



The Design Museum mourns the loss of its founder, design visionary, Sir Terence Conran

Saturday 12 September
the Design Museum

Terence Conran, founder of the Design Museum, designer, philanthropist and businessman, has passed away on Saturday 12 September, he was 88 years old

Through a series of parallel careers, Sir Terence Conran had a greater impact than any other designer of his generation, revolutionising everyday life in contemporary Britain

Founding the Design Museum in Shad Thames in 1989 following an innovative start as the Boilerhouse in the basement of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sir Terence

Conran was a visionary mentor, leader and philanthropist. In 2016, The Design Museum relocated to Kensington, West London. Leading architect John Pawson converted the interior of a 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programme. The Design Museum is now the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over seven million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams.

His ongoing commitment and support to the museum was recognised with a medal for Arts Philanthropy in 2012 and in 2017 the Queen awarded him the Order of the Companions of Honour for his major contribution to the arts. Terence was the subject of a monographic exhibition *The Way We Live Now* at the Design Museum in 2011 to coincide with his 80th birthday.

Born in 1931, Terence studied textile design at London's Central School of Art. Leaving studies in 1948 to seek full time employment, he set up a workshop with his tutor, the artist and print-maker Eduardo Paolozzi where he concentrated his skills on furniture design, ceramics and fabrics. The early 1950s saw Terence work on the Festival of Britain alongside architect Dennis Lennon.

Terence founded Habitat in 1964, the furniture company that he grew from a single, high profile outlet in London, to a national and international chain. Habitat was the springboard for Conran's expansion into the retail mainstream. As the founder of the Storehouse Group he acquired the Heal's furniture business, set up Next and ran British Home Stores and Mothercare. Terence continued to be involved in retail after he opened the first The Conran Shop in 1972, with eight stores located in London, Paris, New York and across Japan.

Terence was also at the forefront of professionalising design in Britain throughout his life. Founded over 60 years ago, The Conran Design Group demonstrated the best of design in Britain, specialising in interiors, hotel and restaurant design, graphics, products and homeware. Terence would also go on to establish an architectural practice with Fred Lloyd Roche called Conran Roche and eventually became Conran and Partners.

Alongside design, food was also one of Terence's great passions and he became a renowned restaurateur. His first restaurant, with Ivan Storey, The Soup Kitchen, opened in London in 1953 and he went on to open many more including Pont de la Tour, Bibendum, Orrery, Quaglino's and Mezzo. His restaurant interests extended to Paris, New York, Copenhagen and Tokyo.

Tim Marlow, Director and Chief Executive, Design Museum said:

"Terence Conran was instrumental in the re-designing of post-War Britain and his legacy is huge. He is revered by generations of designers from Mary Quant and David Mellor to Thomas Heatherwick and Jonny Ive. He changed the way we lived and shopped and ate. He also created a great institution – the Design Museum - of which he was justifiably proud and with which he remained fully engaged right to the end of his extraordinary life. It was a privilege and an inspiration to know him."

Deyan Sudjic, Director Emeritus, Design Museum said:

“No one has done more to create modern Britain than Terence Conran. He spent his whole career looking for ways to make life better for everyone.”

Lord Mandelson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Design Museum said:

“Terence Conran has filled our lives for generations with ideas, innovation and brilliant design. He is one of the most iconic figures of post war Britain, starting to recast the world of design when as a young man he joined the team working on the 1951 Festival of Britain and never stopping from that moment on. He leaves a treasure trove of household and industrial design that will stay with us forever. And in the Design Museum which he conceived, inspired and drove, he has the most brilliant, enduring tribute and legacy. All of us at the Museum will miss him terribly and never lose sight of what he believed in and what he has contributed to the UK story.”

The Design Museum will celebrate his life, career and contribution to the museum with a commemorative display and memory book for the public to sign.

Ends.

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BIOGRAPHY

1931 Born in Kingston upon Thames

1948 Enrolled in Central School of Arts & Crafts

1949 Shared a studio in London’s East End with Eduardo Paolozzi. Began making furniture

1950 On the advice of his tutor leaves course at Central to work for architect Dennis Lennon. In the evenings he works on window displays in Simpsons, Piccadilly

1952 Opens Conran & Company from a basement in Notting Hill, selling furniture from a showroom in Piccadilly Arcade

1953 Opens Soup Kitchen in Chandos Place, inspired by the elegant simplicity of affordable restaurants in France at the time. It housed the second Gaggia coffee machine in London

1954 Opens Orrery restaurant on Kings Road

1955 Started Conran Fabrics

1956 Set up Conran Design Group, designing among other things a store for Mary Quant in Knightsbridge

1963 Moved his operations to 40,000 square foot factory in Thetford, Norfolk, taking 80 staff and their families with him

1964 Habitat opens on Fulham Road in Chelsea with staff in uniforms by Mary Quant and hair styled by Vidal Sassoon

1965 Habitat opens second branch on Tottenham Court Road

1966 Habitat opens further branches in Manchester, Brighton and Glasgow

1968 Merges company to form Ryman Conran

1970 Neal Street Restaurant opens, which until its closure was run by Terence's sister Priscilla and her husband, Antonio Carluccio. Conran Associates replaces Conran Design Group

1973 Habitat's largest branch opens on Kings' Road and first branch of Conran shop opens on site of original Habitat store

1974 Publication of House Book by Mitchell Beazley

1976 Opens Habitat shop in Citicorp building in Manhattan under the name Conran

1980 Conran Foundation set up, dedicated to educating the public and British industry on the value of industrial design. Habitat becomes a public company.

1981 Boilerhouse (the initial incarnation of the Design Museum) opens at the V&A. As Chairman of Hepworths, uses his position on the board of a menswear chain to develop Next. Buys 11-acre site at Butlers Wharf for redevelopment

1982 Purchased Mothercare; launch of Habitat Basics so popular in Japan that Seibu (the department store that franchised the line) developed the 'no brand' formula to create MUJI.

1983 Receives his knighthood to become Sir Terence Conran

1985 Conran Octopus created with Paul Hamlyn to produce educational but inspiring books about interiors, gardening and cookery

1986 Boilerhouse closes at V&A to begin renovation of Shad Thames site; Habitat-Mothercare merges with British Home Stores and rebranding begins to become BHS. Benchmark furniture-making company set up in the grounds of his home in Berkshire.

1987 Buys the Michelin Building in Fulham Road and refurbishes it to become home for the Conran Shop, Octopus publishing and Bibendum restaurant

1989 Design Museum opens at Butlers Wharf

1990 Retires from Storehouse, sets up Conran Holdings from an apartment in Shad Thames, Butlers Wharf

1991 Conran Restaurants set up. Design company Conran Roche becomes CD partnership.

1994 Conran Shop opens in Shinjuku Park Tower in Tokyo

1999 Conran Shop opens in New York underneath the 59th Street Bridge, along with the restaurant Guastavino's. Merges CD Partnership with Sebastian Conran Associates to form Conran & Partners, or C&P

2000 Opening, in partnership with Wyndham International, of London's Great Eastern Hotel which became one of London's most successful hotels

2003 Named Provost for the Royal College of Art. Starts developing the Conran Collections, a series of brand licensed products that reflect his lifelong philosophy to bring good quality, contemporary homewares to a wider audience. Ranges now include Bed by Conran, Light by Conran, Terence Conran by Royal Doulton, Content by Conran and Vision by Conran

2004 Awarded Prince Philip Designer of the Year award for services to design. Conran & Partners complete work on Roppongi Hills, a new urban quarter in the heart of Tokyo, created by the Mori Building Company.

2006 Conran restaurants renamed D&D London but Conran Holdings maintains a 51% stake in the business. Sells Great Eastern Hotel to Hyatt Hotels

2007 Launches range of cookware for Royal Doulton. Becomes an honorary Doctor of Science at Southbank University.

2012 Design Museum Exhibition: Terence Conran - The Way We Live Now from 16 November 2011 - 4 March 2012. Awarded The Prince of Wales Medal for Arts Philanthropy which celebrates the impact of givers to the arts and won the Lifetime Achievement medal at the London Design Festival

2016 Sir Terence Conran cuts the ribbon to open the new Design Museum in Kensington High Street on 24 November. Awarded the Order of the Companions of Honour in the Queen's Honours List.

2017 the Design Museum welcomes 780,000 visitors in its opening year.

2019 Opens the first and largest Conran Shop in Seoul, South Korea