

# SOUTHBANK WALK

## CULTURAL LED REGENERATION



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## A WORD TO START:

**Welcome to the Southbank Walk** - We will be taking you from Somerset House on the Strand - Across Waterloo Bridge - down to the new Millennium Bridge where we will go back across the river towards St Paul's Cathedral and then through the city back to the LSE.

A couple of words of caution. You are being broken into small groups and will be given start times to begin. You need to remain at a distance of 2m from one another. If you are distanced at only 1m you **MUST** wear a mask.

Finally, London is a city and we have traffic from busses, cars, bikes and taxis. You need to be careful when crossing the road and you need to remember that we drive on the other side of the road - most of you won't be used to this. The traffic will be approaching from your left so please look left before you step into the road.

### **Worth Watching!**

This is a link to a 1964 film by the British Film Institute of the development of the South Bank. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyQLA\\_hFfb4&t=127s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyQLA_hFfb4&t=127s)

## STOP A – SOMERSET HOUSE



You are now standing in the courtyard of Somerset House on the North side of the river. The space is public and in the summer hosts outdoor film events and in the winter, it has an ice-skating rink. But not that long ago - up until the late 1990s, this was a civil service carpark. Nowadays it seems extraordinary that there would be such a large space dedicated to parking cars in central London. At the time however, we were all just coming to grips with the idea that these sorts of spaces provided amazing opportunities for residents and tourists in the city.

**Reflections/Questions** It is worth pausing for a moment here and thinking about how public spaces can be provided in existing cities - what other sites might offer possibilities?

### Resources:

- “This courtyard used to be a car park” - *The Guardian*  
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/jan/31/artsfeatures1>
- “The Opening of Somerset House” - <https://www.publicspace.org/works/-/project/b034-opening-somerset-house>

## STOP B – ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL



The South Bank of the Thames is historically the poorer bank of London, as the city has primarily developed North-wise. In the industrialization years, it was mainly a place of docks, power generation and industries, where the working class settled.

World War II had a strong impact in the first ideas for a South Bank regeneration process. By 1941, London was devastated by bombings; the South Bank, with its warehouses, docklands and energy generators, was badly hit. In 1943, Patrick Abercrombie, influential planning academic, was asked, alongside with municipal architect John Forshaw, to redesign a post-War London. His project proposed a more modern, less polarized city, in which the South Bank would provide a shared space for all Londoners away from the pressures of business; where they could unite around art and culture.

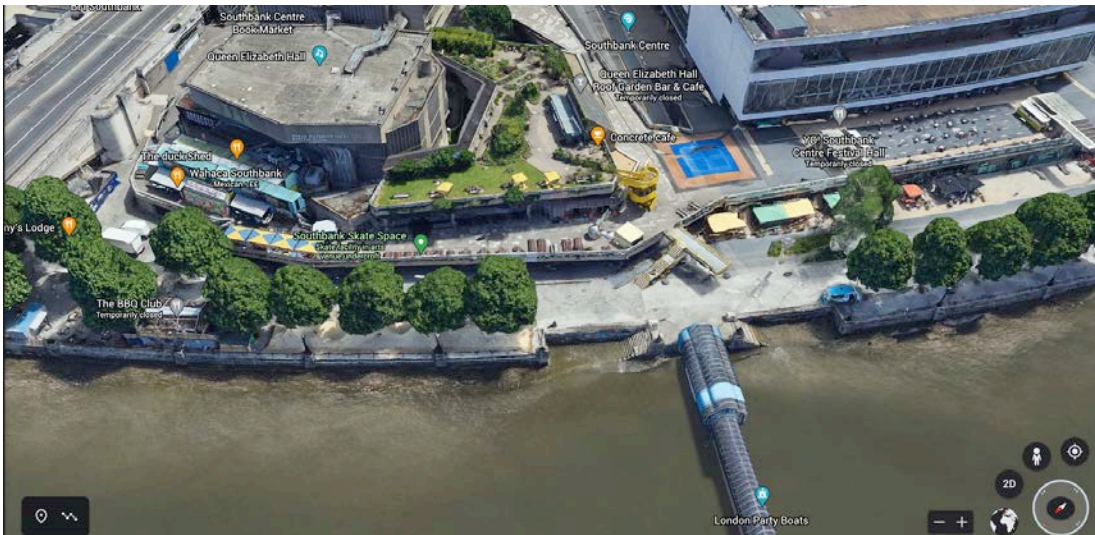
His plan would not be thoroughly followed. However, it did leave an important heritage: the 1951 Festival of Britain. Its purpose was to present a strong image of London after World War II, and a placemaking representation to give to the world – much like the purpose served by World Fairs or Olympic Games today.

The Festival of Britain was fundamental in creating the entertainment use you see here. As you walk today look around you and think about how the entertainment uses that started here have slowly crept down the south side of the river.

**Reflections/ Questions** Do you think this has met the goal of providing a shared space for all Londoners to enjoy?



## STOP C – SKATE PARK



The Under-croft skatepark. The open space situated below these brutalist buildings was informally appropriated by skateboarders in the Seventies. In fact, this space was not designed to be a skatepark, but rather it is a “found space”, later also adopted by street artists and other urban subcultures as well. The South Bank Centre, over the course of the years, has actively limited the spaces the skaters could use, also by installing physical barriers between pedestrians and the park.

In 2013, the South Bank Centre presented a £120m redevelopment plan to refurbish existing buildings and install a "floating" glass pavilion that would have been able to accommodate a full rehearsing orchestra. To proceed with this, the skatepark needed to be moved elsewhere the proposal was to locate it under the Hungerford Bridge.

As a reaction, the Under-croft skaters founded a non-profit community organization, called Long Live Southbank, to combat the redevelopment plan, refusing to relocate. After 17 months of legal battle, Long Live Southbank and South Bank Centre found an agreement to keep the skatepark at its place, with the South Bank Centre recognizing its historic and community value.

Additionally, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios was commissioned the refurbishment of the skatepark by South Bank Centre. They re-opened parts of the park that had been closed off since 2004. They replicated the original brutalist architecture, placing obstacles in their original spots.

**Reflections/ Questions** What value do you think South Bank Centre has seen in the Under-croft skatepark? To what extent should we be guided by the market in land use decisions?

### Resources:

- “Southbank skateboarding gets a new lease of life” BBC London  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls61fy4gF0c>

## STOP D – THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND IBM



As you can see, we are standing in front of the brutalist National Theatre, designed by Denys Lasdun and completed in 1976. In fact, the cultural and entertainment sector were a contributing factor in the shaping of the South Bank redevelopment. This renovation has had a strong impact on the area, in terms of population, land value and use. This uplift in value and popularity can be seen in the building next to the National Theatre - it is the headquarters of IBM, also designed by Lasdun and completed in 1983.

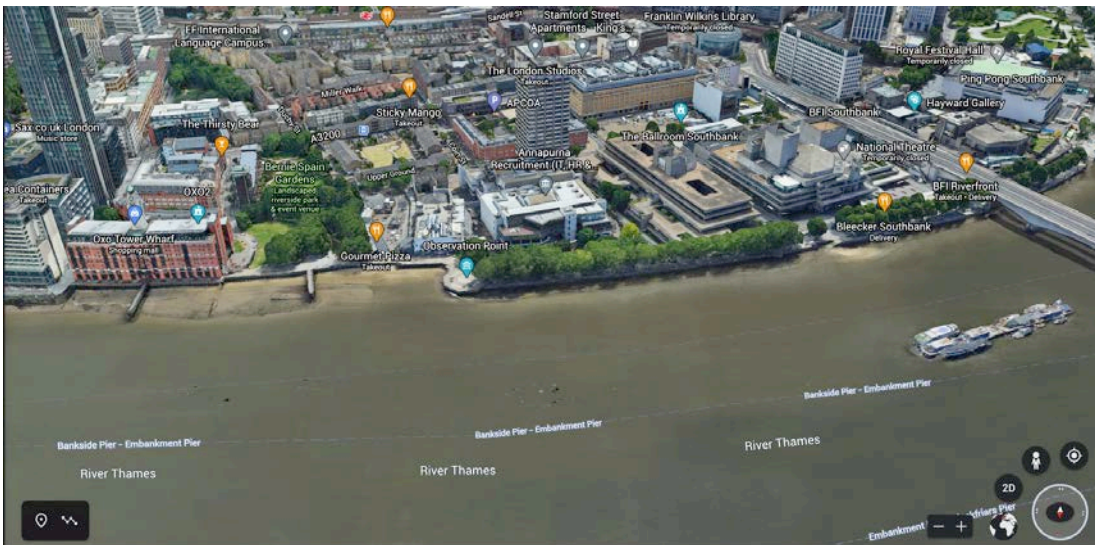
The current owners of the building, Dubai-based group and its architects AHMM, proposed to extend the building to offer IBM more space and to provide shops on the ground level. This may seem a very sensible use of space land values are rising and retail is strong. However, development is often balanced by other factors in planning. IN the UK, an important one is heritage. In June 2020 the UK Government acted in like with the advice of Historic England and awarded the building Grade II statutory protection. This means that any redevelopment now will go through a stricter route that will consider the historic fabric of the building.

**Reflections/Questions** The art of planning is about balancing one outcome against another - Here we are trying to allow for economic growth while maintaining the look, feel and history of a building. Planning is therefore blocking the full force of the market. Is this appropriate?

### Resources:

- “A brief introduction to Denys Lasdun” Historic England  
<https://heritagecalling.com/2019/09/02/denys-lasdun/>
- “Blow for AHMM South Bank scheme as Lasdun’s IBM building is listed” Greg Pitcher Architects’ Journal  
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/blow-for-ahmm-south-bank-scheme-as-lasduns-ibm-building-is-listed>

## STOP E – A BRIDGE TOO FAR (OBSERVATION POINT)



Another bridge? There has been a longstanding plan to add another bridge in London, connecting the South Bank to Temple. Firstly, it was proposed by Patrick Abercrombie, in his post-war London vision. Then, Richard Rogers, who was proposing a development for Coin Street, advanced a similar suggestion. In the last decades, more and more voices agreed that a bridge in this location was needed, when finally, Joanna Lumley proposed a garden bridge designed by Thomas Heatherwick to the London mayor at the time, Boris Johnson. This idea got a lot of attention and was officially assigned to Heatherwick Studios, and plans seemed to be going forward, to the point that Boris Johnson gave the go-ahead to the renovation of the Temple Tube station, so that it would have been directly connected to the bridge. However, as you can see, this project did not result in a concrete achievement: public funding stopped with the election of Sadiq Khan, and the garden bridge project was officially abandoned in August 2017.

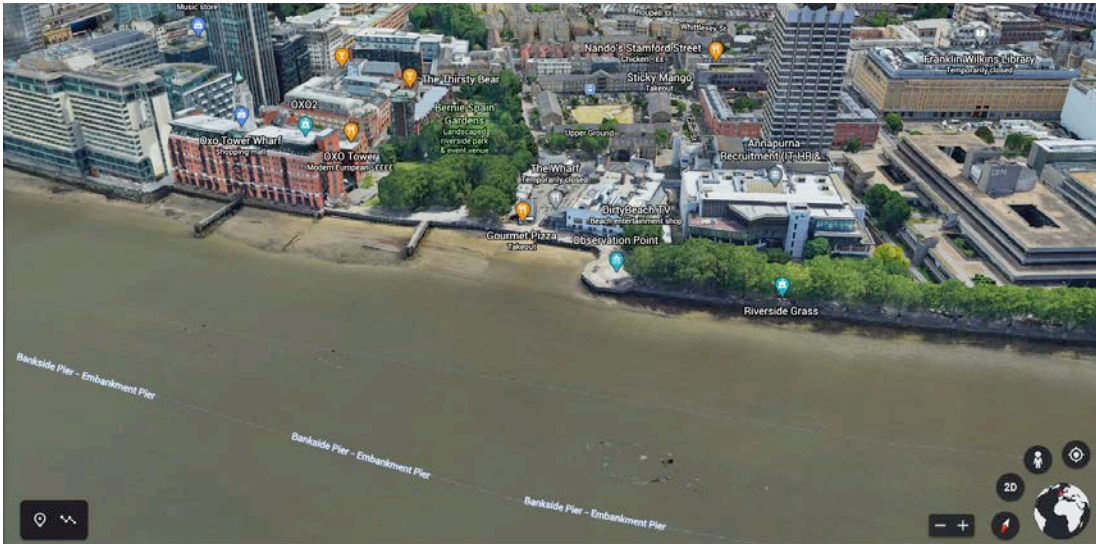
**Reflections/Questions** So here we have a dilemma. Boris Johnson saw the bridge as an opportunity – Sadiq Khan as a waste of public money. In designing the city, where do you think the balance should be put, thinking at global or local scales? Is it possible to balance the two? If you were the mayor of London, what solution would you choose?

### Resources:

- “Failed London Garden Bridge project cost £53m” BBC <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-47228698>



## STOP F – AIR RIGHTS (OBSERVATION POINT)



One way to increase the number of affordable housing units in cities is to allow people to develop upwards using permissive air space regulation. However, in London this is not as simple as it may sound. The city has a number of designated views that include panoramas, river views, townscape views and linear views. Here the linear views are of particular importance as they control the height of any building within the corridor. So, for example, there is a view that extends from King Henry VIII's Mound in Richmond all the way to St. Paul's Cathedral. In practice this means that if you are standing on the top of the mound in Richmond you can peer through the little telescope that is there and see St Paul's. Perhaps for the beauty and uniqueness of the city this is a wonderful planning tool. However, it does mean that the space the city has to build is constrained.

Potentially there may be some loosening of airspace regulation as London Mayor Sadiq Khan has provided a £10m development loan to the company Airspace (Apex) to develop new affordable homes within London's airspace. They predict that they could provide 180000 new homes in this way.

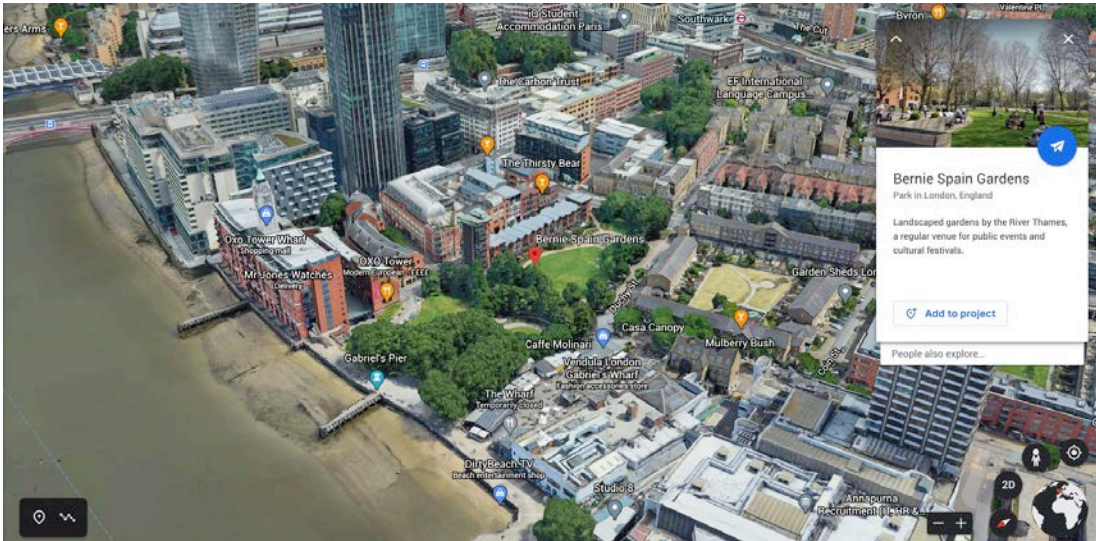
**Reflections/ Questions** Think here about how and where we can provide affordable housing in unaffordable cities.

### Resources:

- "London's view management framework" <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-chapter-seven-londons-living-space-2>
- "Apex Airspace plans 10,000 affordable modular rooftop homes" Hamish Champ Housing Today <https://www.housingtoday.co.uk/news/apex-airspace-plans-10000-affordable-modular-rooftop-homes/5103175.article>
- "Mayor of London backs Apex Airspace with £10million" <https://www.apexairspace.co.uk/mayor-london-backs-apex-airspace-10-million/>

## STOP G – COIN STREET (BERNIE SPAIN GARDENS SE1 9PH)

### MEETING POINT!!



Coin Street is a rather unique experience in the British planning history: this piece of land was in fact gifted by the Greater London Council to a non-profit community group, along with a £1m loan, for them to develop it. This process did not occur smoothly.

In the 1970s, there were a lot of pressure to use this 13-acre site for major development in keeping with the changes that we have seen on the Southbank so far. A project, designed by Richard Rogers, was proposed for a group of 16-story office blocks with a shopping arcade, the tallest hotel in London and new footbridge across the Thames.

The planned development sparked considerable community protests from the nearby residents who felt disenfranchised. They wanted to see family housing, a park and a continuation of the riverside walk on the site.

Under normal circumstances it would be hard to see how the community could stand against such pressure. However, the politics of the time and land ownership played to the benefit of the residents.

A key factor in determining the outcome of the conflict was the Greater London Council election. The previous administration had supported the development, but the new Labour Party administration changed sides and took up the cause of the local community. The GLC owned half the site and this gave it some leverage. They also changed the zoning of the local plan that immediately decreased the commercial value of the land. In 1984 the developers pulled out and sold their half of the site to the GLC. In turn the GLC then passed the ownership of the site on to a non-profit



company set up by the community groups. They also provided a £1M loan. The community was then able to develop the site for their desired uses.

There was, however, still a need for money: what the community group had been doing, renting out available open land in their ownership for car parking, was only a temporary resource. They included in the project the Oxo Tower, a previous electricity generating station that had then been later used as a warehouse, but that it went disused in the 1970s. The Coin Street Community Builders decided to rent out the very valuable top floor to a high-end restaurant of the tower to cross subsidize social housing, and community-oriented designer workshops and galleries on the lower floors. More recently, a similar cross-subsidization is taking place with the provisional parking space in Doon Street. The sale or letting at less than half of market rents of 236 flats will result in new leisure facilities for all community member, including a swimming pool.

**Reflections/Questions** Do you think a similar development can be replicated in other areas of the UK or in other countries? Has the market and its relationship to planning changed the context for such community involvement between the 1970s, 1990s, and now?

**Resources:**

- Coin Street Developments - <https://coinstreet.org/about-us/our-developments/>
- Coin Street Community Builders “Doon Street” <https://coinstreet.org/our-developments/doon-street/>
- Coin Street Community Builders “History” <https://coinstreet.org/about-us/history-background/>
- “Unexecuted design for the Coin Street Development, South Bank, Lambeth, London, for Greycoat Commercial Estates Ltd: elevation for part of an office building in a large commercial development” RIBA <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/RIBApix/image-information/poster/unexecuted-design-for-the-coin-street-development-south-bank-lambeth-london-for-greycoat-commercial-/posterid/RIBA85105.html>
- Fun Video of actor Bob Hoskins discussing the South Bank in 1982 – when he mentions the development by Greycoat Commercial Estates it is the Coin Street project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlrtcbLuoUM&t=124s>

## STOP H – BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE



Blackfriars Station was constructed in 1886 on the existing Blackfriars Bridge to create a city landmark, being the first British railway station situated on a bridge. In 2009, Jacobs and Tony Gee & Partners were commissioned to redesign the station to make it more efficient –in terms of commuter capacity and of emissions control.

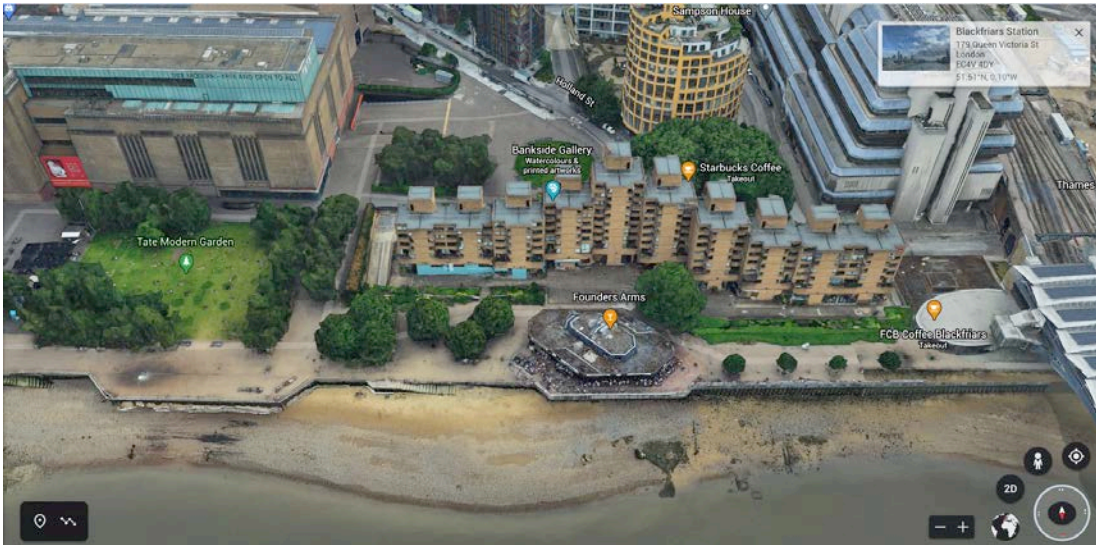
Even though there were some criticism over the glass entrance clashing with the Victorian bridge, the renovation was praised for its sustainable design and construction. It has the largest roof array of solar panels in the UK, providing more than half of the daily energy required. Also, the Thames was used to ship materials during construction so that no storage was needed on site, this helped to remove 2000 lorries from London’s streets. Finally, only one power generator was used during construction, reducing air and noise pollution.

**Reflections/ Questions** One of London’s objectives is achieving sustainability; it is often mentioned in the London Plan, in which a whole section is dedicated to it, mentioning sustainable construction as a way to fight climate change. How do you think a city should approach this matter? And furthermore, how else can the river be used as a resource?

### Resources:

- “Renovation of Blackfriars Bridge Station 2009-2013” London Transport Museum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0656i5E7zw>
- “Chapter 5- London’s Response to Climate Change” GLA <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-chapter-five-londons-response/poli-1>

## STOP I – RIGHT TO BUY (FOUNDER'S ARMS )



There is a great deal of talk that, in order to lower housing prices and ease the housing crisis, the UK needs to build around 300,000 homes a year. We have typically only met these numbers during the private housing boom of the 1930s when housing followed the railway lines out of London and in the post war period when the country began to build council housing (or housing owned by the State). Falcon Point was just such a building. Completed in the 1970's it would have served to meet the needs of residents in the borough of Southwark. But today more than 60% of the flats are privately owned and a one-bed flat ranges in price from £700,000 and up. What happened?

By the 1970s, council housing was losing favour amongst some residents and dominant political discourse. The election of Thatcher in 1979 brought in her signature policy of the Right to Buy, which gave council tenants the right to purchase their homes at a discounted rate. This policy began a rapid shift from state owned rented housing to home ownership. In the 1970s roughly half of people were owner occupiers, 20% were private renters and 30% were council/social tenants. Housing tenure in England now is roughly 70% owner occupied; 18% social rented and 13% private rented.

The result of this policy is mixed. How you view it will depend on your politics and your own reading of the situation. Right to Buy represented a big opportunity for some council tenants to own their first home raising the level of home ownership to 70%. However, it has also resulted in rising social polarisation, a diminishing stock of affordable housing and arguably higher house prices.

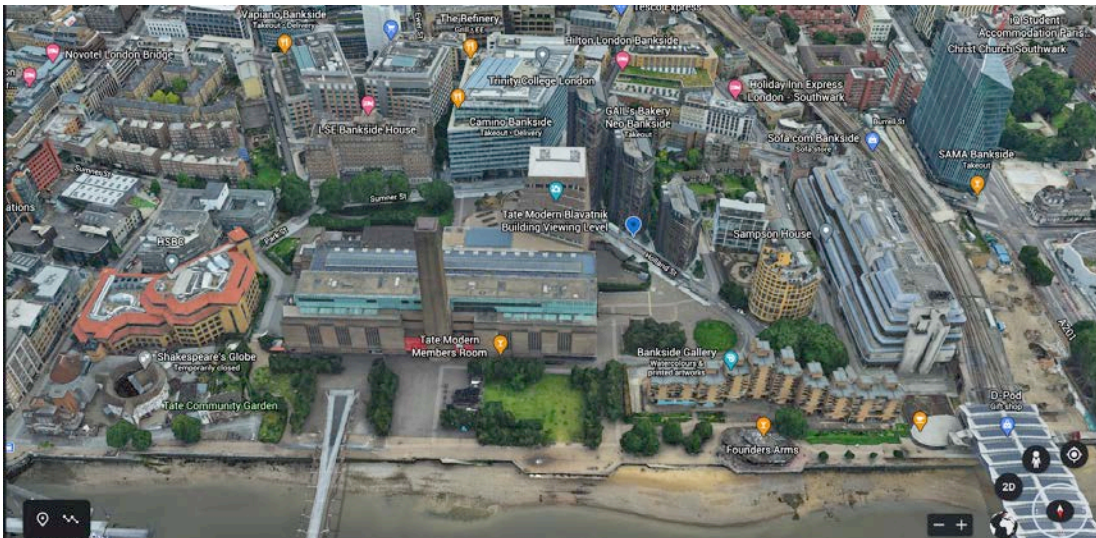


**Reflections/ Questions** Could the current housing crisis have been at least partially avoided had this policy not been implemented? What is the role of the state/the market/ society and the individual in terms of housing? Is housing purely a private good?

**Resources:**

- Shelter – UK Housing Charity <https://england.shelter.org.uk>
- LSE London – Housing Research <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lse/london/>

**STOP J – TATE MODERN & NEO BANKSIDE**



As we have previously discussed, since the Festival of Britain in 1951, entertainment was a key element in the development of the South Bank. The redevelopment of Bankside power station by Swiss architects Herzog & De Meuron gave this purpose a further boost.

The power station had been developed by Sir Gilbert Scott in two phases in 1947 and 1963. As early as the 1950s the plant was already causing increasing air pollution and pressures to close the plant, especially in light of the 1956 Clean Air Act mounted. Politics and economics allowed the plant to hold on until 1981.

The Tate Modern, opened in 2000 and gave a boost in terms of tourism to the area. Since its inauguration, other art galleries and tourist activities have opened nearby. Market pressures started to rise, with developers interested in building luxury complexes in this refurbished piece of land situated right across St. Paul's Cathedral.

Bankside Lofts was the first pioneer private scheme to develop around the Tate Modern, led by the Manhattan Loft Corporation. The well-known architect Piers

Gough designed the scheme and 120 flats were sold in the late 1990s, at prices starting from £800,000 for a studio apartment and £2m for a three-bedroom flat. This development paved the way to the construction of the award-winning NEO Bankside Buildings, designed by Richard Rogers.

Of interest, the residents of NEO Bankside came into conflict with the Tate when they sought to create their extension. There were objections from residents that the extension would allow patrons of the museum to see into their flats. In the end the planning inspector found in favour of the Tate and the extension that you see here today was built.

**Reflections/ Questions** There are two things to consider here. The first is about cities, gentrification and pollution. The architectural critic Rowan Moore describes the 1956 Clean Air Act as something that aided the foundations of gentrification as it made central London a more desirable place to be by removing polluting industries and cleaning up the city. Is there a way to create environmentally equitable places that do not become socially polarised? Secondly, did the residents of NEO Bankside have a reasonable point about the Tate's extension?

**Resources:**

- “The Politics and Economics of Technology: Bankside Power Station and the Environment, 1945–81” Stephen Murray <https://www-tandfonline-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/03058034.2019.1583454>
- Case summary: Neo Bankside Residents v Tate Gallery <https://www.forsters.co.uk/news/news/case-summary-neo-bankside-residents-v-tate-gallery>
- “Luxury flat owners lose privacy appeal against Tate Modern viewpoint” The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/feb/12/luxury-flat-owners-lose-privacy-appeal-against-tate-modern-viewpoint>

## STOP K – THE MILLENNIUM BRIDGE

You will now go back over the Thames towards St Paul's Cathedral crossing by the footbridge. This is the Millennium Bridge, which was opened in 2000. It was part of a design competition held by the London Borough of Southwark, The Financial Times and the Royal Institute of British Architects. A consortium of Arup (engineers) Foster and Partners (Architects) and Sir Anthony Caro (sculptor). It was the first bridge to be built over the Thames in 100 years. Typically bridges across the Thames require an Act of Parliament but in this instance, permission was granted by license by the Port of London Authority and planning permission was granted by the City of London and the London Borough of Southwark.

Please now follow your maps carefully past St Paul's Cathedral and into Paternoster Square.

## STOP L – PATERNOSTER SQUARE



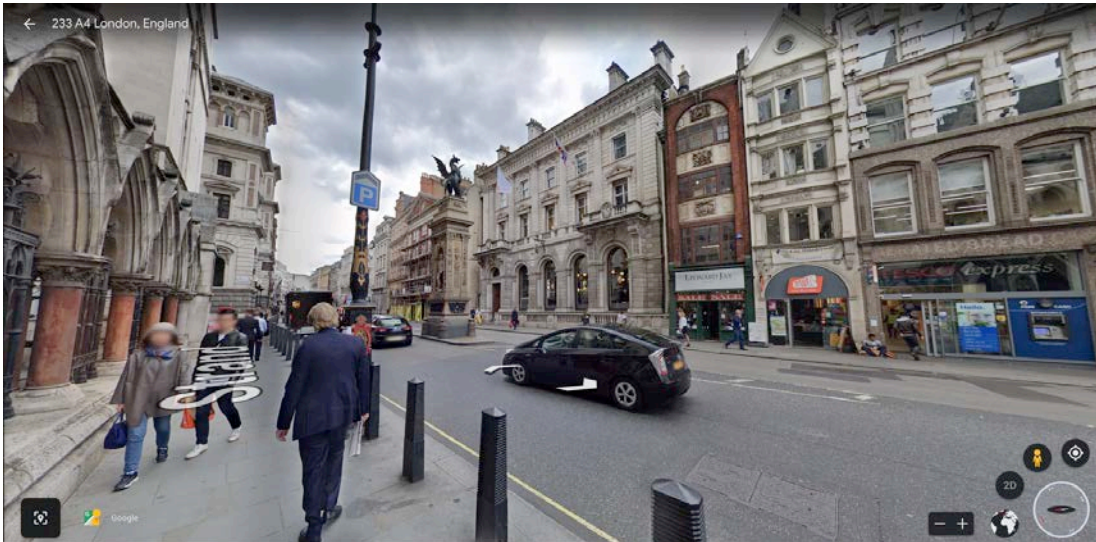
You are now in Paternoster Square, which has several interesting stories to tell us. The first is about design and taste. Look around you and try to determine what is new and what is original. Are the neo-classical features reproductions? Is there any architecture here that you think is 17<sup>th</sup> Century? The answer is that very much of the development is a pastiche of neo-classical architecture. Generally speaking, architects and heritage planners do not like this space as it tries to reproduce a past style and is therefore fake. However, many people, including Prince Charles find it very pleasing. This tension makes developing in sensitive areas, like here around St Paul's Cathedral very tricky. The answer to whether or not there is any original architecture is that there is. As a group try and understand which part of the development dates to 1672. Take a photo of what you think it is.

The second interesting issue is that of public space vs privatised public space. The square, though it is open to the public, is private. It is controlled by private security who can close the space as they see fit. The most famous moment of this in recent history was the Occupy movement protests of 2011. The Occupy movement was worldwide and in London the group occupied and created camps in many public spaces which included the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. Paternoster Square was able to close itself to the public and was therefore not occupied.



**Reflections/ Questions** There are two things to ask yourselves. First, how do we deal with issues of taste in terms of design in public spaces? Secondly, is there a danger to democracy when public space becomes privatised?

## STOP M – TEMPLE BAR



You should now be on familiar grounds near to the LSE and the Royal Courts of Justice on the Strand. There are a few things to end on here. First, you will see a strange animal sitting on top of a pillar in the middle of the road. The significance of this is that it marks the boundary between the City of Westminster and the City of London.

London is made up of 32 boroughs plus the City of London. Each has its own local government and each marks its territory in different ways. When you are walking around the city, you should see if you can spot these as it will tell you when you have crossed from one borough to another. It is also reflective of the relative power each borough has. Despite the highly centralised English planning system the boroughs have their own local plans and their own powers to grant planning permission this means that each has some degree of freedom in choosing what it prioritises in its plan.

The other interesting fact about the dragon is that it has a connection to Paternoster Square. If you made the right choice when you were there, you will have taken a photo of Temple Bar Gate, which was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. For 200 years this sat on Fleet Street and marked the gateway to the City of London.

It was removed in 1878 as Fleet Street needed to be widened due to the heavy traffic on the road. It was dismantled and stored in Farringdon Yard where it stayed for 10 years.

In 1889, Lady Meux, who is described as a banjo playing barmaid who married a wealthy brewer decided to buy the gate and have it erected at her Hertfordshire home in a bid to convince Victorian high society of her respectability.

In 1976 the Temple Bar Trust was founded with the purpose of bringing the gate back to London. This was finally achieved in 2001 at a cost of just over £3million pounds. It was placed at Paternoster Square. It is interesting to think how an historic gate came to be in an entirely new setting amongst a pastiche of classical architecture.

The genesis of this myth is likely to be the [Ceremony of the Pearl Sword](#) which has, from time to time, been held at the former site of Temple Bar on Fleet Street. During the ceremony the Monarch's carriage procession draws up, the City Police pull a red cord across the street where Temple Bar once stood, the royal procession stops, the Lord Mayor approaches the carriage and presents the hilt of the City's Pearl Sword to the Monarch who touches it and symbolically returns the sword to the Lord Mayor. This is act of feudal fealty in which the Lord Mayor surrenders his principal symbol of authority to the Monarch, who in turn (assuming she finds him suitably qualified to continue in office) returns the sword.

### **Resources:**

- You might enjoy this film about London boroughs and how they came about. The film is by Jay Foreman who does a number of films on London and planning. He is great so do check him out!  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T\\_0FYHn0I0&t=646s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_0FYHn0I0&t=646s)