

Aberfeldy Street in Poplar Painted with Amazing Murals

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Aberfeldy Street is a street in Poplar which has recently undertaken a huge makeover. All the shopfronts along the street have been painted with bright colours and patterns. Part of a community project to brighten up the area, it's had a transformative effect.

Part of a project to help boost businesses during lockdown. It's a response to the economic havoc being caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The colours and patterns themselves have been designed by local people. The work has been inspired by the Bangladeshi tradition of Kantha which is about recycling and the transformation of something old into something new.



Some of the buildings and shopfronts on Aberfeldy Street

Aberfeldy Street Transformation

That's certainly what's happened here. The old shopfronts between Dee and Blair streets have been transformed. "Since Covid we have redefined the High Street" said Mikey Weinkove of the People Speak. "It's more of a place for people to meet, have a coffee and see each other. We need that even more since lockdown". The result is actually something quite unrecognisable from what it once was.

Art has been used as the catalyst. Working with the [London Mural Company](#) the design was commissioned from Jan Kattein architects. It took six weeks and used over 800 litres of paint and 300 spray cans to complete. The result is a bold and unapologetic transformation. Working with [Poddar Harca](#) and [EcoWorld](#) it's been all in. Both organisations own buildings in the street and both are intent on supporting sustainable communities.



Some of the patterned shutters on Aberfeldy Street

Tommy Flowers Pub

It's not the first time that street art has appeared on Aberfeldy Street. In May 2018 the Tommy Flowers pub opened. A micro pub housed in an old shop front unit, it brought a much needed social activity back into the street. On the outside wall of the pub, street artist James Cochran painted a portrait of Tommy Flowers, which still stands now.

Founded by [Garry Hunter](#), he's been working in arts management around the area of East London for years. Bringing a pub back to the area was key to it's renewal. The last pub, [The Aberfeldy](#), was part of the original estate built in 1959 only to be pulled down in 2015. It left a hole in the community and local support was crucial in it's development. [Tommy Flowers](#) himself was a post office engineer who would go on to work at Bletchley Park in the war. In 1944 he developed the worlds first programmable computer called [Colossus](#). Flowers was only born a short walk away at 160 Abbott Road.



Portrait of Tommy Flowers on Aberfeldy Street by James Cochran aka Jimmy C

History of Aberfeldy Street

The area of what is now the Aberfeldy Estate was badly hit during the second world war. It's proximity to the docks didn't help and the whole area was heavily targetted by German bombers. Much of the area of Poplar suffered extensive damage as a result. The areas former pub, [The Aberfeldy](#), which sat at 357 East India Dock Road was destroyed in 1944. Much of Aberfeldy Street meanwhile was destroyed in 1940 during the blitz. A [high explosive bomb](#) landed in the middle of where the painted street is today, causing huge damage.

Many of the streets around Aberfeldy Street are named after Scottish towns. Indeed Aberfeldy itself takes its name from a market town in Perthshire. It was an engineer called [Hugh McIntosh](#) who would develop much of the area. Moving down from Scotland in 1803 he lived in Poplar due to it's close proximity to the East India Docks. There he would make a name for himself by working on the docks development. Later he would move to Mile End and entered the property business. This was a boom time for the growth of London and in particular the East End. The city saw many new streets and homes being built at this time.



Painted houses

Street Art Murals on Aberfeldy Street

Aberfeldy Street is certainly entering a new era. Part of a wider regeneration project, street art is clearly key to this. Already the shopfronts have completely transformed the street beyond recognition. Additional murals have also been added as part of the 2020 [London Mural Festival](#). Gable ends at either side of the street have been painted by artists Philth and Captain Kris. Both well known to us on Inspiring City, they are established artists on the urban art scene.

Philth's work is a patterned flowery piece. He is known for his delicate imagery and finds inspiration in the natural world. The mural itself is about vibrancy and growth. He wanted to "remind city dwellers that they are still part of nature". Captain Kris at the other end created an immersive mural surrounding the words 'Against All Odds'. Again themes of nature can be seen running through it. Two significant additions to the street art scene in London.



Mural by Philth at one end of the street



Mural by Captain Kris at the other

The shopfront painting of Aberfeldy Street was completed in August 2020 by the London Mural Company. The recent murals by Philth and Captain Kris were painted in September 2020 as part of the London Mural Festival. Aberfeldy Street was visited in 27 September 2020.

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