richard Townley received 174 votes. Gren Manuel was therefore elected as trustee for an initial three-year term, and Richard Townley was re-elected for a second a three-year term. Maralyn Roberts stood down as trustee, and we thank her for her contribution to the work of the Trust.

# The Pre-Suburb Landscape and its Legacy

In this write-up from the Trust's popular Proms at St Jude's Heritage Walks, the Trust's Chief Executive Simon Henderson looks at how the Suburb we have today took a lot of inspiration from the pre-existing landscape.

**T**he natural landscape on which the Suburb was built greatly influenced Raymond Unwin in planning the original layout of the Suburb. Much of this pre-existing world survives, either intact or as a ghost in the present topography of the Suburb.

The land on which the Suburb now sits was once part of a large swathe of uncultivated heathland across north London. Eton College acquired it from Henry VI in 1449, and the heath was progressively cleared and enclosed as more productive fields. By the time Mrs Barnett and Raymond Unwin stomped across it in 1906, the 243 acres of farmland that were to form the original Suburb were a patchwork of mostly pasture, divided by thickset hedges with numerous hedgerow oaks.

Unwin carefully surveyed the site and recorded the position of every hedgerow and tree. Onto this framework, he then plotted the roads and housing groups, the roads curving to follow contours where they could, and the houses stepping forward or back as needed to accommodate the trees – to preserve, as he said, “as much as possible of the natural beauty of contour and of scenery”. The original Suburb could thus be thought of as a sort of shadow-projection of the landscape under it.

## So where can we still find evidence of this lost landscape?

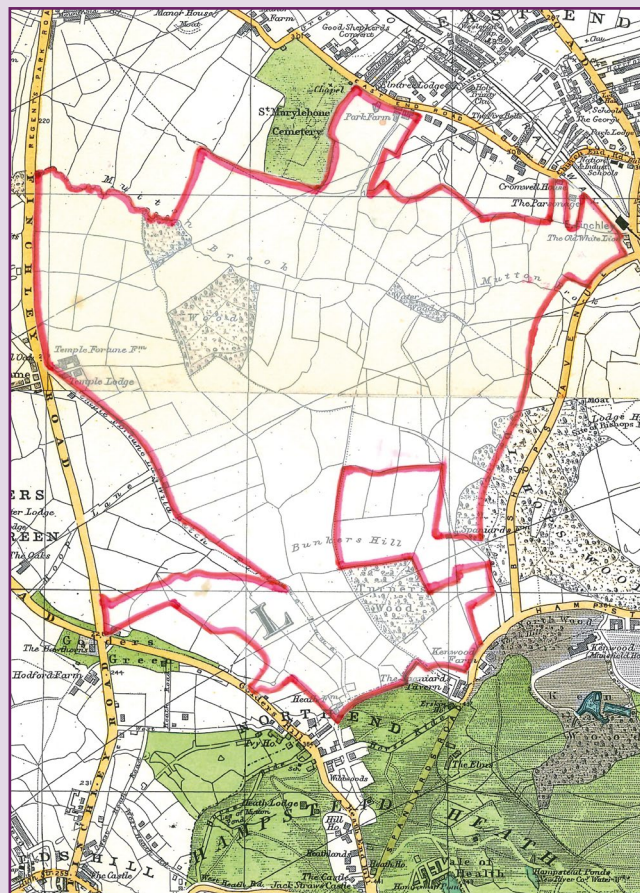
The future site of Central Square was a low rounded hill. Edwin Lutyens levelled this off to create the present flat Square, but its original contours can still be seen by the Free Church, which sits lower than the main Square, and the North Square houses, which sit lower still.

An ancient manorial boundary can still be seen in the north-east corner of the Square at the junction with Northway, where a corner of Big Wood curtails Lutyens' otherwise formal housing group.

The shape and alignment of the whole Square was dictated by field boundaries, including a still-visible field boundary behind the tennis courts.

The footpath across Crossways Garden to Hampstead Way and down to Temple Fortune Lane follows an old field boundary, including several former hedgerow oaks.

The rather irregular property frontages to Temple Fortune Lane reflect its former role as the back lane from Hendon



*Bacon's Atlas 1902 with Suburb boundaries added*

serving various farms along its route, including Temple Fortune Farm (now Farm Walk Tennis Club), Wildwood Farm and Wyldes Farm. This lane continues across Meadway Gate to become Wild Hatch, then as a track across the Heath Extension to North End.

The Heath Extension itself preserves all the original field boundaries, and its southern end preserves the best impression of the pre-Suburb landscape.

Other parts of the Suburb also preserve the old landscape in their shape and the trees that Unwin retained. For example, Meadway is centred on the field called Four Acre Mead; part of Willifield Way and Erskine Hill follow old field boundaries, allowing hedgerow trees to border the new roads. Asmunds Place lies entirely within Lower Asmunds field; Queens Court sits within Near Cock field; and Childs Hill Way follows an old hedgerow marked by ancient oaks.

I hope this has given you a new appreciation of just how much the layout of the Suburb owes to the underlying landscape, and how its bones are still there to see – if you just know where to look!

## Stop Press!

### Proms Heritage Walks

This year's Proms Heritage Walks will be announced shortly.

Keep an eye out for details of the Trust's walks on Unwin's Oaks, Suburb Radicals, and the Suburb in TV and Cinema.



# State of the Management Charge as at January 2023

**T**he great majority of Suburb households are now freeholds. They therefore come within the Scheme of Management for the Suburb and are legally obliged to pay the annual management charge which funds the Scheme. The period covered by each charge is 1st April to 31st March, and bills are sent out by the Trust halfway through the year, in early September.

As the costs of operating the Scheme are spread throughout the year it is important that freeholders pay their management

charge promptly. We are pleased to say that 47% of the total 4,006 management charges (at 1 April 2022) were paid within the first three months – thank you!

As of January 2023, 83% have paid, however this does mean that around £111,000 remains unpaid so far this year. Late payments incur costs for the Trust that must be passed on in future year charges. Please help us to keep costs down by paying your charge as soon as possible. If you have difficulties in paying, please do contact us.

## Membership Reminder

### More than 150 membership renewals received

**T**he Trust is a company limited by guarantee, with Members rather than shareholders. As noted earlier in this issue, one of the key responsibilities of Trust Members is the election of the four resident trustees. Together with the four trustees appointed by external bodies, these provide the overall governance for the Trust and ensure that it continues to fulfil its given purpose.

It is therefore important that Suburb residents with an interest in this process join as members and ensure that their membership remains current. As well as voting in trustee elections, members receive the annual report and accounts in August and are invited to our annual members' winter lecture.

Membership lasts for three full calendar years. Renewal is not automatic, so when members approach the end of their three-year period, we write to each one inviting them to renew.

Over the new year period we have received a healthy number of renewal forms. However there remains a fair number of residents whose membership has now lapsed.

We therefore encourage all those residents with an interest in what the Trust does for Hampstead Garden Suburb to register. Forms are available via the Trust website under 'The Trust'. If you're unsure and wish to check your membership status, just contact [mail@hgstrust.org](mailto:mail@hgstrust.org)

Membership is free and voluntary. It is not linked to membership of the HGS Residents Association, or payment of the management charge or ground rent.

## Window Guidance Publication

**T**o supplement our general Design Guidance for alterations to Suburb properties, we occasionally publish new guidance on specific areas, including home security, and energy conservation and production.

Our latest supplementary design guidance documents are now available via our website under Your Property, covering Steel Windows and Wooden Windows. Those wishing to repair or replace their windows – possibly to improve their thermal efficiency – should start by checking the relevant document for their type of window.

*New timber and metal window guidance documents*



## And Finally...

With Spring just round the corner, don't forget that the Trust offers free expert advice on tree and hedge care for your property. Just phone the Trust Office to book an appointment.

**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

Residents are welcome to contact the Chief Executive, Simon Henderson, on any aspect of the Trust's work.

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