

# St John's at Hackney, London

## Community study on the future of the churchyard

**Client:** The Hackney Society and Groundwork Hackney  
**Regeneration consultant:** Tellus 42  
**Project dates:** 2000

St John's churchyard lies at the heart of Hackney town, in east London. It encapsulates over eight centuries of history and is overlooked by both the massive Georgian church of St John's and the much older St Augustine's tower; all that remains of the medieval church.

Today the churchyard serves three vital functions as a public open space, as remembrance gardens for the dead of two world wars and as an important pedestrian and cycle thoroughfare. Yet there are serious problems. The northern part of the churchyard is marred by excessive, haphazard car parking; the fabric of the churchyard is in poor repair; a recycling skip, located near the church is a particular eyesore and the churchyard is perceived as unsafe, particularly in the evenings.

In July 2000, the Hackney Society and Groundwork Hackney appointed a team of consultants to examine the condition and problems of the churchyard with the aim of identifying feasible measures to improve its quality and relevance to local people.

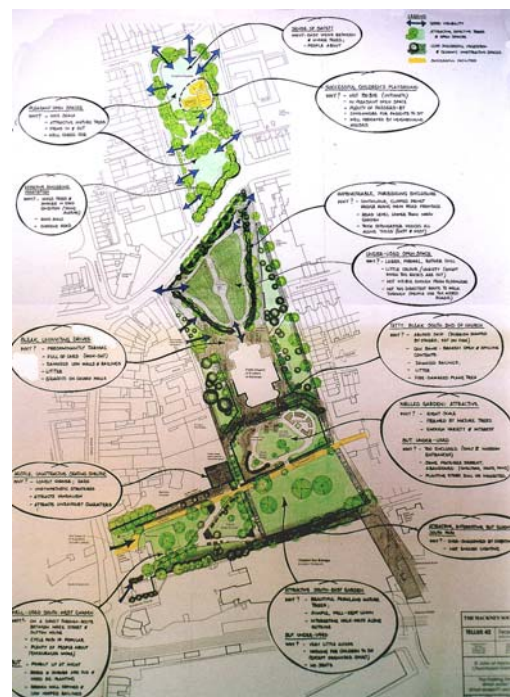
The study team consulted not only the church authorities, council officers and other agencies, but also held meetings and workshops with local people with an interest in the future of the churchyard. Suggestions were made by local residents, school children and business people for improving the fabric of the churchyard through local action groups, installing better night-time lighting, establishing a small café and creating a wildlife garden.



*Fine old Georgian tombstones, which include those of the Beaufort family (Inventors of the Beaufort Scale), many Huguenot families and the Loddiges (who owned one of the largest hot houses of its time).*



*Damage, graffiti and inappropriate uses of the spaces*



*Presentation of local people's suggestions for improving the churchyard*