

Bermondsey Street

Contemporary Architecture Trail Guide

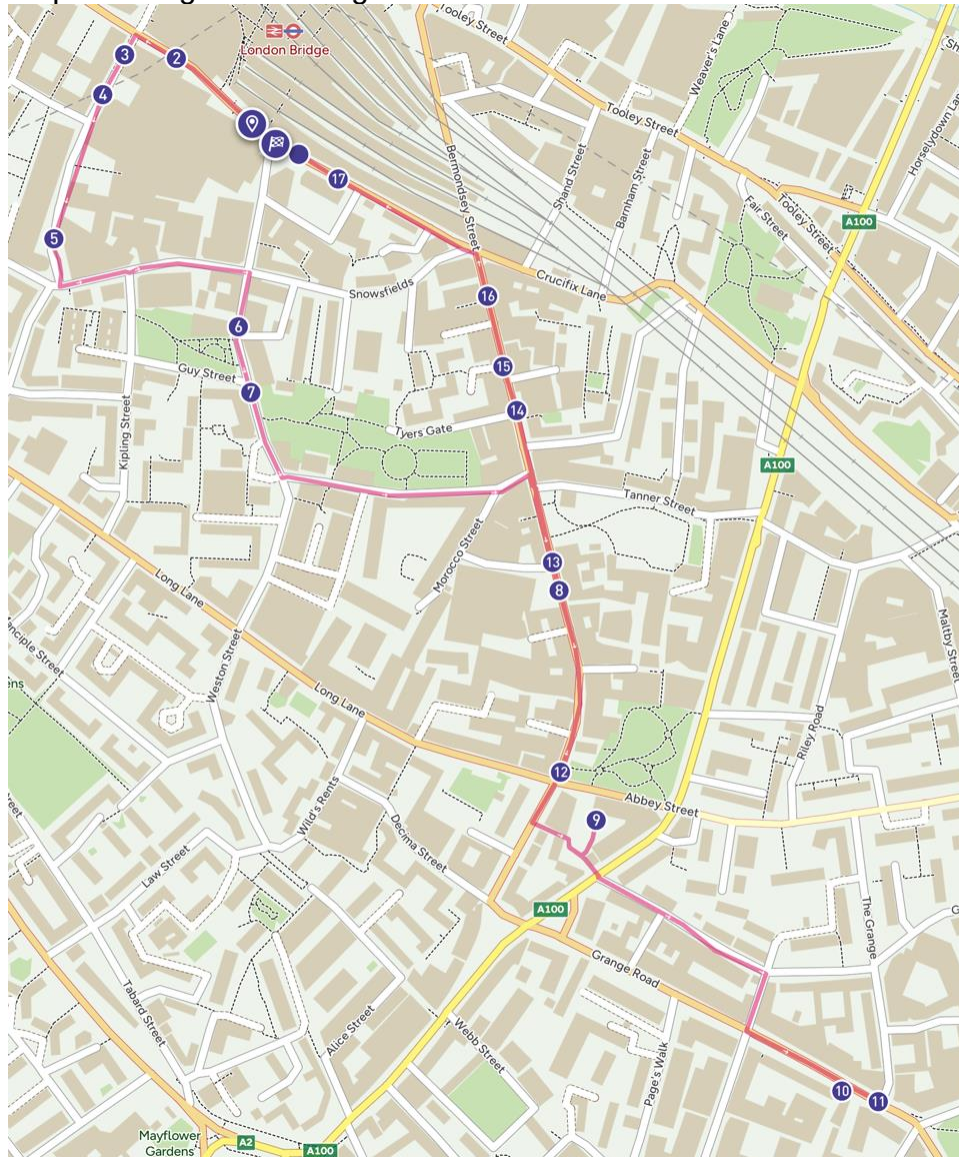
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This trail guide will take you around the ever-evolving urban landscape of the Bermondsey Street area, with a focus on key new modern buildings and recent refurbishments from the last 15 years or so. It will take about an hour and a half.

Acknowledgements – compiled by Clare Birks based on material developed by Chris Hampson and Elena Thatcher of HampsonWilliams, a local architects' practice, for a London Festival of Architecture 2018 event, with 2024 updates by Elena Thatcher. Photographs by HampsonWilliams and others.

Map showing the buildings included in the trail



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First, some context. Twenty-five years ago, this area was extremely run-down and full of derelict industrial buildings. Its wealth had been built first on the wool trade, then the leather industry. The tanneries left in search of bigger sites and the industrial spaces were taken over by antique dealers. In the 1990s, the antiques trade went into decline, buildings fell into disuse and parts of the area became derelict. What you are about to see is an amazing transformation. We now have a vibrant area with thousands of residents and about 500 small businesses. Refurbished or new buildings have made a major contribution to that regeneration.

This circular walk starts on the south side of St Thomas St at the junction with Great Maze Pond. Look East along the north side of St Thomas St and you will see...

1 London Bridge Station – Roof Line

The new station was designed by Grimshaw with iconic rippling 'eyelid' canopies over the platforms. You can just see an 'eyelid' further along St Thomas St.



London Bridge station is one of the busiest in London, with over 50m customer journeys a year. It is a railway terminus which also has through trains and is connected to the London Bridge Underground station (Jubilee and Northern line services). The first ever railway station in central London was built here in 1836 serving trains to and from Greenwich. The station was rebuilt in 1849 and 1864 to increase capacity and serve more destinations on additional tracks. It was rebuilt again in the 1970s. This latest redesign 2009-18 cost £220m.

In the current re-design, dedicated through tracks have been created for the Thameslink service. All platforms have been rebuilt and two major new street-level entrances have been created. There have been changes to passenger concourses and a huge increase in retail facilities.

There will be an opportunity to see inside the new station building at the end of this trail.

Now, look up to the north east and you will see...

2 The Shard

The London Bridge Tower, also known as the Shard, was designed by Renzo Piano and built from 2000-12 for developer Sellar Property Group. It takes its Shard name from the glass cladding which looks from ground level like shards of glass.

It is a 95-storey, mixed-use tower, built partly over London Bridge station. This development was a response to the urban vision of London's first Mayor, Ken Livingstone. His policy was to encourage high-density development at key transport nodes as this enables denser living and working with minimal increase in road traffic.



The building is 310m tall. The slender and pyramidal form of the tower lends itself to different uses at different heights: large floor plates at the bottom for offices; restaurants, public spaces and a hotel located in the middle; private apartments at the top of the building. Seventy-two of the storeys are habitable. The top floors accommodate a public viewing gallery.

The tower appears to taper off and disappear into the sky, a particularly important detail for Renzo Piano Building Workshop given the building's prominence on the London skyline. It is very impressive in sunshine, and equally impressive in a quite different way when there is low cloud, as it appears to be taking off into the cloud.

Eight sloping glass facades, with extra-white glass, gives the tower a 'lightness', fragmenting the scale of the building and reflecting the light in unexpected ways. It is a prime example of how glass cladding can make tall buildings more attractive to people.

The façade is a double-skin with internal blinds that respond automatically to changes in light levels. Opening vents in the "fractures" between the shards of glass provide natural ventilation to winter gardens. This solution was developed specifically for this building.

The Shard was developed by the late Irvine Sellar and is now part-owned by the state of Qatar. It has been the stimulus for much of the regeneration of the surrounding area, now known as the London Bridge Quarter.

Walk south down Great Maze Pond opposite and stop at the...

3 The Science Gallery



This building, originally a wing of the 18th century Guy's Hospital building was refurbished and extended by LTS Architects in 2018 to showcase King's College world-leading research to a young adult audience. A café area, auditorium and glass fronted exhibition space were all part of the redesign.

The architects found a neat way to meet accessibility requirements by building a new accessible entrance on the outside of the existing building.

Walk on down Great Maze Pond and on the left you will see the curvy...

4 Guy's Hospital Boiler Room

This was designed by the Heatherwick Studio and built in 2002. The challenge for the hospital was that, right at its front door there was a huge and unattractive installation of boilers. These attractive sculptural woven tiles act as a 'breathable skin' for the boiler rooms behind.

Thomas Heatherwick has been associated with creative installations for example the cauldron used during the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony and the controversial proposed 'garden bridge' scheme across the Thames at Temple.



Walk on past the 1970s tower block that is Guy's Hospital's main building, the tallest hospital in the world. You'll soon see on your left the trademark colourful pipework of a Richard Rogers building...



5 Guy's Hospital Cancer Centre

This building was designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners who wanted to create a "space focused on patient care and treatment, a welcoming building of human scale...an uplifting environment for visitors and staff."

In 2010, a RIBA international design competition was launched to find design partners to develop the new Cancer Centre. RSH with specialist healthcare architect Stantec were chosen for their innovative design based around a series of 'villages' that give the 14-storey building a human scale. Each care 'village' is identified by a different colour to help people find their way around inside the building.

The architects also had to protect the remains of a Roman boat found 4.8m down, a scheduled ancient monument. The building design, with minimal basement area, allows the Roman boat to remain in situ.

The building opened in 2016 at a cost of £120m. It has 14 storeys and provides a transition between the Shard's 95 storeys to the north and the lower rise areas to the south and east.

One really important innovation has been to locate the radiotherapy area upstairs in the light. Because radiotherapy equipment is heavy, it often has to be in the basement of an older building. In response to patient wishes, in this new building it has been located above ground so that patients receiving radiotherapy can enjoy natural light.

Turn left along Snowfields and right after the Miller pub. Aim for Guy Street Park opposite and walk through the park to the other side. Turn round and look north and you have a great view of ...

6 Number 81-87 Weston Street

This block of flats was designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris and completed in 2016. The site is surrounded by buildings of different architectural styles and scales. The building's stepped massing is a response to this, while the brickwork façade and metal windows refer back to the 19th century industrial buildings of this historic part of the city. The existing brick wall to the park has been retained.

The scheme provides an open plan office space on the ground floor with eight split level apartments above. The



apartments' open plan arrangement of living, kitchen and study space across three levels creates a complex play of interlocking units.

The external envelope is formed of a load-bearing concrete inner skin and light-coloured brickwork outer skin, with deep inset window apertures revealing the interlocked arrangement of apartments behind. Amenity space is provided by large cantilevered balconies to the south and roof terraces created by the stepping back of the façade at higher levels.

Cross the road and walk to the entrance to Leathermarket Gardens. Look across the road and you'll see...

7 Marklake Court, Weston Street

This building is by Bell Philips Architects and is on the Kipling estate, a social housing estate. When the social housing was first built, garages were provided. Over time it became clear that the garages were under-used. With local authorities under huge pressure to build additional housing, many are looking to do infill developments on existing estates, and under-used garage blocks are a prime target. This development will provide a range of housing sizes and ownerships. The front wall is full of interest eg different heights, materials, windows and surfaces and this makes it seem smaller than it is, easy on the eye.



Enter Leathermarket Gardens and walk past the children's playground. Follow the path through the shrubbery and past the rose garden. Exit on the far side into Leathermarket Street. Turn left and continue until you come to a T-junction. Turn right onto Bermondsey St and continue until you arrive at the...

8 White Cube Gallery

This had been a 1970s warehouse with offices and was re-imagined by Casper Mueller Kneer Architects as an art gallery for Jay Jopling, gallery-owner. It was converted in 2011. White Cube Bermondsey is the gallery's third and largest venue in



London. Conversion of the 1970s warehouse and office space provides exhibition spaces, warehousing, private viewing rooms, an auditorium and a bookshop. There are three distinct exhibition areas, one of which is a cubic space flooded with natural light.

The original structure and materials were generally maintained, enhanced by new additions and modifications. The building and yard are now much more open to the street, with a new canopy and the boundary marked by vertical metal fins. Concrete, grey granite and steel dominate the external landscaping. The gallery is open to the public, free of charge.

Turn right and continue along Bermondsey Street. When you hit Long Lane cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and walk into ...

9 Bermondsey Square

The modern buildings on three sides of the square were designed by Stephen Marshall Architects and finished in 2004. This area had been the site of the Caledonian Antiques market which ran every Friday from 5am until lunchtime. With the decline of the Antiques trade the market also declined, and the square became neglected and was used as a car park.



Bermondsey Square is therefore a new focus for an old area. The market continues. On a Friday morning traders sell collectibles that you can carry away, on Saturday morning, food. The development includes flats, offices, a 100-room hotel, a cinema (and facilities for outdoor projection), shops, an art gallery, restaurants and bars.

During the build, the remains of the medieval Bermondsey Abbey were discovered and these can now be seen through the glass floor of the restaurant in the north east corner of the square.

The Marshall design places the tallest corner tower on the most prominent part of the site, on Tower Bridge Road. To avoid a sea of lamp-posts, the square with its market stalls is lit by suspended pantograph lighting.

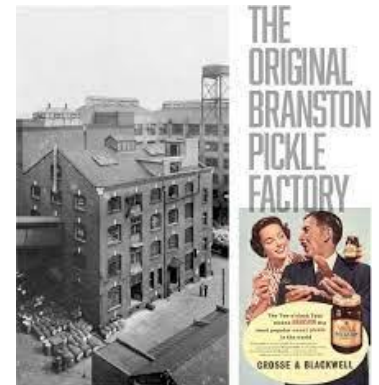
A carefully located opening between buildings gives a view of the spire of the church of St Mary Magdalen on Bermondsey St. Cladding varies on the street sides – timber and metal – while on the inside of the square it is more uniform with monoflex artworks.

The scale cleverly does not over-dominate the Georgian buildings on the south side of the square.

Cross the square diagonally and when you come out onto Tower Bridge Road, turn right to the traffic lights. Cross Tower bridge Road and head East along Grange Road. Within about 5 minutes you will discover a clutch of new/old developments, through a gate on the right...

10 New Tannery Way - Tannery Arts and the Drawing Room

This is a redevelopment of the famous Crosse and Blackwell Pickle Factory site and a neighbouring tannery. Crosse & Blackwell had been a successful food and canning business since the 18th century. In 1920 the firm merged with the sauce and pickle firm of Elizabeth Lazenby based in Grange Road and Crimscott Street, producing the famous Branston pickle here. The factory on this site closed in 1969.



Coffey Architects has completed the new building for Tannery Arts and The Drawing Room as part of a new neighbourhood comprising 400 homes, commercial space, art studios and gallery space in a mix of heritage and contemporary buildings. The new neighbourhood was master-planned by AHMM for developer London Square. The gallery has a sawtooth roof for controlled light exposure, which also serves as a nod to the industrial warehouse heritage of the site.



Combining conversion and restoration with new build, the layout forms a new public realm and courtyard along New Tannery Way with an additional private landscaped courtyard for residents. At the far end is The Pickle Factory building now refurbished for residential and commercial use.

Go back out onto Grange Road and turn right to the neighbouring ...

11 Number 61 Grange Road The Alaska Building

The original 1869 Alaska factory processed seal skins from North America. In the early 20th century this trade declined and the firm diversified into furs, fur cleaning and re-conditioning. They dyed



bearskins for the Brigade of Guards and cleaned Queen Mary's coronation robe in 1937. The factory here was rebuilt in 1932 to the art deco design of Wallis, Gilbert & Partners, who also designed the iconic Firestone and Hoover factories. Later in the 20th century, the firm left Bermondsey, and the elegant building was converted into flats.

Turn round and walk back the way you came along Grange Road towards Tower Bridge Road. Cross Tower Bridge Road, turn right and then left into Bermondsey Square. Cross the square diagonally and cross Abbey Street at the pedestrian crossing. On the corner of Bermondsey Square and Abbey Street, you will find the...

12 The Watch House

This adaptation to a café was designed by Aquarium Architecture and completed in 2014. The Watch House building was erected 1810-1812 to guard the graves in the neighbouring churchyard at a time when bodies were illegally exhumed and sold to doctors and scientists for dissection. In the 20th century it was the office of Mrs Ashford's laundry.



The conversion is designed to highlight the building's history and equally to bring it into our contemporary moment and make that atmosphere accessible to anyone who steps in. The result is very successful. It looks tiny from the outside but comfortably proportioned on the inside.

Continue north along Bermondsey Street past a number of older buildings clustered close to the church of St Mary Magdalen, until you're back outside the White Cube gallery and look up at the building beyond...

13 Number 142 Bermondsey Street

This refurbishment and extension was designed by HampsonWilliams. The building is now a combination of commercial and residential space. The work was completed in 2015.

The building was an unlisted post war building owned by a long-standing local resident who wanted to breathe new life into it. The design proposal was to use the existing building as a starting point and wrap it around the corner to benefit from open views and south facing sunlight.



Externally there is a simple white box industrial appearance with robust materials and clean lines. Internally, these clean lines are continued but using softer natural timber gives a warmer feel.

The extension and the new build extensions were all constructed using lightweight Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) allowing it to be erected quickly, minimising the disruption to movements on this busy street. This construction won an award in 2017.

Continue along Bermondsey St until you reach Tyer's Gate on the left. Turn and look across Bermondsey Street to the....

14 Fashion and Textile Museum / Ricardo Logaretta and Alan Camp Architects



The museum was founded by the famous British fashion and textile designer Zandra Rhodes, who is noted for her extremely colourful

work. The building dates from the 1950s. The late Ricardo Legorreta, a Mexican architect also known for his use of colour, was commissioned to design the conversion. It is one of his few works outside the American continent.

The conversion provided eight apartments on new upper floors which were sold to fund the rest of the project. The upper levels of the building also house the offices and studios of Zandra Rhodes. Lower levels comprise the museum, a shop and a café.

Continue along Bermondsey St until you come to a narrow cobbled street under an arch on the left. Turn in under the arch to Carmarthen Place and walk to the corner. Here you will see....

15 Numbers 2, 4 & 6 Carmarthen Place

Numbers 2 and 4 were designed by Amanda Mosley with Architects in Residence and built in 2006. The inaccessibility of the site made conventional building techniques impossible. The timber panels were built off-site and then craned into position. On-site assembly took two weeks. These were the first structural solid timber buildings in the UK and won an award in 2007.

They are 'upside down' houses, with bedrooms on ground level and living rooms above. Number 2 has had an upper extension added more recently.



Number 6 was designed by Amanda Mosley and built in 2017 using the more widely known system of cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels. Screw piles with a concrete raft were used to protect archaeological remains in situ. The solid timber panels were constructed on top of the raft. Underfloor heating was installed in the ground floor, under a thick concrete screed which acts as a slow-release heat sink. The concrete has been polished to provide a decorative floor finish.

Windows are double or triple glazed. All the houses benefit from windows and roof-lights that harvest natural light without causing overlooking.

Walk back to Bermondsey Street and turn left, continue northwards until you reach...

16 Number 56 Bermondsey Street - The Woolyard

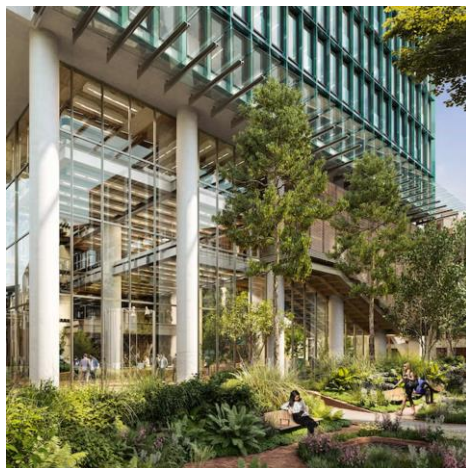
This is an integrated collection of new and historic buildings in a traditional medieval courtyard pattern – a building with a narrow frontage on the street providing access through the ground floor to a long narrow yard behind. Reinstated granite cobbles and stone helps to integrate the old with the new in a very sympathetic and successful way.

The Woolyard provides office space for small businesses. The art work is by Nigel Hall. Following his first tubular aluminium sculpture in 1970, he has frequently explored the ways in which tubular construction alters the viewer's perception of space



Continue up Bermondsey Street until you reach the traffic lights and turn left along beside the railway viaduct until you come to the new tall buildings taking shape on St Thomas Street. The first you come to is...

17 The Edge London Bridge building



This is a 27-storey commercial building by Pilbrow & Partners. It will be the UK's first high rise building designed to achieve BREEAM Outstanding and WELL platinum certification. As well as state-of-the-art office space, the building includes a shared green roof terrace and a public park at ground level. It uses ground and air source heat pumps, energy efficient ventilation, shading, solar energy, solar control glass and smart building

technology. The café on the ground floor will be publicly accessible. Churchman Thornhill Finch have designed the public park

Continue along St Thomas Street towards the railway station The next building on the left is the even taller...

18 Chapter Living

This was designed as student accommodation by Kohn Pederson Fox Associates. The 39-storey tower has accommodation for 905 student bedrooms. It was built in a very modular way with the modules delivered onsite, craned up and bolted together.



Contextually, the project integrates into a dense urban setting. Aesthetically, the design reflects the materials and textures of the local area's historic warehouses and rooflines, while the massing relates to the immediate skyline of the existing Shard tower and the future tall buildings along St Thomas Street.

A suite of recreational amenities, complete with a landscaped outdoor terrace, is integrated at the top of the scheme, while the podium levels provide further shared facilities, together with start-up business spaces, and public retail units.

19 London Bridge Rail Station Concourse

This is an opportunity to go inside the massive station concourse and marvel at the clever use of light, wood cladding and the 19th century brick arches. This concourse is bigger than Wembley Stadium.



Leave the station the way you came in and turn right along St Thomas St, past the Shard and back into the entrance to the start point.

We hope you enjoyed your walk and will come back to the Bermondsey Street area again soon. There are more trail guides and Bermondsey Street Back Stories on our website <http://www.bermondseystreet.london>