

Building buys a pint ... for DLG Architects



Pub: The Gramophone, Commercial Street, London E1. Ambience: Arty minimalist hang-out Topics: Jack the Ripper, gargoyles and Goths Drinks:

2 pints Adnams, 3 glasses white wine, 2 white wine spritzers, 3 pints Guinness, 2 bottles Corona, 2 pints Bitburger, 1 lemonade, 2 tomato juices

Gareth Gerner partner
Tony Walker consultant and former founding partner
Gillian Lane finance manager
Tim Chandler associate director
Daniel Washbourn project architect
Graham MacKay senior designer
Martha Kastrinou architectural assistant
Sarah Richardson Building magazine

It's Wednesday lunchtime in the Gramophone and murderous thoughts are filling the air.

"Did you know our Fashion Street office is one of the places they reckon Jack the Ripper could have lived?" says Gillian.

Daniel, it seems, is all too aware of this ghoulish fact. "A couple of times recently I've been walking down Artillery Passage and it's been filled with smoke by people

filming down there. I keep thinking there's a documentary on Jack the Ripper coming out, but I haven't seen anything."

He then recollects another detail that seems to scupper this theory. "Actually, there were also people moving a fibreglass postbox up and down the street, so I don't know what was going on."

DLG's east London locale is

starting to sound like a place to be avoided by the faint-hearted, so I'm slightly alarmed when Graham chips in: "One of the things that attracted us to the office was the area."

But the team at DLG obviously aren't the type to live in fear of murder and mayhem - or even latex.

"People do need to take safety more seriously," says Tony. "But

then some bureaucracy can be really stupid and over-the-top. It's a cultural thing at the moment.

"There was a children's entertainer on the radio this morning saying he couldn't use balloons because some children have a latex allergy."

There is an uncomfortable silence while people contemplate the implications of such an affliction.

Finally, Graham asks the obvious question: "How will they get over the problem of condoms in later life?"

The conversation turns once more to the darker side with the revelation that Tim is a member of a Goth band, and is about to tour as a session musician with a Japanese outfit.

It's unlikely he will look too sinister on stage, however: "The

thing with Japanese Goths is they dress as Edwardian children. It's OK if you're a girl, but if you're a guy, you end up looking like a Christmas pudding."

Christmas pudding or not, it seems Tim has a young admirer. Gareth's 12-year-old daughter is apparently a Goth in waiting: "She's not too hardcore yet, but Tim's her hero. Her favourite outfit involves a black jacket, but

she hasn't yet started on the make-up."

Gareth himself doesn't appear convinced: his Gothic tendencies seem to begin and end with architecture.

And as the conversation meanders on to the lost crafts of stonemasons with a specialism in gargoyles, I slip away to take my chances on the fashionably mean streets of Shoreditch.