



U.S. Lighthouse Society ~ Lighthouses of the United Kingdom

Bow Creek Lighthouse

(Trinity Buoy Wharf in London Borough of Tower Hamlets)





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History

In 1803, the site came to be used by *The Elder Brethren of Trinity House* which is now known as Corporation of Trinity House, and the seawall here was reconstructed in 1822, built by George Mundy of Old Ford. The site was used as a maintenance depot, and storage facility for the many buoys that aided navigation on the Thames; and the wharf for docking and repair of lightships.

The original lighthouse was built by the engineer of Trinity House, James Walker, in 1852. and was demolished in the late 1920s. The surviving lighthouse was built in 1864-6 by James Douglass for Trinity House. It was used for lighting trials for Trinity House's lights around England & Wales. Michael Faraday also carried out experiments there. The pair of lighthouses were used for training prospective lighthouse keepers.

Late 20th Century to the Present

The lighthouse no longer functions and in December 1988, the Corporation of Trinity House closed the wharf, and the area was acquired by the London Docklands Development Corporation. In 1998, Urban Space Holdings Ltd took control of the site on a long lease. The site has been, and continues to be, developed as "a centre for the arts and cultural activities". Enhancements include studio space (including unusual architecture based on used shipping containers) and exhibition space.

Urban Space Holdings have used the area to develop 'Container City' in 2001, a studio and office complex made from recycled sea shipping containers. The original project was made from 80% recycled material. "Container City 1" took 5 months to complete, taking 4 days to install. The Container City project proved very popular and in 2002 "Container City 2" was completed delivering a further 22 studios across 5 floors in a with a brightly colored ziggurat design. A further extension to the Container City Complex was the "Riverside Building" located next to the Thames facing The O₂ dome. This was yet another architectural design providing an additional 22 studio spaces.

On 30 November 2005, the University of East London opened Fine Art studios at the wharf, and on the 25th September 2009 the University of East London opened two dance studios at the Institute of Performing Arts Development in The Chainstore at Trinity Buoy Wharf.