

ENGLAND DISPATCH

A Century-Old Pub, Razed 6 Years Ago, Is Raised From the Dead

By MEGAN SPECIA

LONDON — “Your local pub, it’s a bit like your favorite pair of shoes or jeans, something you just completely take for granted,” Rob Cope said, sitting outside the Carlton Tavern in North London on Monday.

With the glow of the afternoon sun easing the bite of the chilly April air, he gazed at the building’s brick facade and explained, “You don’t really understand that it’s there until it’s gone.”

The Carlton Tavern joined thousands of other pubs on Monday in reopening with outdoor spaces as lockdown restrictions in England eased after months of closures. But its story still stood out in that shared national moment, as its closure was counted not in months but in years.

Its story began when developers tore it down.

Six years ago, people watched in dismay as the Carlton Tavern, built in the 1920s and nestled against a park on the edge of the affluent Maida Vale neighborhood, was reduced to rubble. The building’s overseas owners had skirted local laws and abruptly demolished it to make way for luxury apartments.

Outraged, a group of neighborhood campaigners and local lawmakers fought for years to have the building restored. Eventually, the developers were ordered to rebuild it.

So when glasses were raised and meals shared outside the red brick building on Monday, the patrons were toasting a pub that was simultaneously brand-new and 100 years old as well as celebrating the reclamation of a piece of their community, and, in some cases, a piece of themselves.

Polly Robertson, one of the campaigners at the heart of the fight, laughed and chatted on Monday over fish and chips at the pub with her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, flitting among groups of campaigners, the pub’s new owners and neighbors. The generations of families seated around her were why she fought so hard for the place, she said.

“It’s wonderful coming in, just seeing people we haven’t seen in a long, long time,” she said, “not just because of Covid but because we had no location to meet up.”

Before the pub was demolished in 2015, the preservation society English Heritage surveyed the Carlton Tavern as it was being considered for historical status. The society recorded the layout of the pub’s rooms and took molds of its distinctive architectural features, so when it was time to rebuild, there was something to work with.

“It’s identical,” Ms. Robertson said.

From the other red letters spelling out “Charrington Sparkling Ales and Famous Stout” on its brick and tile facade to the swooping brass door handles to the elaborate plasterwork inside, the pub’s original charm and character has been recreated.



MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

At the Carlton Tavern in London on Sunday, the final touches were put on, left, and on Monday patrons returned. The pub had been illegally torn down to make way for luxury apartments.



ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

For some, the reopening was like welcoming back a long-lost friend. Neighbors likened the space to a communal living room where lives had played out and overlapped. They recalled decades of christenings, birthdays, first communions and wakes held within the tavern’s walls by local people who mostly lived in modest flats.

Martin Shannon has lived in London since 1965, and raised a family in the area. He came to the reopening of the pub with his wife, son and daughter-in-law on Monday. They paused to pose for photos at the sign out front and laughed as they shared a cherished memory of celebrating

their son’s 30th birthday there more than a decade ago.

“These are the things the system walks over, average people’s ideas and norms all the time,” he said, growing reflective as he talked about the temporary loss of the pub. “It should survive anyway, and not be rolled over and knocked down.”

To many there, the building’s demolition had felt like a personal affront. Mr. Cope said it had amounted to someone coming in and stealing your favorite pair of shoes.

“It’s like someone saying: ‘You don’t matter. And your values don’t matter. Your memories don’t matter,’” Mr. Cope said,

pausing to adjust his glasses. “It feels very deeply personal.”

Behind the pub’s reopening are Tom Rees and Ben Martin, business partners who have a connection to the area and a background running pubs. They hope to see the Carlton Tavern once again at the heart of the community.

“There have been people wandering past, wanting to talk to us, telling us great stories about how they used to work here, they used to drink here, how their parents used to drink here,” Mr. Rees said. “It’s amazing really.”

The middle of a pandemic may seem like a strange time to embark on a venture reviving a pub, especially with so many businesses struggling to survive, but Mr. Rees believes the prolonged lockdown brought a new appreciation for local spaces like this one. Their business, aptly named Homegrown Pubs, is focused on local beers as much as it is on the local people the proprietors hope to see return.

“I think the pandemic has forced people to re-evaluate their local area and their relationships to it, and all those great memories they had in these places,” Mr. Rees said.

It seemed fitting to its new owners that the pub’s rebirth

would begin 100 years after its founding. The Carlton Tavern first opened its doors in 1921, and was one of the few buildings on the street to survive bombing during World War II.

Its location at the border of Kilburn and Maida Vale is also a junction of two London worlds. On one adjacent street, rows of glass and brick luxury apartment blocks face off against pockets of

bar counter — salvaged from the original tavern — and preparing fresh juice for the other workers, she reflected on the changes she had seen since moving to the area in the 1980s.

For much of the latter half of the last century, the neighborhood was home to waves of immigrants, first from Ireland, then the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia. Then came the developers and with them steep housing costs that pushed many from the once diverse, largely working-class area. But despite that, the community has remained close knit.

Ms. Robertson’s husband grew up in the area, and they raised two children there alongside generations of family. Seeing the Carlton Tavern restored and reopened will mean a lot, she said, particularly for older residents who built decades of memories within its red brick walls.

The whole aim was to save a space where people felt they belonged, in a city that has grown increasingly unfamiliar around them.

“The city can be a very lonely place,” Ms. Robertson said as she wiped a dusty film from a mirror behind the bar. “And this, it’s a familiar place. This is their place as much as anything.”

‘You don’t really understand that it’s there until it’s gone.’

subsidized housing.

On Saturday, two days before the pub welcomed back visitors, the new owners and an army of workers and volunteers, including Ms. Robertson, were putting the finishing touches on the building. Outside, workers shook the dust from their hands as they heaved the last bits of construction waste into a dumpster, while others tidied inside to ready the Carlton Tavern for its big debut.

As Ms. Robertson flitted between wiping down the wooden

Prize Awarded Annually In Israel Lands in Court In ‘a Repetitive Ritual’

By ISABEL KERSHNER

JERUSALEM — The annual Israel Prize ceremony is supposed to be an august and unifying event, a beloved highlight of the Independence Day celebrations that fall on Thursday this year.

This being Israel, it is rarely without controversy.

The latest ruckus goes to the heart of the political divides and culture wars rocking the country’s liberal democratic foundations even as it remains lodged in a two-year leadership crisis.

The prize is the state’s most prestigious honor, traditionally awarded to 10 or more citizens or organizations for outstanding contributions to the sciences, culture and society.

The scandal began about a month ago, when Education Minister Yoav Gallant, whose ministry oversees the prize, refused to honor one winner, Oded Goldreich, a professor of mathematics and computer science at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

Mr. Gallant, from the conservative Likud party, asserts that Professor Goldreich supports the international, pro-Palestinian campaign to boycott Israel, even though the professor has said he is neutral on the issue — now a touchstone of the dominant right-wing camp’s test of loyalty and patriotism.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has fielded requests from outside critics to disqualify several laureates from across the political spectrum.

This year, unusually, the selection committee that chose Professor Goldreich itself turned to the

Supreme Court to complain that Mr. Gallant had overstepped his authority: The education minister grants the prize but has no say over the committee’s choices.

“Once again, we are required, in what has turned into a repetitive ritual, to engage in the Israel Prize,” the panel of three judges lamented in a ruling issued last week. “Indeed,” they added, “it is regrettable that such a prestigious and renowned award and such a unifying and uplifting event as the Israel Prize ceremony has turned into an almost constant source of disagreement and division.”

In the early 1990s, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a polarizing professor who stridently opposed Israel’s occupation, was named a winner but withdrew himself after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin threatened to boycott the prize ceremony.

Last year, a contentious rabbi, Yaakov Ariel, received the prize over objections that he had described homosexuals as “disabled” and in need of treatment and had once opposed renting an apartment to two lesbians.

Drawing on previous rulings, the Supreme Court rejected a petition calling for the rabbi’s disqualification, saying that his past remarks were irrelevant and had no bearing on his professional excellence in his field of Torah scholarship, and that his comments were protected by free speech.

Professor Goldreich has a history of signing letters and petitions opposing Israel’s occupation of territories claimed by the Palestinians for a future state. In Tirtzu, a nationalistic Israeli



CORINNA KERN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Prof. Oded Goldreich’s nomination for the Israel Prize became controversial because of his politics.

group that has branded him the “Anti-Israeli Israeli Professor” campaigned against his nomination.

But to the dismay of Professor Goldreich’s supporters, the Supreme Court did not accept the selection committee’s petition. It granted the education minister a month to examine a recent discovery.

Professor Goldreich signed a petition this year urging the European Union to stick to its policy of not collaborating with research projects at Ariel University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as most of the world considers Jewish settlements in the West Bank to be a violation of international law.

The court agreed with the attorney general that the minister should be allowed to check if Professor Goldreich had fallen afoul

of a contentious 2011 law that effectively bans any public call for a boycott against the state of Israel or its West Bank settlements. Yet the court acknowledged that Professor Goldreich said he did not support the anti-Israel boycott, investment and sanctions movement known as B.D.S.

Michael Sfard, an Israeli human rights lawyer who represents Professor Goldreich, said that even if his client did support B.D.S., such support should not disqualify him from receiving the Israel Prize.

“Now, to prove that someone called for a boycott, you need to scrutinize his writings and signatures, driving us straight toward a McCarthyist process,” Mr. Sfard said, referring to the 1940s and 1950s in the United States, when leftists were regularly accused of subversion and treason. “This is an attempt to exclude a whole po-

litical camp in Israel.”

Professor Goldreich missed this year’s ceremony, which was recorded on Sunday for broadcast on Thursday. The judges said that should he be approved, he could receive the award at next year’s ceremony, if not before.

Mr. Gallant, the education minister, appeared emboldened by the court decision.

“Prof. Goldreich may be a brilliant scientist, but his support for the boycott movement and his call to boycott Ariel University is a spit in the face of the state of Israel and of Israeli academia and is possibly even a violation of the law,” he wrote on Twitter. He added that he would use the time to investigate whether the professor’s “current renunciation” of the boycott movement was genuine.

Mr. Gallant’s staff declined requests for comment.

“I view this (unlawful) behavior of the minister as a small step in the process of pushing the left in Israel outside the limits of legitimacy, a process that has been going on for decades now and has been intensified in the last years,” Professor Goldreich said in an emailed comment. “I am happy to play a role in the struggle to block this delegitimization process and the attempt to reverse it.”

The professor’s colleagues and supporters held an alternative award ceremony for him at Weizmann Institute this week, where he suggested that Mr. Gallant’s version of the award was the “Likud Prize.”

“I think that the Likud and the state of Israel are two different things,” he said.

The Weizmann Institute took out ads in the Hebrew newspapers on Wednesday congratulating Professor Goldreich and saying that, as far as they were concerned, he had won the prize.

The debate, meanwhile, has served only to underscore the deep divisions in the country.

“It’s delusional that people think they can break the basic rule that we don’t boycott each other and then get a prize from the state,” Orit Strock, a far-right lawmaker and settler, told Israel’s public radio.

Joseph Cedar, an Israeli writer and film director whose father won the Israel Prize in 1999, made a satirical movie, “Footnote,” revolving around a mix-up over the prize recipient and the academic rivalry between a father and son.

He said that, like every controversy, the prize exposed a truism that most of us tend to ignore. “It’s a transaction,” he said. By offering the award to independent thinkers, the government has in the past had an opportunity to bring people outside the political consensus into the fold.

In this instance, however, “Goldreich got all the prestige while the establishment got nothing.”