



PART OF HISTORY: Far left, the Green Room complete with black borders which are part of the artwork; left, the Strong Room archive and bottom left, the Council Chamber.

Pictures by Roelof Bakker

Hornsey Town Hall celebrates 75th anniversary

Charlotte Newton

NORTH Londoners will have a chance to glimpse the unexplored interiors of Hornsey Town Hall and imagine what it looked like in times gone by, as part of an exhibition to celebrate its 75th anniversary.

The exhibition, called Still, will feature film footage of the interiors of the Grade II-Listed building in Crouch End Broadway, and photographs of objects and artefacts which have been found inside.

Crouch End resident and designer Roelof Bakker, 45, spent 10 days exploring the building with unlimited access after being bowled over by its beauty during an Open House Weekend last year.

Mr Bakker, of Rosebury Gardens, explained: "The project became like a meditative experience because there is a stillness to the building. I wanted to breathe some life back into it and took photos."

"I stumbled into things by accident but all the objects I photographed I found in the building."

"In a way it became a reflection of how quickly time passes and things becomes obsolete."

"The building feels unloved at the moment but I think it will be the most amazing place again in the community; it needs a bit of love and attention so that it can become a focus for the area."

Among the discoveries that Mr Bakker made was a poster, dated 1943, detailing a sexual health campaign that the council was running after a

Exhibition gives public a chance to see the Grade II-Listed building from a by-gone era

spate of problems with sexually transmitted diseases in the area.

Seen as one of the finest examples of architecture from the 1930s, the town hall staged events of all kinds including dances, school prize-givings and even the rock band Queen's first concert, in 1971.

It ceased to be a civic centre when Hornsey Borough Council was abolished and the London Borough of Haringey was created in 1963 and the town hall functions were transferred to Wood Green.

Only parts of the building have been used since, primarily as office spaces.

When Haringey Council decided it no longer needed the building, residents campaigned for it to be retained for community use, and the Community Partnership Board was formed. This is made up of council officials and residents. The Hornsey Town Hall Creative Trust (HTHCT), a corporate charity was also created, with a view to it eventually running and managing the town hall.

In July this year a £16million development plan of the town hall was finally given the green light.

Haringey's planning committee voted unanimously to allow the conversion of the building into an "arts hub" and community facility, funded by the building of 123 residential



units in and around the site.

The award-winning architects behind Camden's new-look Roundhouse, John McAslan and Partners, have been appointed to carry out the refurbishment.

Works on the site could begin in 2011 with a range of cultural spaces, community facilities, a theatre and a restaurant or bar

installed in the building.

The council, which currently owns the site, has put £7million of funding forward for the scheme.

It is expected this will be recouped by the sale of the land for the new homes.

Responsibility will then be handed to HTHCT, who will



VISITING THE PAST: Crouch End photographer Roelof Bakker has taken photos of the inside of Hornsey Town Hall for an exhibition to commemorate its 75th anniversary.

Picture by Nigel Sutton

need to raise a further £3million for the rest of the works.

Ann Wilks, chairwoman of the Partnership Board and the HTHCT, said: "Seventy-five years after the opening of the Town Hall, we look forward to delivering a future that lives up to its past, revives this civic jewel and revitalises the heart of

Crouch End."

"Still" will be on at Hornsey Town Hall (rear entrance), via Weston Park, N8, on Thursday November 4, for a private viewing from 18.30-21.00; Friday November 5, from 10.30-16.00; Saturday November 6, 10.30-16.00; and Sunday November 7, from 12.00-16.30.