

This is a city walk embracing Shoreditch/Hoxton and north Spitalfields. Both areas include streets that are vibrant with life, old streets and housing estates.

- Main route 10.3 km circular walk
- options to Shoreditch Park, Bell Foundry etc
- divide walk in two here - approx 5.6 km each
- Railway

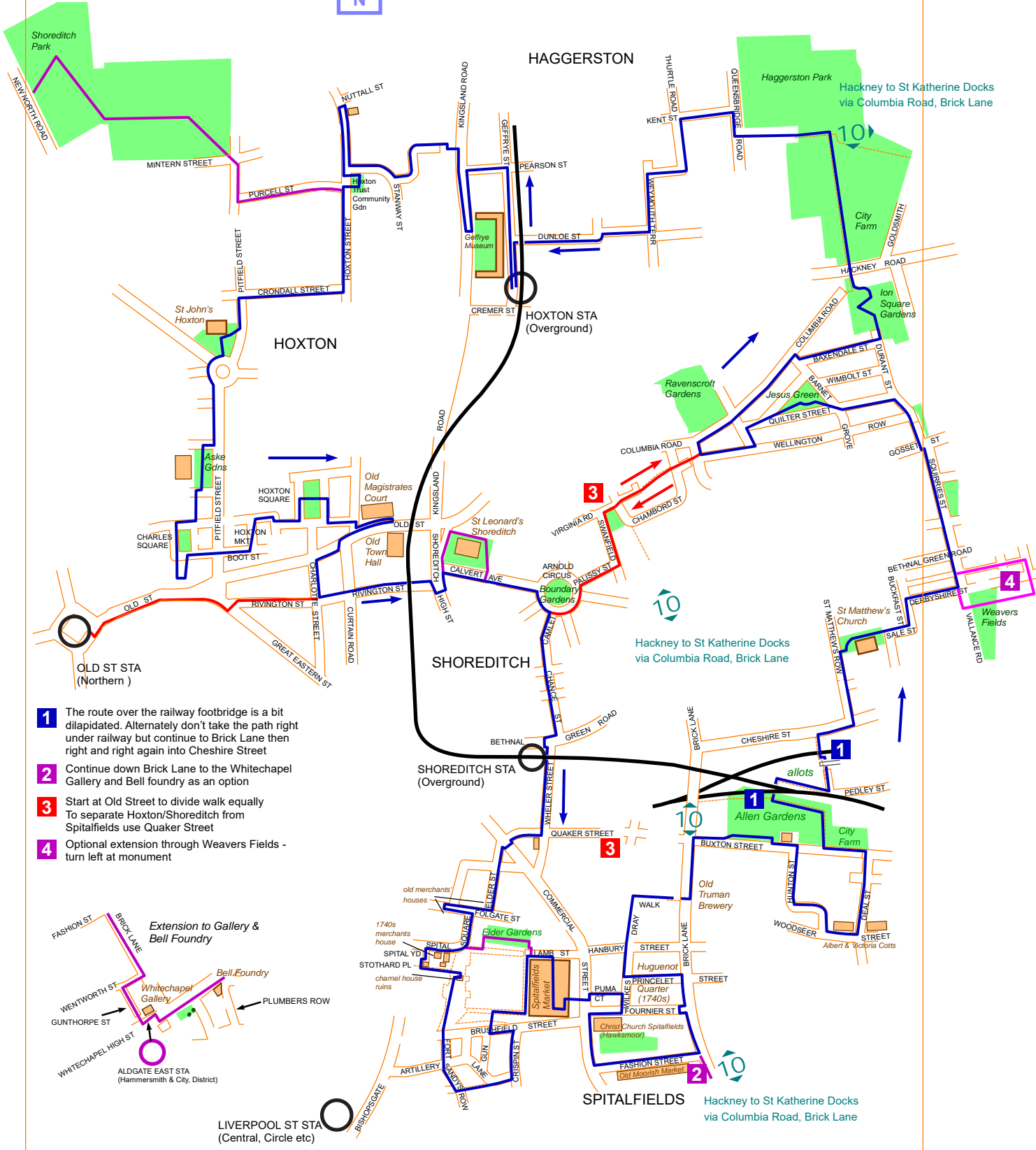


connection with another walk

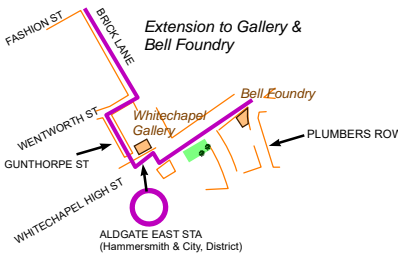
0.5 kilometre



Hoxton, Shoreditch and north Spitalfields



- 1** The route over the railway footbridge is a bit dilapidated. Alternately don't take the path right under railway but continue to Brick Lane then right and right again into Cheshire Street
- 2** Continue down Brick Lane to the Whitechapel Gallery and Bell foundry as an option
- 3** Start at Old Street to divide walk equally To separate Hoxton/Shoreditch from Spitalfields use Quaker Street
- 4** Optional extension through Weavers Fields - turn left at monument



walk notes

Hoxditch & North Spitalfields

This pavement walk is a slog but can be easily cut in two.

Hoxton and Shoreditch

Shoreditch originated at the junction of two important Roman roads, Kingsland Road (Ermine Street) and Old Street. The Shoreditch parish of St Leonards included Hoxton to the north-west and Haggerston to the north-east until 1830. Much of the area was blighted by the railways and the blitz but there are pockets of interest and this walk links them.

The Hoxton area was laid out to a formal street pattern. Hoxton Square was laid out shortly after 1683. Hoxton Market was simply called the Market Place; the market has since moved to Hoxton Street. Hoxton and Charles Squares were the most fashionable residential areas in the parish of Shoreditch. One of the earliest Academies (1669) was in Hoxton Square. Outside the jurisdiction of the City, Hoxton remained mainly rural except for the brickfields until the coming of the Regents Canal. Hoxton was also known for its 'lunatic' asylums and its places of entertainment. Hoxton Square was by the mid nineteenth century a centre of the furnishing trade. It is becoming known for its media workshops. Buildings and items of interest in Hoxton include:

Georgian buildings can still be seen. No. 32 Hoxton Square is late seventeenth century or early 18th and is a rare survival. No. 56 is early to mid 9th century on a possibly earlier house. No. 10 was the church vicarage.

The remains of the **old work house** on Hoxton Street (it used to stretch back to Kingsland Road, where its old buildings now form part of S Leonard's Hospital.

Hoxton Hall was first built as a Music hall by James Mortimer in 1863, as MacDonald's Music Hall in saloon-style. A grade II* listed building at 130 Hoxton St, renovated in 2015, the theatre has an iron-railed, two tier galleried auditorium on three sides, supported on cast iron columns, above a small, high, multi-tiered stage. It survives largely in its original form after having been used as a Quaker meeting house for many years.

Aske's Hospital or the Haberdashers' Alms Houses, was originally erected 1693 to designs of Robert Hooke the scientist for the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers, funded by Robert Aske to provide accommodation for twenty "decayed members" of the Company. Hooke's building was replaced by a smaller one by D.R.

Roper in 1826. It is distinguished by its fine central Doric portico flanked by plain stock brick wings. In front is a small public park.

St John's Church, completed in 1826 in the Classical style, and the only one built to the design of Francis Edwards. The building is a large example of a Commissioners' church, with its original floor plan intact, as well as notable galleries and décor, including a spectacular painted ceiling executed in the early 20th century by the architect Joseph Arthur Reeve. There is a plaque on Pitfield Street to the site of Pimlico Hostelry & Pleasure Garden, a noted place of entertainment, established by 1590s. Ben Jonson, playwright, poet and writer of court masques, fought a duel near here and escaped execution by citing chaplains right.

Hoxton Trust Community Garden was laid out by the Hoxton Trust in the early 1980s. It contains the C19th cupola from the old Hackney Work House at Homerton. The site was once that of an C18th lunatic asylum, Holly House, later built over with housing.

The Geffrye Museum is set in almshouses built in 1714 by the Ironmongers' Company, with a bequest from Sir Robert Geffrye, twice master of the Company and former Lord Mayor of London to provide homes for around fifty poor pensioners. They are now recognised for their historical importance as Grade I listed buildings.

A large proportion of the parish of St Leonards Shoreditch in mediæval times belonged to religious foundations. The Augustinian Priory of Holywell was situated within the parish, and owned a considerable estate therein. The Priory of St. Mary Spital was just outside, but owned a portion of southern Shoreditch east of the main road as well as the greater part of Haggerston. Shoreditch has suffered badly from the advent of the railways, the blitz and now office development. The walk avoids the Curtain Street/Worship Street area and strays, rather, over into Bethnal Green before returning through Haggerston Park.

St Leonards church has been in existence since Anglo-Saxon times and had a vicar in 1185. The present building designed by George Dance the Elder was erected in the eighteenth century. It was was the only church he designed and built from an original design. However, this new church caused a scandal when first opened. It was very unlike the chunky and ornate Hawksmoor style so popular in the late Baroque period. The slender columns and

subtle colonnades, and bright windows were an innovation that was hard to accept as a church. Luckily tastes have changed and now it is seen as a national treasure. It is, with its Clerk's House, the oldest building in Shoreditch.

The Boundary Estate was Britain's first council estate, raised from the rubble of one of London's most notorious slums, the Old Nichol. Despite the intention for the estate to house the 'deserving poor', only 11 of the original Old Nichol residents were amongst the 5,100 housed.

In 1742, having previously rejected a Hawksmoor design, the parish of Bethnal Green was authorised and George Dance was commissioned to design a smaller and more reasonable church. The building was completed and dedicated in 1746. In the blitz the church was left as a roofless shell. In 1957 it was decided to rebuild the church and Antony Lewis was appointed architect and the present church was re-consecrated in 1961.

The Jesus Hospital Estate was established as a charity in 1679 by a Hertfordshire man called James Ravenscoft who bequeathed to the charity some farmland in Bethnal Green. In 1822 the charity decided to create new homes. Sadly the houses were so dreadful that they all had to be pulled down and rebuilt 40 years later. The Charity trustees, including Reverend Elwin and solicitor Quilter, recruited Joseph Baxendale, civil engineer and former CEO of Pickfords, and Richard Durant, one of the few landed gentry with a concern for the working class and others and together they created the estate we see today .

125–130 Shoreditch High Street was a purpose-built foundry and showroom from about 1880.

Home to a significant group of brick warehouses from the 19th and 20th century furniture and printing trade, the area around Rivington Street/Charlotte Road gets a real buzz from its galleries, print shops, media companies, cafes and street art.

Spitalfields

There are many reports on the history of this fascinating and diverse area. See

<http://www.spitalfields.co.uk/spitalfields-history/>

<http://www.eastlondonhistory.co.uk/visit-spitalfields/>

and

<http://www.exploringeastlondon.co.uk/eel/Spitalfields/Spitalfields.htm>

A significant Roman burial ground was excavated in the 1990s when Spitalfields market was redeveloped. Spitalfields takes its name from the hospital and priory, St. Mary's

Spittel that was founded in 1197. This was one of the most significant hospitals in the country at the time until it was taken apart on the orders of Henry VIII during the dissolution of the monasteries; at that time the hospital, which belonged to the priory, was found to contain one hundred and eighty beds. In place of the hospital many large mansions were built. Beneath the pavement of Bishops Square near where the Roman remains were found can be seen(through glass) the remains of a building from about 1320, which was used for storing the bones of the dead. This was part of the St Mary Spital complex which included an Augustinian priory, an infirmary, a church and a cemetery. When the priory was closed in 1539, the bones were removed and a house built above the site.

At this point, more people started to set up home in the area and in the 17th century, Huguenot weavers moved into Spitalfields to escape from persecution in France. Spitalfields was ideal for the Huguenots who needed to work outside the restrictions of the city's guilds and Spitalfields was outside this jurisdiction. As the Huguenots built Spitalfields into a centre of silk weaving excellence, the area became more developed and more housing was constructed. It is thought that the first streets in the area were built then. The houses inhabited by the weavers had wide latticed windows in the upper storeys, to light the looms. The weavers also supplied London with singing-birds, and half the linnets, woodlarks, goldfinches, and greenfinches sold in the metropolis.

The landmark Truman's Brewery opened in 1669 in Brick Lane. By 1789 a 30-year-old Quaker businessman, Sampson Hanbury, had purchased a share and came to live in the brewer's house. Hanbury, was a member of an extensive network of Quaker merchants, bankers and brewers. For a brief time in the 1800s it was the biggest brewery in the world - it sent Imperial Stout to the Russian court and IPA to the British Raj. It remained resolutely independent until succumbing to the merger mania of the 1980s. In 1989 the brewery and pubs were sold and Truman's closed its doors.

In 1682 King Charles II granted John Balch a Royal Charter giving him the right to hold a market on Thursdays and Saturdays in or near Spital Square. In 1876, a former market porter called Robert Horner bought a short lease on the market and started work on a new market building, which was completed in 1893 at a cost of £80,000. In 1920, the City of London

acquired direct control of the market, extending the original buildings some eight years later. With no room for the expansion it so badly needed, the market was forced to move and in May 1991, it opened its doors at a new location in Leyton.

Spitalfields

Spitalfields was a hamlet of Stepney until 1729, when it was made a distinct parish, and Christ Church consecrated. Christ Church was built between the years 1714 and 1729 as part of the church building programme initiated by the Fifty New Churches act of 1711, backed by Queen Anne. At the time, there were fears that 'godless thousands' outside the City of London had no adequate church provision, and that non-conformists –including large numbers of French Huguenot silk weavers –were moving into Spitalfields and bringing their non-conformist worshipping ways with them. The Commission stipulated that the new buildings should have tall spires so that they would tower above the smaller, non-conformist chapels. Funding was to be through taxes on coal coming into London, but building progressed fitfully.

Irish weavers joined the Huguenots, but both groups were finding it hard to compete with cheap French imports. In 1769, unrest boiled over, leading to the Spitalfields Riots. By the 19th century, most of the area's traditional industries, including silk weaving, had moved elsewhere, although the area still produced some textiles. With the decline of local industry Spitalfields became poverty-stricken, over populated and with little work. The grand houses that the Huguenots had built became slums. By the late 19th century, many people considered the area to be the most criminal in all of London.

The Irish were followed by **East European Jews** escaping the Polish pogroms and harsh conditions in Russia; as well as entrepreneurial Jews from the Netherlands. From the 1880s to 1970s Spitalfields was overwhelmingly Jewish and probably one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe with over 40 Synagogues.

By the 20th century, Spitalfields became the home of many **immigrants from Bangladesh**, many of whom ultimately made their homes in and around the nearby Brick Lane. The area is now partly dominated by office blocks, although some of the old houses remain and are being renovated.

Norton Folgate

Norton Folgate, an extra-parochial liberty of nine acres in Whitechapel district until 1911, in the line of Ermine-street, took the former part of its name from its situation N of Bishopsgate, and the latter part from the Saxon Foldweg, signifying a "highway, " in allusion to Ermine-street; and the name was formerly written Northern-Foldgate. An extra-parochial liberty meant that it was outside the influence of the church. The area north of Artillery Passage consisted of two liberties, the northern being Norton Folgate and the southern the Old Artillery Ground. The latter had its origin as part of the precinct of the Priory of St. Mary Spital; in 1604, much of the liberty was occupied by the disused or adapted buildings of St. Mary Spital Priory, an Artillery Ground was created there in 1538, under Henry VIII, for the use of 'The Fraternity or Guild of Artillery of Longbows, Crossbows and Handguns', also known as 'The Fraternity of St George'. In 1658 the Honourable Artillery Company moved to a new Artillery Ground in Bunhill Fields. Norton Folgate had a more obscure history associated with a distinct Manor of Norton Folgate which may have antedated the priory.

As in other liberties the inhabitants of Norton Folgate were not always wholly law-abiding. A considerable amount of disorderliness and numerous trivial offences are recorded in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century court rolls; indulgence in the inflammatory game of 'cosh' appears to have been one of the most popular pastimes and thieves could prey upon travellers along Bishopsgate Street.

Norton Folgate was once so familiar to most Londoners that Mr Burgess could say, in GB Shaw's play *Candida*, "I never met a man as didn't know Nortn Folgit before".

Dennis Severs' house at 18 Folgate Street is a recreation of a Huguenot silk weaver's family home. Its restricted public opening allows visitors to experience the sights, sounds and smells of domestic life in the 18th century (or thereabouts) in a way that no mass access museum can achieve.

Puma Court, east of Spitalfields market, has almshouses 'for the poor inhabitants of the Liberty of Norton Folgate,' built in 1860 to replace those of 1728.

The Save Norton Folgate group continues to campaign for a more sympathetic alternative to British Land's intentions.

More detailed notes of part of this walk see <http://www.tonero.me.uk/walkmaps/T&Swalks83JF.pdf>