



No.36 Seymour Walk

Today, Seymour Walk sits within The Boltons Conservation area and still retains its quiet village-like atmosphere, much like it did when it was first built 200 years ago. No.36 Seymour Walk was completed in around 1810 and has continued as a family home throughout its history. It has been the home of many different people, from a retired beer seller, a 'railway station inspector' and a man who professed to be a 'tea taster', a clerk and a house painter. Seymour Walk has been the home of playwright Douglas Jerrold along with artist Mary Moser.

Origins and name changes

There is some uncertainty about the origin of the name of Seymour, as there were a few men with the name 'Seymour' from whom it may have originated. However, given the road was also previously known as Somerset Place, it is more likely the name Seymour originated from the Dukes of Somerset. The naming of Seymour Walk has also changed a number of times over the last 200 years. Originally named Seymour Place, until in 1834 the entire west side and the east side to No.34 were renamed Somerset Place. At this time, today's Nos. 36- 58 were identified separately as Seymour Terrace. The street was renamed again in 1866, when all homes came under the name of Seymour Place, and for the third time, in 1938 the entire street was renamed Seymour Walk.

Little Chelsea – village in the country

This area along today's Fulham Road, formerly known as Little Chelsea, originated with a small collection of homes during the 17th century as a small village separated from its bigger neighbours; Chelsea proper towards the river and Kensington by Kensington Palace. Along with small cottages the area was chosen as a place for large homes away from the busy city. In fact, Seymour Walk was the location of one of the most well known houses, with a large enclosed garden.

17th century grand house

The grand 17th century house was formerly home to eminent residents including Sir John Griffin and Sir John Rolles, Knight of the Bath. The house then passed through a number of owners and by the 18th century was home to a grocer of Covent Garden, who was using the surrounding land for growing vegetables. However, by 1790 the house and grounds were sold to Francis Mayoss, who was described as 'brickmaker, builder and gentleman'. By this time the area of Little Chelsea was still predominately covered by fields and gardens. Francis Mayoss leased the large house, while he began to build shops and small homes along Fulham Road.

Early building and Mary Moser

Building began in Seymour Walk during the 1790s, with the unusual twist in the layout from Fulham Road believed to have been a purposeful design to act as a separation from the more commercial and business element of Fulham Road. One of the first houses completed was the larger No.1 that Mayoss took as his own home in 1793. He later moved to No.3 when No.1 became the home of artist Mary Moser and her husband Captain Hugh Lloyd. Mary Moser was one of only two female founding members of The Royal Academy and she was also commissioned by Queen Charlotte to paint a room at Frogmore House.

Building continues and Thomas Chandless

Mayoss continued to build large homes along Seymour Walk during the early 1800s. However, he soon began to sell off properties and land, including all the land northward of No.14 in 1806, which still lay largely undeveloped. The land was purchased by Thomas Chandless of Portman Square, who finished the construction of homes along Seymour Walk, including the home we know as No.36 today.

Residents move in – Douglas Jerrold

Despite the larger, more attractive designs of homes in Seymour Walk, it took a while for residents to move in. It wasn't until the late 1820s and early 1830s that the majority of the homes became fully occupied. It was around this time that one of Seymour Walk's most notable residents moved into the street, playwright and author, Douglas Jerrold, who lived at No.46 in around 1832-4.



Seymour Terrace – “every requisite comfort and convenience”

As mentioned earlier, the different names attributed to sections of Seymour Walk also meant that early house numbering was quite different to what it is today. No.36 Seymour Walk was in fact known as No.1 Seymour Terrace. The parish rate books for Seymour Terrace show that one of the first residents of No.1 was a Mrs Elizabeth Matthews, who moved in sometime during the mid-late 1820s and stayed until 1839. In September 1839 an advertisement for No.1 appeared in *The Times* for “apartments to be let, furnished [and] suitable either to a single individual or a married lady and gentleman.” No.1 Seymour Terrace was described as “very pleasantly situate within 20 minutes drive [in a carriage] of Hyde Park Corner, and combine[s] every requisite comfort and convenience with economy, the rent being only 16 shillings a week.” It also adds that “Omnibuses to town every 10 minutes: fare six pence”.

Richard and Sarah Hailing

The house was taken by Richard Hailing and his wife, Sarah, who were listed in the house from 1840. Richard Hailing passed away in 1845, but Sarah Hailing continued to live in Seymour Terrace. The 1851 census shows Sarah living in the house, 65 years old and described as a ‘gentlewoman’. At the time she also had two visitors in the house, Harriet, a 63 year old widow receiving an annuity and George Buck, a 32 year old stationer. Sarah passed away in 1858 at the age of 72.

Families, lodgers and boarders

The house then appeared listed in the 1861 census as home to Thomas Norris, a corn collector, with his wife Maria and their five children. Along with the Norris family, No.1 Seymour Terrace was also home to two lodgers, Robert Fergusson, a retired beer seller and his wife Emily, as well as a boarder, Harriet Dobson, a 75 year old widow from Nottingham. No.1 Seymour Terrace was renamed and numbered No.36 Seymour Place in 1866 and by the time of the 1881 census, fortunes had begun to change. No.36 was now divided between two families, the first, Edward Govier, who was already a widower at the age of 37 with two sons, Edward and William. Edward senior’s sister, Martha a single ‘former governess’ was living with the family, looking after the house and family for her brother.

George Allen – man of many trades

By the early 1880s the house was also home to the Allan family, with the head of the house, George Alfred Allen, a ‘tea taster’, aged 23 with his wife, Henrietta, aged 27 and their new born son, Frederick. The Allen family also had a lodger, 71 year old Ann Allen, receiving an annuity, although it is uncertain what relation she was to George and Henrietta. George and Henrietta remained at No.36 Seymour Place for many years; however, George seems to have tried a number of different professions. The 1891 census lists him as mercantile clerk and the 1901 census lists him as a house painter.

Many residents sharing just a few rooms

During the years of the late 19th century the Allen family continued to share the house with others. The 1901 census gives us a clearer picture of how the rooms were shared in the house, especially when you consider the number of people living in just a few rooms. The Allen family occupied three rooms, however, there was also the Butler family, consisting of Herbert, a drapers’ packer, and his wife Harriet, a cooks domestic and their one year old son, as well as a boarder, 22 year old John Young, all of whom occupied just two rooms. Lastly, there was Hannah Davis and her four children (all working as domestic servants) occupying two rooms. However, despite the number of people living in the house, it is worth noting that in Charles Booth’s map of London in 1899, Seymour Place was recorded as ‘fairly comfortable [with] good ordinary earnings’.

20th century changes – the Cook family

The Allen family remained at No.36 Seymour Place for many years. George died in 1907, but his widow Henrietta continued in the house until around 1911. Drainage plans in 1912 reveal that the house was completely reconstructed, creating two separate living quarters. From 1913, No.36 Seymour Place became the home of Cecil and Hannah Cook, along with their son and daughter, Arthur and Gladys, who remained at Seymour Walk for the next 40 years. By which time the street had finally been renamed Seymour Walk.