

A walk from Ray Street to Tabernacle Street

This walk takes us through Clerkenwell to South Shoreditch. These pavements are well trodden by guided tours but by following the locally listed buildings we can see some of the less well-known corners.

We start at a pub, in Ray Street, just off Farringdon Road. The former Coach & Horses, now The Coach, is a fine 1897 neo-Baroque public house, decorated outside with the fanciful motifs popular at the time. At roof level is a cartouche with the pub's original name, a challenge to later attempts to change it. The ground floor frontage is impressive, with marble pilasters and wooden fluted columns.



The Coach (& Horses) Ray Street

Round the corner in Crawford Passage is one of Islington's early street bollards. Real canon were used in the late 1700s and early 1800s, particularly after the Battle of Waterloo. When the supply ran out, imitations were cast, often with a "cannon ball" projecting from the muzzle. The imitations were usually hollow castings but the best are quite convincing.

Cross Farringdon Road, up Pear Tree Court and turn right into Clerkenwell Close. This still follows the old medieval street line; on the left was St. Mary's nunnery and the parish church. After the Dissolution, the nunnery was replaced by the grand Newcastle House, while the old medieval parish church gradually crumbled away. In 1792 it too was replaced with the grade II listed St. James's Church, by the local architect and developer, James Carr. He also redeveloped the Newcastle House site with a row of six terraced houses. Demolition was planned after WWII but two of them, Nos. 47 and 48, were saved and substantially rebuilt in 1991. The original local listing was in 1970 but the later rebuilding has reproduced the facades with some precision.



47 & 48 Clerkenwell Close

Clerkenwell Close still retains much of its atmosphere, though its mix of ducal palaces and artisan workshops have long gone. The locally listed Challoner House, a heavily restored Victorian commercial building, is on the site of the mansion of that name which stood opposite Newcastle House.

Leave Clerkenwell Close with The Three Kings pub on your right, part of the medieval street pattern as it winds round St James's church. There has been a pub on this site since the mid-1700s but the current structure was built in 1871. for the east London brewer Mann, Crossman and Paulin. The architect was Robert C James. The tiled exterior was added in the 1930s and is an important survival in its own right.

Turn left into Clerkenwell Green, left into Sekforde Street and then right into Hayward's Place. The road narrows as you cross Woodbridge Street and you come to a terrace of small artisan dwellings on the right-hand side. They are dated 1834 on No. 3 but Nos. 5 and 6 were rebuilt after World War II bomb damage, which destroyed the other side of the alleyway. They were lived in by distillery workers at No. 201 St. John's Street, built in 1828 by John Blyth. There are few other examples of artisan housing of this date in Clerkenwell and they are an important survival.

When you emerge through the archway onto St. John Street, turn right towards Clerkenwell Road. Before you reach the junction turn right into Albemarle Way and a terrace of late Victorian shopfronts, of which Nos. 3, 4,5, and 8 are locally listed. They have an unusual arrangement of mullions and transoms which divide the display windows. Their brackets and fascias are intact, with timber stallrisers below. In spite of adjustments over the years, the original historic shopfronts remain largely intact.

At the corner with Clerkenwell Road is No. 84, a striking and distinctive wedge-shaped building. It was built in 1879 for Edward Culver who was a gold chain maker and jeweller. The Clerkenwell Road frontage displays the name "The Printworks" and between 1894 and 1915 it may have been used for that purpose. In the 19th century Clerkenwell was the home of many thriving jewellery businesses and this building housed at least one of them. Printing was another important industry in Clerkenwell in the 19th century and this building has links with that industry too. It is a particularly distinctive Clerkenwell industrial building.

Walk eastwards along Clerkenwell Road. After it becomes Old Street turn right onto Honduras Street and you come to a former London board school, dated 1888 on the pediment facing Honduras Street. The London School Board built some 400 schools in its thirty or so years of existence between 1870 and 1904. E. R. Robson was appointed its architect in 1871 and remained there until 1884, when T. J. Baily took over. Robson established the design style which the Board was to follow, Arts & Crafts, with Queen Anne and Baroque references. This school refers back to that style, with its grand pedimented gable end on Baltic Street East and Baroque details on the separate Boys, Girls and Infants doorways on the other side of the building.

At the corner of Baltic Street East and Golden Lane is a well preserved 1870s warehouse. It has varied and original window detailing on the upper stories capped by a heavy cornice. It retains its hoist and crane bay on Baltic Street East with external machinery intact. The ground floor and access bays have been modernised but do not spoil the overall effect.



115 Golden Lane

Turn right onto Golden Lane, left onto Fortune Street and then into Errol Street. No. 12 is a former school, designed by W.H. Boney a north London architect who lived in Highgate and designed the former Highgate Methodist Church, now the Jackson's Lane Community Centre. The north elevation is particularly fine, with stepped first floor windows, a single gable, and date and dedication plaques. It is an important memorial to the early years of the Leysian Mission for which it was built. This was founded in 1886 by old boys of the Leys School in Cambridge. It started in Whitecross Street, then moved to No. 12 Errol Street in 1890, where it provided facilities for Sunday schools, Boys Brigades and a Girls Parlour. It quickly outgrew Errol Street and moved in 1904 to City Road. No. 12 Errol Street is now the headquarters of the Royal Statistical Society.

Round the corner in Bunhill Row we come to the Artillery Arms. There has been a pub on this site since the 1830s, but this building dates from later than that, when it was renamed the Artillery Arms in the 1850s. The name derives from the Royal Artillery Company, which is based nearby. The pub frontage retains most of its original features and is an important landmark by Bunhill Fields cemetery. These days it is a civilised, welcoming pub. But it wasn't always like that. Until the sport was banned the pub was a centre for rat baiting, in which a dog was put in a confined space with a large number of rats. The sport lay in how many rats the dog could kill and how long it took. Punters bet on the outcome. A terrier called Tiny managed two hundred in an hour on two occasions, in 1847 and 1848. The landlord had storage space behind the pub for around 6000 live rats at a time.

Walk through Bunhill Fields and cross City Road into Epworth Street and then Tabernacle Street. This was the centre of the furniture trade which dominated this part of south Shoreditch between around 1860 and 1945. Every stage of the process took place here, from woodyard to showroom, often on the same site. No. 41 Tabernacle Street is an attractive example. It has a showroom on the ground floor, with manufacturing space and storage above. It retains the architectural detail in its windows and brick work, and particularly in the showroom exterior on the ground floor.



41 Tabernacle Street

The Windmill is a prominent public house on a corner site between Tabernacle Street and Epworth Street. Its late Victorian pub frontage is intact, with granite stallrisers, multipaned leaded glass windows, panelled doors, pilasters and its original street signage. It is a fine old pub built to serve workers in the furniture trade. It provides a florid contrast to the austere classicism of the Victorian and Edwardian warehouses nearby.

The information in this walk is based on the efforts of the volunteers who worked on the project to revise Islington's list of locally significant buildings. This work is now complete and has been submitted to the Council.

Artillery Arms and Three Kings references from "Clerkenwell & Islington Pubs", Johnny Horner, Amberley.