

designated. Key artifacts, such as the cranes, were purchased and preserved. The first buildings to be restored were the Docklands churches. The cleaning and repairing of Nicholas Hawksmoor's St George in the East and St Anne's Limehouse were early indicators of an area about to be changed, but were nevertheless controversial as it was considered by many local organizations that the money should have gone into new social facilities rather than old buildings.

Warehouse restoration followed, with extensive early conversions happening in Wapping, the area of Docklands closest to the city. These too were initially controversial, as many felt they would rather see them demolished to make way for new uses. In one week over fifty fires were reported in empty warehouses. Some of the restorations could more accurately be called resuscitations, with structures such as the Old Skin Floor buildings at Tobacco Dock being rebuilt for retailing use to a standard of restoration that must have exceeded the original quality of the building. Structures such as dock walls were also retained, maintaining fragments of previous land patterns to which new building was forced to relate to.

In some of the most difficult areas, such as the Shad Thames area around Tower Bridge, the density of warehouse building initially defied reuse. The building regulations were not flexible enough to allow for the retention of cast iron columns and timber floors that were regarded as a fire hazard. The size of buildings such as the Butlers Wharf warehouse made them initially unattractive even to those developers prepared to work with old structures. However, gradually by example, the technical problems were solved and the steady build up of cleaned and restored structures acted as a catalyst for the restoration of the entire area.

Shad Thames is a long, narrow, winding Thameside street and one of the few surviving waterfront communities that used to characterize London's Dockland before the nineteenth-century expansion eastward beyond the original city boundaries. With other surviving areas in Rotherhithe, Wapping and Bankside it represented a pattern of development that was medieval in origin. The winding streets followed the line of the Thames and, although lined with tall nineteenth-century brick warehouses and other industrial structures, retained the informal, almost rustic, layout of an earlier period. The street has a strong urban quality and links a series of architecturally significant schemes ranging from the south piers of Tower Bridge to St Saviours Dock and Dockhead.

The decision was taken both to retain everything that could be retained and also to ensure that where new development occurred it should reflect the best of modern design. This approach extended beyond those buildings that were listed to include anything that could be said to preserve or enhance the area. Most critically it included the retention of the original geometry of the streets. It presented designers with a challenge. New buildings acknowledged, without replicating, the older, dense forms. The Vogans Mill development, for example, created a white tower constructed around the remains of a former grain silo. New office buildings at Saffron Wharf contrast with the adjacent dark brick. A new Design Museum was created out of a concrete-framed warehouse built in the 1940s.

The centerpiece of the area is the Butlers Wharf site, acquired relatively cheaply for less than £5 million in 1984 by a consortium led by Terence