

# Shad Thames Trail

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A guide to exploring the unique  
character of the Shad Thames area



# Everyone who visits Shad Thames falls in love with it. But what makes the area so special?

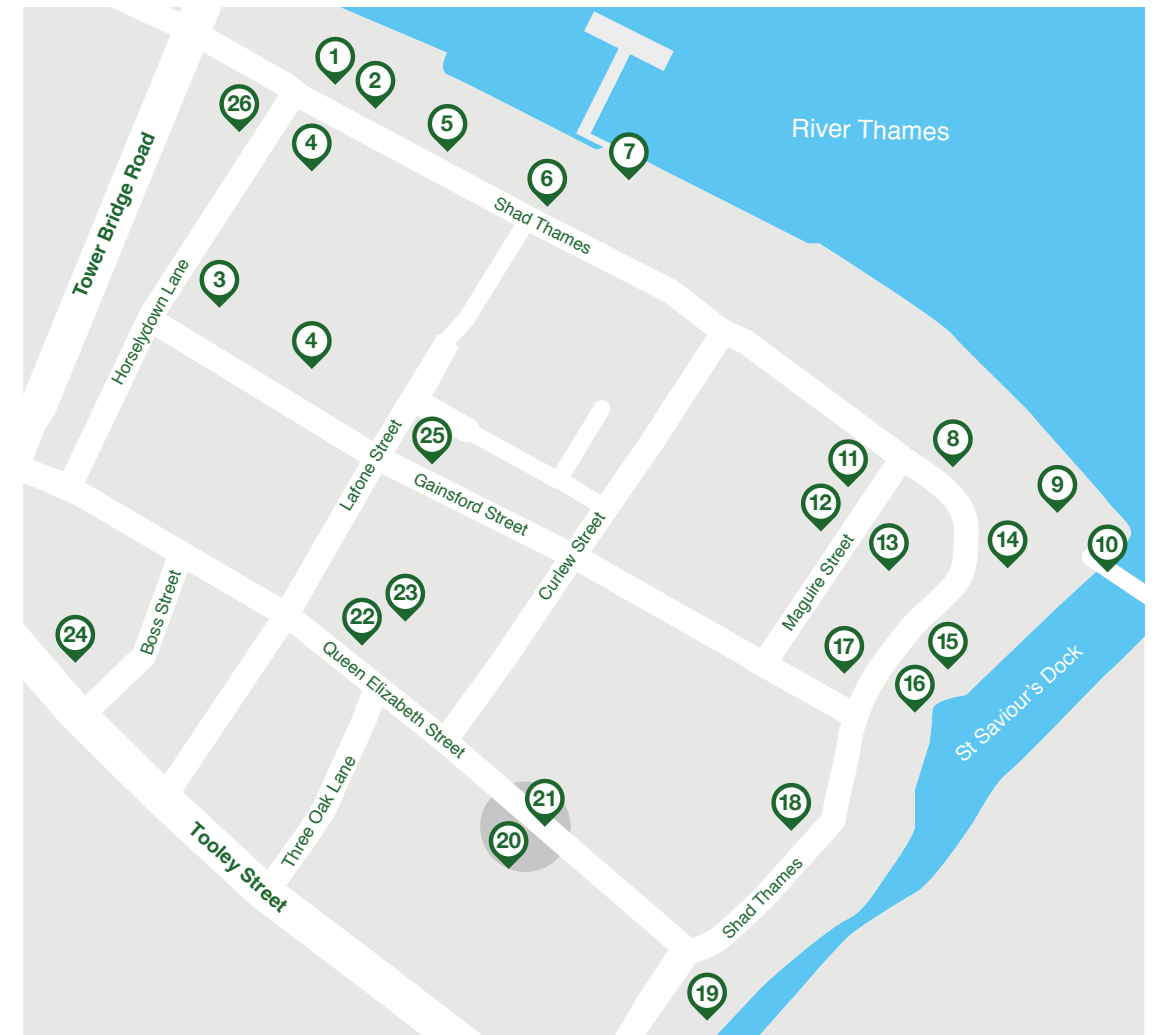
This Trail highlights features that make Shad Thames distinctive, from the riverside location and the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings, to the bold architecture of late 20<sup>th</sup> century regeneration and new developments coming up.

Follow the Trail in any order and explore one of central London's most iconic yet intimate spaces. Who knows what you'll discover?



## About STAMP

STAMP (Shad Thames Area Management Partnership) is a groundbreaking collaboration between stakeholders in and around Shad Thames. We bring together local residents, local businesses and Southwark Council to protect, enhance and celebrate the area's distinctive identity. Through our collaborative approach, we aim to make the Shad Thames area welcoming to all who live, work and visit here.



## Interested in ...?

### Outdoor sculpture

Courage Yard: Waterfall **4**  
Courage Yard (Brewery Square): Torso **4**  
Exotic Cargo **9**  
Jacob the Dray Horse **21**

### The unexpected

Maggie Blake's Cause **5**  
The Circle **20**  
The Pyramid **23**

### 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings

Anchor Brewhouse (Courage & Co Ltd) **2**  
Butler's Wharf Complex **6**  
Wheat Wharf **11**  
Anise & Coriander Buildings **17**  
Butler's & Colonial Wharf **18**  
St George's Wharf **19**  
The Flag Store **22**

### Early 20<sup>th</sup> century public buildings

Shad Thames Pumping Station **12**  
The Dixon Hotel (formerly Magistrates Court) **24**

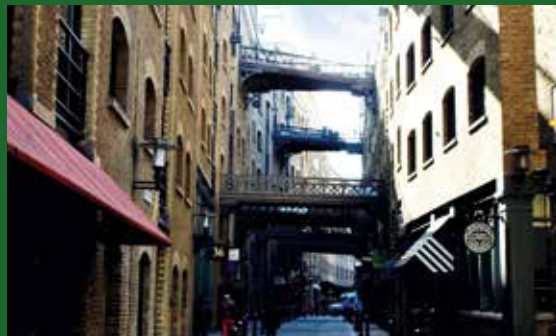
### 1980s/90s architecture

Courage Yard and Brewery Square **4**  
Zaha Hadid site (formerly Design Museum) **8**  
St Saviour's Dock Footbridge **10**  
The Clove Building **13**  
Former Conran Offices **15**  
Saffron Wharf **16**  
The Circle **20**

### Works in progress

Zaha Hadid site (formerly Design Museum) **8**  
TBC (Tower Bridge Court) **26**

# Tales of Shad Thames Past



## Wharves, warehouses and what they were for

Southwark's riverfront has a long history as part of the busy Port of London. There were structures near Shad Thames by mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, although the only buildings now remaining are mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and later.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries successful businesses handling cargo, warehousing goods and milling were based in the area. Butler's Wharf Complex began on the riverside and as business boomed, the south side of Shad Thames became an overflow for more warehouses. This created two distinctive features: the "canyon" between the two sides of the street, and the metal bridges at various heights for the transfer of goods between buildings.

In the heyday of the Port of London the wharf warehouse was a common structure. In Shad Thames this was usually a riverside building of several storeys, with many windows of the same size. Vertical tiers of doorways, known as loopholes, had double doors opening outwards with a flap below attached by chains. Above each tier of loopholes was a wall-mounted crane, and some of these loopholes and cranes are still in place.

## The rise and fall and rise again of the Shad Thames Docks

The success of the docks continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century with intense use during World War II. But from the 1960s the Pool of London (from London Bridge to Cherry Garden Pier) lost its competitiveness due to containerisation.

By 1972 the wharf complexes in the area had closed. Some buildings were let for storage and light industrial use, and a community of artists moved in on short-term leases. By the late 1970s leading architect, designer and entrepreneur Sir Terence Conran became involved in regenerating the area. In 1981 the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) began work, and Conran and Partners acted as master planners of the large Butler's Wharf estate from 1985 to 1997.

Several decades on, Shad Thames is now a highly-desirable residential area with popular riverside restaurants and a section of the Thames Path running through it. A few years ago we saw the opening of The Dixon Hotel on the site of the former Magistrates Court and Police Station on Tooley Street. Coming up is the renewal of a 1990s office building renamed TBC (Tower Bridge Court) which aims to be one of the healthiest and greenest buildings in London. The story of Shad Thames continues to unfold.

# Shad Thames Trail



## Horselydown Old Stairs

Shad Thames, western end of Anchor Brewhouse

1

Shad Thames had three sets of river stairs used by Thames watermen transporting passengers in their skiffs.

Of the original three (Horselydown Old Stairs, George Stairs and Horselydown New Stairs), Horselydown Old Stairs remains. Appearing in John Rocque's 1746 map of London, the stairs are Grade II listed. They can be seen on the foreshore via a new flight of steps at the western end of Anchor Brewhouse, and the paved causeway is visible at low tide.



## Anchor Brewhouse (Courage & Co Ltd)

50 Shad Thames

2

In 1787 John Courage founded a brewery which subsequently developed into a huge estate. The site covered four acres, including the riverside on Shad Thames and the current Courage Yard development.

The existing buildings of Anchor Brewhouse date from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dray horses, which delivered beer from Anchor Brewery, were stabled in what is now the Circle development on Queen Elizabeth Street. The brewery was famous for its capacity and its strong beer known as porter, and it continued operating until 1981.

The current buildings on Shad Thames reflect the different components of the brewing industry. The middle section, now called Malt Mill, was the malt store and initially had no windows. The gabled Boilerhouse on the eastern end is in a different style and included steam boilers. The original part of the building dates from 1871, largely rebuilt in 1894-5 (around the same time as the opening of Tower Bridge). In 1985-9, Anchor Brewhouse was reconstructed, restored and refurbished as offices, shops and flats. You can still see signage for Anchor Brewhouse and Courage & Co Ltd at the very top of the buildings.

There's a long tradition of brewing in Southwark, with Chaucer and Shakespeare mentioning brewing in Horselydown (the ancient name of the area). It is exciting to see the resurgence of this local brewing tradition with several microbreweries based in the railway arches nearby, in and around Druid Street.



## Anchor Tap

28 Horselydown Lane



**John Courage's first pub was based on this site bought at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.**

A brewery tap was the nearest outlet where beer was available on draught to the public. It was effectively an advertisement for the beer and because of its proximity to the brewery itself, the beer was invariably in excellent condition.

The current pub, operated by Samuel Smith's, was built in the early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with a refurbishment in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was Grade II listed in 2004 and retains many of its original external and internal features, including interior bar divisions and fireplaces.



## Courage Yard and Brewery Square

Entry via Shad Thames opposite Anchor Brewhouse



**This late 20<sup>th</sup> century development on the Anchor Brewery site was built by Wickham Associates (now Wickham van Eyck). Described by the architects as "a high-density mixed-use urban complex", it was constructed in 1983-90.**

Architectural critics at the time enthused about its "zest"; its "charm and character without (thankfully) any trace of pastiche"; and its "exuberant use of colour".

The site contrasts sharply with the neighbouring warehouses, but it respects previous patterns of use, with entries reflecting original pedestrian routes to the river. The new structures include residential buildings, offices and shops built in modern forms and colours, with yellow stock brick and terracotta detail. The main entrance to Courage Yard from Shad Thames is through a diagonal passage flanked by two round neo-Constructivist towers.

Not everything in this development is new. Eagle Wharf (Grade II listed) on the east side of Courage Yard is an old warehouse; Brewery Square incorporates a 19<sup>th</sup> century building in the southwest corner; and the Cooperage is a neo-Georgian interwar structure.

Each square incorporates a sculpture commissioned by the original architects. Waterfall (1991) in Courage Yard is a bronze fountain by Anthony Donaldson with a Renaissance-cistern shape and nymphs. Torso (1991) in Brewery Square is also by Donaldson.

Following the sale of the freehold in 2016, the site was refurbished including the addition of a one-storey pavilion in the main square. Originally known as Horselydown Square, this space was renamed Tower Bridge Piazza for the 1980s regeneration. As part of the refurbishment a few years ago, it was once again renamed, this time as Courage Yard to celebrate its heritage as a part of the original Courage & Co Anchor Brewery site. Southwark Council is the current freeholder.



## Maggie Blake's Cause

Shad Thames (between Anchor Brewhouse Boilerhouse and Butler's Wharf West)



**Maggie Blake was a community activist during the 1980s regeneration.**

She successfully fought the developers' proposal to restrict public access to this riverside section of Butler's Wharf. This small passage from Shad Thames to the river celebrates her successful campaign.



## Butler's Wharf Complex

Shad Thames



**Records show that a grain trader named Mr Butler rented warehouses from the Thomas family in 1794. The existing Butler's Wharf was originally built in 1871-3, with some rebuilding taking place in the 1880s and 1890s.**

Butler's Wharf was the largest and most densely packed group of Victorian warehouses in London, its size of 25 acres unusual even at the time. The buildings were constructed in yellow London stock brick, with window heads in paler brick and cast-iron window frames. Internally there were timber floors supported by cast-iron columns.

As Butler's Wharf was a public wharf, it did not own the goods it stored. Instead, it provided services to link importers of goods with buyers and distributors. Butler's Wharf specialised in tea, reputedly having the largest tea warehouse in the world. It also stored grain, rubber, sugar, cloves, cinnamon and tapioca.

When the complex closed in 1971, the vacant warehouses were rented out for individual storage and light industrial use. Some of the spaces on the riverfront were also colonised by artists on short-term leases and for nearly a decade a mixed community of some 150 artists worked there. Towards the end of the 1970s there was increasing interest in regenerating the area. A fire in 1979 highlighted the dangerous living conditions. As a result, in January 1980 all residents were evicted and in 1981 Sir Terence Conran bid for a mixed-use redevelopment. He subsequently renovated and developed six buildings, with Conran and Partners acting as the master planners for regeneration of the Butler's Wharf estate between 1985 and 1997.

Both Butler's Wharf Building and Butler's Wharf West are Grade II listed. They constitute the largest surviving range of buildings showing the characteristic dockland "canyon", with overhead bridges linking warehouses on both sides of Shad Thames.







## Wheat Wharf

27 Shad Thames

11

**Originally known as Coles Upper Wharf, this was the largest granary in Bermondsey in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.**

An early warehouse survivor with timber-framed interior, Wheat Wharf is Grade II listed with some structures from early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and frontages from 1903-4. The conversion to flats and offices was carried out by architects Dransfield Owens da Silva.



## Shad Thames Pumping Station

West side of Maguire Street, opposite the Clove Building

12

**This is an interesting example of historical layering in Shad Thames. The site was originally part of an extensive drainage system going back to Tudor times.**

Its successor is the London County Council Shad Thames Pumping Station, built 1906-8 for storm drainage. It was originally powered by gas engines, with staff being housed at 25 Shad Thames. The exterior of the building is in glazed red brick and terracotta; the interior is glazed white brick.

A new historical layer has recently been added with functional changes as part of the Thames Tideway Tunnel project.



## The Clove Building

4 Maguire Street, just off Shad Thames

13

**The Clove Building is a conversion of a 1940s warehouse which also has a frontage opposite 24 Shad Thames. Its crisp, modernist style with white façade and metallic grey steel windows was the work of architects Allies and Morrison in 1990.**

With the departure of the Design Museum in 2016, the Clove Building is now even more important as an occupied example of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century regeneration style in Shad Thames.



## Tea Trade Wharf

26 Shad Thames

14

**Previously Butler's Wharf Building 15, the original building was described as a plain, but well-built 1922 warehouse.**

Converted into flats in 2003, its riverside frontage is at the western end of St Saviour's Dock Footbridge (see listing 10).



## Former Conran Offices

22 Shad Thames

15

**This building replaced a 19<sup>th</sup> century granary and was commissioned by the industrial designer David Mellor as his showroom and headquarters.**

The structure is a simple box, glazed at the front and back, with exposed concrete and lead-wrapped side panels. It was built by Hopkins Architects (1990-1) and until recently housed offices for the Conran Shop and for Conran and Partners, together with a flat at the top of the building. The Conran businesses are scheduled to move out by the end of 2020, severing a connection with the area stretching back to its regeneration in the 1980s.



## Saffron Wharf

20 Shad Thames

16

**This new building was developed by Conran Roche at the same time as the building next door at 22 Shad Thames.**

Built at the start of the 1990s entirely as offices, in 1997 it was converted to flats, with office/shop space remaining at ground floor level. The unusual construction includes white stove-enamelled steel panels.



## Anise & Coriander Buildings and Anise Gallery

13a Shad Thames

17

**Anise Building and Coriander Court were Victorian spice warehouses. Historical records from the 1850s also show that the site housed two corn-drying kilns.**

In 2000 both buildings were converted to residential flats with some office space created at ground level. Many original features were retained in the conversion, including timber and cast-iron structures and brickwork.

In 2012 Anise Gallery set up in a shared space with architectural visualisation studio AVR London. The Gallery is currently between locations but we hope they will still use this Shad Thames space for some exhibitions and events open to the public.



## Butler's & Colonial Wharf

10/11 Shad Thames

18

**Butler's Grinders and Operators was Grade II listed in 1994. Built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and possibly used originally for rice and oil milling, it was the last working mill in the area, closing in 1995.**

This part of Shad Thames included a large number of mills linking with St Saviour's Dock (which abuts the east side of the street). You can still see the early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century overhead footbridge connecting to St Andrew's Wharf at 12 Shad Thames. You can also see a large millstone in the courtyard through the entrance gates at 10/11 Shad Thames.



## St George's Wharf

6 Shad Thames

19

**This flourmill from around 1870 has a distinctive exterior, with toothed cornice and bands of blue brick linking small cast-iron windows.**

It is Grade II listed, forming part of the well-regarded sequence of historic warehouses along Shad Thames backing on to St Saviour's Dock.

A short diversion (south on Shad Thames and then left on Jamaica Road) will give you a good view of these warehouses from the dockhead, as well as of St Saviour's Dock Footbridge and the Thames in the distance.



## The Circle

Eastern end of Queen Elizabeth Street

20

**The Circle is the work of CZWG, built in 1987-9 and subsequently described as "one of the most extravagant pieces of architectural whimsy in London".**

It is made up of four big quadrant blocks with four courtyard gardens at the back, comprising over 300 apartments, offices, a gym, cafés and shops. The structure is unusual with inner curves faced with ultramarine blue-glazed bricks, creating two semi-circular forecourts spanning both sides of the road on the scale of a gasometer. The shape of these blue-glazed buildings suggests owl-like ears.

Further "whimsical" features include metal balconies carried on pine logs, perhaps referencing a ship's mast. The metal windows are finished in light gold with diagonal glazing bars, and the non-glazed façades with undulating parapets are yellow brick (echoing the neighbouring buildings in London stock brick).

In 2018, the Circle (including Jacob the Dray Horse – see listing 21) was Grade II listed as part of a wider Post-Modern initiative by Historic England. As at summer 2020, work was pending on additional penthouses in the four quadrant blocks for which planning permission is in place.



## Jacob the Dray Horse

Eastern end of Queen Elizabeth Street

21

**This bronze sculpture by Shirley Pace was commissioned to celebrate the redevelopment of the area.**

The sculpture stands on the site of the 19<sup>th</sup> century stables for dray horses which delivered beer from Courage's Anchor Brewery on Shad Thames. The name Jacob probably comes from the name of the nearby Victorian slum Jacob's Island (where Bill Sykes met his end in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*). The sculptor said she sought "to portray the dignified tolerance and the power of these horses plus the hint of resignation to men's direction and the vagaries of a cold wet windy winter".

A plaque on the plinth of the sculpture explains that it "was commissioned ... as the centrepiece of the Circle to commemorate the history of the site. He was flown over London by helicopter into Queen Elizabeth Street to launch the Circle in 1987." The plaque claims that the name of the area, Horselydown, derives from 'horse-lie-down', referring to working horses resting. According to historians, however, the name (also known in its 12<sup>th</sup> century version as horseidune) means 'hill by the horse marsh'.



## The Flag Store

23/25/31 Queen Elizabeth Street

22

**The Flag Store was built in 1899 by Benjamin Edgington, flag and tent manufacturers.**

It was converted into offices and flats by Dransfield Owens Design in 1991-3. Dransfield Owens also converted Canvas House which was originally two warehouses where tents were stored, one from the 1840s and the other from 1890.

There have been several Edgingtons recorded as tent makers. Benjamin Edgington advertised in the *Alpine Journal* of 1960 claiming they were "established before 1795" and describing themselves as "By appointment to Her Majesty the Queen; Tent and Flag Makers".



## The Pyramid

Within the courtyard of The Flag Store, Queen Elizabeth Street

23

**In the courtyard surrounded by the 19<sup>th</sup> century warehouses they converted, Dransfield Owens Design created an office which was originally used by their architectural practice.**

The Pyramid (2006) is clad in diamonds of stainless steel and glass on a steel and concrete frame. The building is deceptively small from the outside but is actually large enough to offer workspace to a range of businesses and individuals.



## The Dixon Hotel (formerly Magistrates Court)

Tooley Street and Boss Street

24

The Magistrates Court and Police Station on Tooley Street were built in 1906 by John Dixon Butler, Architect and Surveyor to the Metropolitan Police, who worked on over 200 public buildings.

Its flamboyant external appearance and grand interiors are highly regarded by enthusiasts of Edwardian civic architecture. In 1998 parts of the structure were Grade II listed.

After the Court and Police Station closed in summer 2013, Dominvs Group acquired the large site to redevelop as a hotel. The new complex opened at the end of 2018 and celebrates the listed features as well as the heritage of the building.



## LSE Halls of Residence

11 Gainsford Street

25

These student Halls of Residence were built for the LSE (London School of Economics and Political Science) in 1990 by Conran Roche, who were responsible for many other buildings in the area.

The pale yellow brick echoes the London stock brick of neighbouring warehouses. At the time of construction, there would have been little indication of what you now see from outside the building: looking west there are good views of both The Shard and One Tower Bridge.



## TBC (Tower Bridge Court)

224-226 Tower Bridge Road/Horselydown Lane

26

The top photo of a solid red-brick and stone building shows what you would have seen from when it was built, around 1990, until summer 2020 when refurbishment work began.

The renewal of this site, now called TBC, aims to transform it into one of the healthiest buildings in London and to be net-zero carbon in operation. The bottom photo of a light brick building with glass frontage at street level is a projection of how it is intended to look when work is completed, scheduled for 2022.



# What's in a name?



## Shad Thames

Shad Thames is a tricky name to pin down.

One idea is that it is a corruption of St John at Thames, referring back to the medieval ownership of the land. Names have often been corrupted over time by shortening but in the case of St John at Thames, not all experts are convinced that 'St John at' could become 'Shad'.

Perhaps a more convincing explanation is that the name refers to shad fish. These fish did exist in the Thames and fish names were used for other streets; for example, the riverside street just west of Tower Bridge was called Pickle Herring Street. And, although this derivation from shad fish is not yet proved, there's no doubt about the name itself: Shad Thames appears as early as John Rocque's 1746 map of London.



## Horselydown

Much of the Shad Thames area once formed part of Horselydown, also known in its 12<sup>th</sup> century version as 'horseidune', which was a large open space at the eastern end of the ancient town of Southwark.

Most historical experts agree that the name means 'hill by the horse marsh', but other explanations continue to circulate. The most popular is that Horselydown derives from 'horse lie down', referring to working horses resting here in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This explanation even appears on the base of Jacob, the dray horse sculpture on Queen Elizabeth Street, installed in 1987 (see listing 21). A nice story but, sadly, it's not true!

## Special Thanks

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Hudson/  
Fuggle







**STAMP**<sub>SE1</sub>

STAMP (Shad Thames Area Management Partnership)

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