



## Open Call Reimagining Butler's Wharf



(c) Steven Ehrlich

### 1 The Commission

The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) and the Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust (BWRT) invite architects, landscape architects, designers and artists to submit an expression of interest for our competition to develop a design solution that will enhance the hugely popular but unimagined riverside jetty which sits in the river in front of the warehouses of Butler's Wharf.

The design competition is to select a winning design to improve this important path and the experience it offers for residents and visitors. The winning team will be appointed to deliver Stages 2 and 3 of the RIBA Plan of Work which will enable the BWRT to raise the funding for the delivery of the selected design scheme. BWRT is also in the process of resolving complex issues around ownership, responsibilities and potential adoption by Southwark Council. BWRT's plan has been to aim to deliver or begin work in 2022 to celebrate the jetty's 100th anniversary.

The competition is seeking feasible design solutions which will encourage visitors and residents to use and cherish this important path, to understand why it is here, and to have their thoughts drawn to both the river and the buildings that once served this busy industrial site. We are seeking innovative, relevant, positive, and lasting change to this area of Bermondsey, which has the potential to serve as a connection between the trade, wealth, and dignity of both the past and the present.

The winning design will be selected by panel and public vote combined. Due to Covid-19, the format of local consultation on the shortlisted designs will be announced later in the summer.

2

## The Client

Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust (BWRT) began as a sub-committee within STAMP (Shad Thames Area Management Partnership), leading on issues facing the community regarding the site known as 'the jetty' at Butler's Wharf, which was becoming increasingly neglected. In 2017, the sub-committee evolved into a resident-led campaigning group, the Friends of Butlers Wharf Riverside, and the 'Friends' became a registered charity in February 2020 (Charity no. 1187952)<sup>1</sup>

The Trustees meet on a regular basis, and report to both STAMP and STRA (Shad Thames Residents Association). The Trust were successful in being awarded £30k from Southwark Council under their 'Cleaner Greener Safer' programme to fund this competition.

The Trust is guided by its agreed Aims and Objectives <sup>2</sup>.

3

## The Site

<sup>1</sup> <https://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1187952&subid=0>

<sup>2</sup> Butlers Wharf Riverside Trust Constitution



(c) Steven Ehrlich



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The site, known locally as ‘the jetty,’ comprises a concrete pier situated in the riverbed. The above-ground space is that section of the Thames Path that runs from St Saviour’s Dock footbridge to The Chop House restaurant, in front of the residential blocks Tea Trade Wharf, Spice Quay Heights and Butlers Wharf. Commercial tenants at the ground-floor level include Browns Brasserie, Blue Print Cafe, Ask Italian restaurant, All Bar One, Cantina del Ponte restaurant, Le Pont de la Tour restaurant and the former site of the Design Museum<sup>3</sup>. It forms the riverside walkway in front of what was originally the Butler’s Wharf Estate and has iconic views of Tower Bridge to the west, St Katharine’s Dock and Hermitage Moorings across the river and Canary Wharf to the east.

The earliest legal mention and drawing of the present structure is contained in a Port of London Authority licence dated 4th August 1920 ‘to construct an embankment at

<sup>3</sup> Ariel site photo 2017

Bermondsey<sup>4</sup>, which replaced an existing smaller structure, and was finally licenced on 1st September 1922<sup>5</sup>.

The site at Shad Thames is the largest collection of preserved Victorian warehouses in one place in the whole of London, comprising 15 separate buildings, which shaped both the industrial and river landscape during their active use between 1863 and 1973 before falling into disrepair. The site was then semi-derelict and became home to squatters, artists, film makers, and musicians. Sir Terence Conran bought the Butler's Wharf Estate in the 1980s and his development of the site represents one of the biggest regeneration stories in recent times. Conran created a 'gastro-dome' with open-backed restaurants and a thriving residential neighbourhood in the 80s and 90s to the present day. Towards the end of Conran's sometimes-controversial regeneration, the jetty was decorated with 'nautical junk' obtained from a ship yard in Portsmouth. These anchors, chains and propellers remain today and are held in real affection<sup>6</sup>.

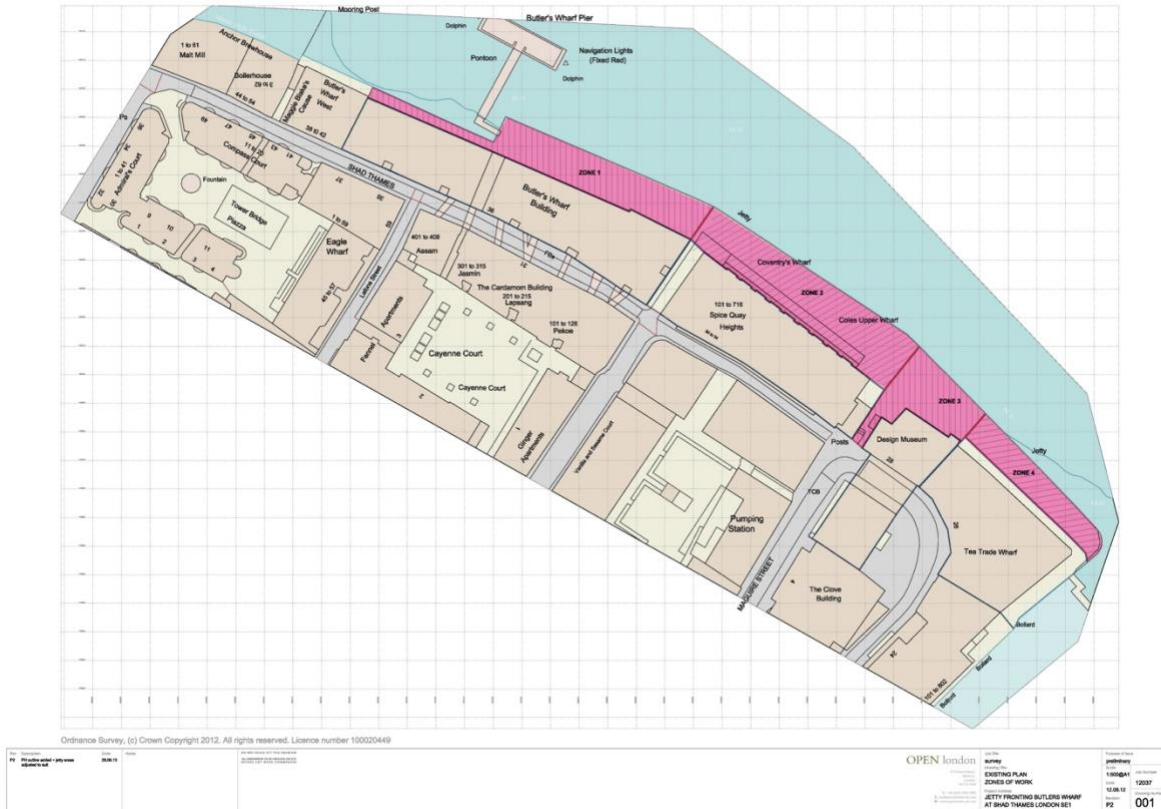


Aerial photo of the site

<sup>4</sup> Port of London Authority licence 4/9/1920

<sup>5</sup> Port of London Authority licence 1/9/1922

<sup>6</sup> Background to the regeneration of the site can be found in greater detail in 'My Life in Design' by Terence Conran, published by Conran Octopus 2016, pp157-163, and here : <https://southwarknotes.wordpress.com/art-and-regeneration/art-empty-southwark-industrial-buildings-1971-1979/>



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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we would strongly advise you not to visit the site as part of your project research. For a virtual walk through the site please go [here](#).

For more photographs of the site go [here](#).

All the other supporting documents can be found [here](#).

4

## Legal background

The jetty, as a structure in the riverbed which impedes river traffic, is seen by the Port of London Authority as 'works' in the river and is therefore subject to a number of River Works Licences. Over the years these licences have been reassigned and amended to reflect development here, including the addition of licences for balconies, outside dining and commercial entities. An extensive research exercise between the Trust and the PLA has resulted in the collection of over 40 different licences and presents a picture about rights and responsibilities that is very complex.

In summary, the structure is a chattel owned by the freeholders of the neighbouring buildings, in the case of Tea Trade Wharf, the former Design Museum and Spice Quay Heights this is Petchey Holdings Ltd or a company within their group.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Site map including River Works Licence zones

Petchey are required to insure and maintain the site, the extent to which is the subject of debate. They recover licence fees, insurance and maintenance costs from residents and businesses in percentage terms that reflect their individual footprints. In addition, Petchey are paid fees for frequent filming onsite.

Southwark Council take no responsibility for the site and make no contribution to its upkeep. The footbridge across St Saviour's Dock is owned by the Council and has been the subject of ongoing repairs since 2019, which reflects the bridge's significant use, bringing people on to the jetty in increasing numbers with corresponding wear and tear.

Shad Thames does not fall within the remit of the nearby Business Improvement District that serves much of the local community, and as such cannot immediately benefit from proposals brought forward by Team London Bridge.

The area has powerful neighbours including City of London which owns Tower Bridge, London Bridge City, which oversees nearby land including More London and Potters Field Park which is managed by a private trust. The jetty forms part of the Thames Path and Jubilee Walkway, which attract no special permission nor funds for maintenance, and allows access at the discretion of the landlord.

Last year, in partnership with Shad Thames Area Management Partnership (STAMP) and Petchey Holdings, the Trust secured funds to situate a new 'zig-zag' bench on the jetty, providing planting and sheltered seating. The bench has been enormously popular and marked the beginning of the community conversation that something *could* be done to improve the site

Shad Thames Residents Association also explored the idea of a Green Wall which has proved difficult to deliver but was widely supported in principle.

The Trust believe there is a compelling case for a long-term partnership with and eventual adoption of the site by Southwark Council. The details of this partnership are the subject of ongoing positive discussions.

5

## The opportunity

As Londoners are encouraged to walk and seek out fresh air, the jetty has become more and more popular, drawing people travelling from east to west and coming up from the south of the borough. Residents, walkers, school children, joggers, wheelchair and buggy users, tourists and workers use the site daily, amounting to millions of visitors each year.

The site pays little heed to the maritime or industrial history of the area and the jetty, which connects these buildings to the river, once the lifeblood of the city, and was completely overlooked when the site was repurposed for housing. Indeed, very few visitors are aware

that the structure is a pier, and the river lies beneath. It now forms a popular path, but one where design and a sense of place is lacking.

This opportunity therefore seeks to improve this important path and the experience it offers for residents and visitors. In particular, we are looking for designs that achieve the following:

- create a sense of place
- reflect the maritime, industrial and human history
- emphasise and protect the views
- connect people with the river and river activity
- educate visitors
- create a path for walking and quiet contemplation
- provide green and sheltered seating
- replace existing lighting with appropriate carbon neutralising lighting
- enable opportunities for art
- celebrate and bring together the community
- encourage healthy habits
- enable seasonal decorating such as at Christmas and other festivals

6

## Ambition

The riverside setting here offers a sense of immortality and energy. The project has an opportunity to reveal the structure and the river that laps beneath visitors' feet. The conclusion of the Tideway super-sewer will result in making the Thames significantly cleaner, resulting in improved conditions for wildlife and activity on the river. It is desirable that the selected design includes new planting, to encourage birds and insects, and to provide small places to sit and enjoy the view, to have a facility to share education and information about the people and their work here.

We invite competition applicants to re-imagine this area, for all its users, to celebrate its unique history, to connect the new and often transient inhabitants with the old, with the river and with the landscape here, where the iconic Tower of London and new Walkie Talkie are framed by Tower Bridge.

The proposed intervention should rethink this site, and provide a more thoughtful, gentle, appropriate place, with sustainable, low-carbon seating, lighting, plants and information, and continue the green ribbon that threads through the residences and cultural corridor from the Southbank to Greenwich.

The competition seeks new designs that will provide the community with an inclusive re-imagining exercise reflecting both the river-side liquid history and the warehouse human

purpose. This is an opportunity to embody the whole city, to represent the local story and to reflect the national character.

The project is led by long-term local residents who have conducted an extensive evidence gathering exercise, talking to neighbours, stakeholders, investigating similar projects and building relationships with potential partners. In doing so the project has gathered widespread energy and support.

7

## Design requirements

The applicant is required to provide a creative design solution for the intervention which improves how people experience and interact with the jetty, while enhancing the look and feel of the site. We are looking for hard-wearing interventions that function for visitors and passers-by (are not purely sculptural) and are realistic to the brief (do not become a pavilion or a folly). They must be safe, durable and offer a low-cost design solution to the brief. A series of practical interventions are desired to animate and enhance the jetty. The project should take a holistic design approach, creating bespoke and integrated experience through the site. It should include:

seating

lighting

planting

signage

interactive information

water refill station

We welcome ideas and proposals that have sustainability at their heart and reduce the reliance on the use of new materials and natural resources. Our ideal would be to convert the site to embrace negative emissions technology and if possible, to raise funds from giving back to the national grid to help fund maintenance.

Because resident and business stakeholders already pay in excess of £100k per year to the Port of London Authority in River Works Licence Fees and insurance, simply to have the jetty positioned in the river, there is little appetite for increased maintenance costs. Proposals should therefore aim to minimise these.

Ideas that combine safety improvements, such as the railings, with green solutions, such as new railings that house solar panels, are preferable. It is important that designs take in to account the important views of the river, Canary Wharf and Tower Bridge which are seen from the restaurants and flats, and in no way obscure them.



Ideas and proposals should be compliant with all relevant disability legislation.

Proposals should include retaining the best of the existing 'nautical junk' propellers, chains & anchors already onsite. These are not secured in position and can be repositioned or reoriented.

Ideas and proposals should bring the site in to compliance with Southwark Council health and safety requirements.

The London Plan, Walkable London, The Southwark Plan, Estuary Edges by Thames 21 are among the relevant plans that already exist and offer standards for best practice.

8

## Technical information

BWRT have not commissioned their own site survey but those provided for insurance purposes have been shared with us by the freeholders <sup>8 9 10</sup>.

The site is constrained by:

limited accessibility

jetty structure and load bearing maximums

utilities including electricity but no water/irrigation

noise and potential temporary disruption to nearby businesses, residents and visitors

potential protected species

the bottleneck/narrow nature of St Saviour's Dock footbridge

Utilities:

The site has electricity, which is located in three separate zones, reflected in the festoon lighting chains in front of the 3 main residential blocks; Tea Trade Wharf, Spice Quay Heights and Butlers Wharf.

We have been provided with a report on the possibilities for lighting and renewable energy here by Atelier 10 in conjunction with Illuminated River <sup>11</sup>. The conclusion is that solar powered lights would be most suitable providing a suitable surface can be found to site solar panels or making use of existing green energy sources. Tea Trade Wharf are citing new solar panels on their roof in 2020, Spice Quay Heights conducted decarbonising improvements in 2017 and Zaha Hadid Foundation may propose similar works to the former Design Museum site.

9

<sup>8</sup> Butlers Wharf Jetties - F J Samuely Survey Report-18-12-09

<sup>9</sup> Butlers Wharf Jetties - F J Samuely Foreshaw Report 02-2014

<sup>10</sup> F J Samuely letter containing additional information about handrails and load-bearing 22-01-2001

<sup>11</sup> Lighting & Renewable Energy Report - Atelier 10 - 31/10/2018

## Budget

The winning team will be appointed to deliver Stages 2 and 3 of the RIBA Plan of Work which will enable the BWRT to raise the funding for the delivery of the selected design scheme.

The fee for the winning team to bring the project to planning stage is £7,900 including VAT.

Half of the fee will be awarded in October 2020, on receipt of a signed agreement in which you commit to provide a more detailed design as per your submission and any revisions as requested by Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust. The remaining fee will be given after delivery of Stages 2 and 3 of the RIBA Plan of Work and submission of the planning application for the project.

9

## Submission

This competition has a two-stage submission. This first stage submission should include:

1. Full name and contact details including postal address, contact number and email of project lead.
2. Brief biographies of all the project team.
3. A 200-word description about your practice along with any relevant technical experience acquired through previous experience; please include images of relevant previous work.
4. A short paragraph of max. 300 words on why you are interested in being involved in the project. You may wish to include some thoughts about your vision including any initial written reactions you may have to the brief.
5. No design work is required for the first stage and any included sketches will not be shared with the judges.

These submissions will be shortlisted by the judging panel. Up to 6 shortlisted practices will then be invited to develop a design concept based on the information laid out in this open call and will be awarded an honorarium of £500 Inc. VAT each.

The work required for the second phase of the project will be reflective of the honorarium sum; therefore, we will be expecting the equivalent of an A2 board explaining your proposal. This can come in the form your practice feels will most effectively communicate your design to the judging panel.

11

## Eligibility

The competition is open to architects, landscape architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations however the project must be actively led by a named architect or landscape architect.

12

## Deadline and submission details

- Deadline for first submission is midday 12.00pm on Friday 24 July 2020. Submissions received after this time will not be considered.
- For competition enquires please contact: [rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](mailto:rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)
- Please send expressions of interest in a PDF format via:  
<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/reimagining-butlers-wharf/>
- The PDF should be no more than 5MB and 10 A4 pages.
- You will receive an email confirming receipt of your submission.

13

## Schedule outline

Submissions open: Thursday 25 June 2020

Submissions closed: Friday 24 July 2020

Successful shortlisted practices notified: w/c 3 August 2020

2<sup>nd</sup> submission: Friday 11 September 2020

2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews: w/c 14 September 2020

Winner notified: w/c 21 September 2020

14

## Judging panel

Sir Terence Conran (Designer, restaurateur, retailer and writer)

Sarah Gaventa (Director, Illuminated River Foundation)

Johanna Gibbons (Partner, J & L Gibbons)

David Ogunmuyiwa (Principal, ArchitectureDoingPlace and Mayor's Design Advocate)

Dr Emma Sanderson-Nash (Chair, Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust)

Ruth Slavid (Journalist and editor)

Tamsie Thomson (Director, London Festival of Architecture)

15

## Further information

- The judges welcome entries from, or collaborations with groups who are underrepresented in architecture. This is in line with the Mayor of London's Supporting Diversity Handbook, a pdf and online version of which can be found [here](#).  
To process entries to this competition we will share your application and any associated personal data provided on the application with our jury and competition partners.
- Submissions will be judged on originality, demonstration of creativity, and relevance to the brief as well as feasibility and how the proposal works in the context of the site.
- The ownership of Copyright of the design will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.

- All designs remain the intellectual property of the designer however the winning design will itself when built will be the property of Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust.
- Please bear in mind the project requires a fast turnaround and may have peak moments when your practice will need to dedicate sufficient staff to deliver the project on time, to budget and to the high standard expected by all stakeholders.
- Significant efforts are made by all stakeholders of the project to ensure wide media coverage; the winning design team will need to provide relevant spokespeople as requested.
- London Festival of Architecture and Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust reserve the right to use images from the submissions for promotional purposes in press, social media and publications. All endeavours will be made to ensure accurate accreditation.

16

## Useful links

London Festival of Architecture:

[www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](http://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)

Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust:

<https://www.butlerswharfriverside.org>

17

## Contact

To submit your entry please visit:

<https://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org/reimagining-butlers-wharf/>

For general enquires please contact: [rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](mailto:rosa@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)

18

## Disclaimer

The competition organisers are not liable for lost, misdirected, or late entries. Decisions of the jury represent their professional judgments and all decisions are final. While it is the intent to construct the winning scheme, the organisers reserve the right to not proceed with construction for any reason. Material submitted by you shall be your sole responsibility, shall not infringe or violate the rights of any other party or violate any laws, contribute to or encourage infringing or otherwise unlawful conduct, or otherwise be obscene, objectionable, or in poor taste. By submitting such material, you are representing that you are the owner of such material and/or have all necessary rights, licences, and authorisation to distribute it.

19



## London Festival of Architecture

The London Festival of Architecture celebrates London as a global hub of architectural experimentation, practice and debate. The festival returns to the capital from 1-30 June 2020 with a lively and diverse programme of public events across London exploring the theme 'power'. The London Festival of Architecture began in 2004, and has since grown to become Europe's biggest annual architecture festival. The festival attracts a vast public audience – 800,000 people in 2019 – and a global media audience of millions. The vast majority of events are free, and are staged by a core festival programming team working alongside architecture and design practices and practitioners, leading cultural and academic institutions, artists and many others. In 2017 the London Festival of Architecture was named by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan as one of his design advocate organisations, and is working alongside the Mayor's team to champion architecture, provide expertise and guidance, and help to make London a better city.

[www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org](http://www.londonfestivalofarchitecture.org)

Twitter: @LFArchitecture



## Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust

Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust (BWRT) began as a sub-committee within STAMP (Shad Thames Area Management Partnership), leading on issues facing the community regarding the site known as 'the jetty' at Butler's Wharf, which was becoming increasingly neglected. In

2017, the sub-committee evolved into a resident-led campaigning group, the Friends of Butlers Wharf Riverside, and the 'Friends' became a registered charity in February 2020 (Charity no. 1187952)

The Trustees meet on a regular basis, and report to both STAMP and STRA (Shad Thames Residents Association). The Trust were successful in being awarded £30k from Southwark Council under their 'Cleaner Greener Safer' programme to fund this competition.

Twitter: @bwriverside

Instagram: @butlerswharfriverside

[www.butlerswharfriverside.org](http://www.butlerswharfriverside.org)