# An Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief at the British Museum, North West Development, Bloomsbury, London Borough of Camden, WC1: An Interim Summary Report

MPB 09

October 2011

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

Site Name: the British Museum, North West Development, Bloomsbury, London Borough of Camden, WC1

Type of project: Excavation

Quality Control

| Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | Name & Title | Signature | Date |
| Text Prepared by: | Rebecca Haslam, | | 12/10/2011 |
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| Project Manager Sign-off: | Peter Moore | | 14/10/2011 |

| Revision No. | Date | Checked | Approved |
|---|---|---|---|
| :1 | 24/10/2011 | | 24/10/2011 |
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**An Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief at the British Museum, North West Development, Bloomsbury, London Borough of Camden, WC1: An Interim Summary Report**

**Site Name: The British Museum North West Development**

**Site Code: MPB09**

**National Grid Reference: TQ 529960 181750**

**Written and Researched by: Rebecca Haslam**

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, April 2011**

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# 1 ABSTRACT

1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological excavation and watching brief on the North West Development site at The British Museum, Bloomsbury, London Borough of Camden, WC1 (TQ 529960 181750), site code MPB 09. The project was commissioned by The British Museum and was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between 1st June and 8th November 2010, prior to the construction of the World Conservation and Exhibition Centre.

1.2 The underlying geology consists of Thanet Sands and Lambeth Group deposits capped by brickearth.

1.3 Roman, Saxon and medieval pottery fragments were found, all of which were redeposited within post-medieval contexts.

1.4 The earliest *in situ* evidence of human activity unearthed on the site dates to the Post-Medieval period and consists of several potential field boundaries, a brick drain and a large brick lined cistern that could represent a well or a soak-away.

1.5 Cartographic evidence suggests that the Parliamentarian Civil War defences ran through the site. A ditch and the base of a possible rampart were identified during the excavation, which may form part of these. The earliest deposits in the ditch suggest that it fell out of use and was partially in-filled in the mid 17th Century.

1.6 The garden wall of the mansion known as Montagu House was identified during the excavation, which records suggest was built between 1675 and 1679. An extension to the gardens was added between 1700 and 1725 and a section of this was also found. Pits and linear features that may represent planting holes and bedding trenches in the ornamental gardens of Montagu House were unearthed.

1.7 A series of pits containing cattle burials were discovered in an area of probable farmland to the immediate north of the ornamental garden wall. The cattle were complete, demonstrating that they were not killed for their meat. It is likely that they died of an infectious disease that wiped out numerous individuals at the same time, a theory that also explains why most of the graves contained several individuals.

1.8 The Bloomsbury area was urbanized in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and part of this development included the construction of terraced housing on Bedford Square and Montague Place. The rear gardens of these properties extended across the site, up to the original garden wall of Montagu House, which remained extant. Numerous late 18th to 19th century garden features, including walls, wells, cesspits, soil horizons, planting beds and paths, were found in the former locations of these gardens. The east-west section of the garden wall of Montagu House was partially rebuilt at this time. It formed the southern side of an extension to the garden of 6 Bedford Square, known as “Lord Eldon’s Walk”.

1.9 Montagu House was demolished in the 1840s and replaced with the current British Museum buildings. Construction work on these began in 1820 and continued throughout the 19th century. One major later addition was the Bindery, which was built in 1898.

1.10 The gardens of the properties fronting Bedford Square and Montague Place were partially annexed in the late 19th and 20th centuries in order to make way for the expanding museum. Numerous walls and services associated with this phase of activity were unearthed during the excavation, most notably the below ground foundations of the Bindery in Areas 1/8/10 and 4/5/6. The excavation demonstrated that the north and south walls of "Lord Eldon's Walk" and the northern garden wall of Montagu House were reused as the footings for this building.

1.11 Several modifications were made to the British Museum during the mid 20th Century. Of particular significance to the excavation is the Bindery rebuild and extension, undertaken in the mid 20th Century. Numerous fragments of what were originally thought to be one or more fossilised marine reptiles of probable Triassic to Cretaceous age were extracted from the backfill of this extension. Further examination has confirmed this material to include postcranial elements of one or more very large fossilised mammals, which may represent discarded acquisitions or donations.

# 2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 An archaeological excavation and watching brief were undertaken on the proposed site of the World Conservation and Exhibition Centre at the British Museum, Bloomsbury, London Borough of Camden, WC1E 7JW, (National Grid Reference TQ 52996 18175). The site will henceforth be referred to as "The British Museum North West Development", the location of which is shown in Figure 1.

2.2 The project began on 1st June 2010 and continued until 8th November 2010. It was commissioned by the British Museum and was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. Peter Moore of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited project managed the site, which was supervised by the author. Kim Stabler of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) monitored all archaeological proceedings on behalf of the London Borough of Camden.

2.3 The site is approximately 0.41 hectares in size and is situated in the northwest corner of the British Museum estate. It is bounded to the north by Montague Place and the King Edward VII Gallery, to the east by the King Edward VII Gallery, to the south by the Wellcome Trust Gallery and to the west by properties fronting Bedford Square.

2.4 The site was occupied by two terraced houses (1-2 Montague Place) butting the King Edward VII Gallery, service roads, late 19th to 20th century workshops and a late 19th century building that was once used as a conservation workshop for the preservation of manuscripts (henceforth termed "the Bindery"). With the exception of the Bindery and 1-2 Montague Place, these structures had been removed before the archaeological dig commenced. The above ground sections of the Bindery were demolished throughout July and August 2010 as the excavation progressed whilst 1-2 Montague Place remained extant. Surveys of the above ground sections of these buildings were undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology's Standing Buildings Department (Gould 2009a, 2009b). This work will be integrated with the results of the archaeological excavation at the publication stage.

2.5 The new development will contain an exhibition space, offices and conservation workshops. Sections of the proposed structure will have a basement that will be several stories deep and this, coupled with heavy plant movement across the site and the excavation of services and other groundworks, will severely impact upon any underlying archaeology.

2.6 Although the site is not situated within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined by the London Borough of Camden, its archaeological potential was shown to be high, as demonstrated by a desktop assessment on the Great Court (le Quesne & Maloney, 1995) and an Environmental Impact Assessment on the site itself (Anderson, 2009). Numerous listed buildings are also situated close by. As a result, the local planning authority deemed that an archaeological evaluation would be necessary, which yielded positive results (Moore, 2008 & 2009; Gould, 2009a). An archaeological excavation and watching brief was therefore proposed an assessment of the results of which is summarised in this report.

2.7 The excavation and watching brief was divided into six open areas and a seventh area that was sub-divided into ten small trenches. These targeted areas of high archaeological potential, as highlighted by the evaluation (Gould 2009a). The areas were arranged in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Moore, 2010) and their locations are shown in Figure 2.

2.8 The completed archive, comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefacts, will be stored by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited until its eventual deposition at the British Museum.




Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4




Figure 2
Excavation Trench Location
1:500 at A4

# 3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

## 3.1 National Guidance

3.1.1 In November 1990, the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning" providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains (http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/ppg16). In March 2010, this was replaced with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5). The evaluation, undertaken between 23rd March and 10th August 2010, was therefore carried out in accordance with PPG16, whilst the excavation and watching brief, which took place between 1st June and 8th November 2010, met the demands outlined in PPS5.

## 3.2 Local Guidance

3.2.1 This study aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Camden, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the replacement Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was formally adopted by the Council in 2006 (http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/our-plans-and-policies/camden-s-unitary-development-plan--udp-/). This was replaced in November 2010 by the Core Strategy and the Local Development Framework (http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/planning-and-built-environment/development-plans-and-policies/local-development-framework/development-policies.en) and the excavation was therefore carried out in accordance with this.

3.2.2 The archaeological guidance section of the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework states:

**PARAGRAPH 25.19: The archaeological priority areas provide a general guide to areas of archaeological remains, but do not indicate every find site in the borough. These are based on current knowledge and may be refined or altered as a result of future archaeological research or discoveries.**

**PARAGRAPH 25.20: It is likely that archaeological remains will be found throughout the borough, both within and outside the archaeological priority areas. Many archaeological remains have yet to be discovered, so their extent and significance is not known. When researching the development potential of a site, developers should, in all cases, assess whether the site is known or is likely to contain archaeological remains. Where there is good reason to believe that there are remains of archaeological importance on a site, the Council will consider directing applicants to supply further details of proposed developments, including the results of archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation. Scheduled monument consent must be obtained before any alterations are made to scheduled ancient monuments.**

**PARAGRAPH 25.21: If important archaeological remains are found, the Council will seek to resist development which adversely affects remains and to minimise the impact of development schemes by requiring either in situ preservation or a programme of excavation, recording, publication and archiving of remains. There will usually be a presumption in favour of in situ preservation of remains and, if important archaeological remains are found, measures should be adopted to allow the remains to be permanently preserved in situ. Where in situ preservation is not feasible, no development shall take place until satisfactory excavation and recording of the remains has been carried out on site, and subsequent analysis, publication and archiving undertaken by an archaeological organisation approved by the Council.**

**PARAGRAPH 25.22: The Council will consult with, and be guided by, English Heritage and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) on the archaeological implications of development proposals. The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, maintained by English Heritage, contains further information on archaeological sites in Camden. When considering schemes involving archaeological remains, the Council will also have regard to government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 16 – Archaeology and Planning.**

3.2.3 Although the site is not located within an archaeological priority area as defined by the London Borough of Camden, many listed buildings surround it. The results of the archaeological evaluation also suggested that the site had a high archaeological potential.

# 4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

## 4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The British Geological Survey of England and Wales (Sheet 256) suggests that the basal geology of the site consists of Upper Cretaceous Chalk, overlain by Palaeocene to Eocene Thanet sands and the Lambeth Group deposits. These, in turn, are sealed by Lynch Hill terrace gravel of Pleistocene age. The evaluation and excavation demonstrated that this was capped by a sandy clayey silt, resembling the Langley Silt complex, which will henceforth be termed “brickearth”.

## 4.2 Topography

4.2.1 The site was located on land that exhibited a gentle downward slope along its length at the time of the evaluation. The topography sloped from a maximum height of 24.60m OD at the northern end of the site to 23.70m OD at the southern end (Gould, 2009a, p.10).

4.2.2 Demolition work had remodeled the area by the time of the excavation. As a result, the topography sloped in all directions from the highest point, which was located in the north-central section of the site at a level of 25.20m OD. The northwest corner was found to be at a level of 24.59m OD, the southwest corner at 24.38m OD, the northeast corner at 23.97m OD and the southeast corner at 23.50m OD (the lowest point).

4.2.3 The excavation demonstrated that the ground level on the site itself had been artificially raised by no more than 1m during the entire Holocene period. The surrounding streets must have been artificially raised by several meters, presumably when the area was urbanised in the 18$^{th}$ and early 19$^{th}$ centuries.

# 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Unless referenced otherwise, the following archaeological and historical background is taken from An Archaeological Evaluation and Building Recording Investigation at the British Museum North West Development, Bloomsbury, London, WC1 (Gould, 2009a, p.11-13)

## 5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 An excavation undertaken in the Great Court of the British Museum recovered a Palaeolithic hand axe. This was stratified in the Taplow Terrace gravel and therefore represents a chance find that was moved from its primary depositional context by fluvial action during the Palaeolithic period.

5.2.2 The site was probably situated within a heavily forested area during the early Holocene. Few prehistoric artefacts have been found in the vicinity of the site, which suggests that it was not situated near a frequently used area.

## 5.3 Roman

5.3.1 Roman inhumations were found at Southampton Row and Endell Street to the south of the site and a Roman silver ring was unearthed at nearby Great Russell Street (this forms part of the British Museum's collections).

5.3.2 An excavation that was undertaken in advance of the Great Court redevelopment revealed fragments of redeposited Roman ceramic building material within later contexts. Whilst this could signify Roman settlement in the vicinity of the site, these artefacts could also have been imported from elsewhere and dumped during a post-medieval ground raising episode.

## 5.4 Saxon and Medieval

5.4.1 The Saxon settlement of Lundunwic was situated several miles to the south, in and around what is now Covent Garden. The area of the British Museum was probably undeveloped at this time as no *in situ* Saxon or medieval remains have been found in the vicinity.

## 5.5 Post-Medieval

5.5.1 Bloomsbury was situated on the very edge of London in the Post-medieval period and historic maps suggest that the site itself was located in open land at this time. This probably consisted of farmland, which was owned by the Lords of Southampton, who were granted the manor of Bloomsbury during the reign of Henry VIII (Wilson, 2002 p.25).

## 5.6 The Civil War (1642-51)

5.6.1 Historical records suggest that the outer ring of the English Civil War defences of London, sometimes termed "the Lines of Communication", crossed the site of the British Museum (Sturdy, 1975 p.337). At approximately eleven miles in length they represent the largest defensive structure built during the war and the longest continuous earthwork of this period in Europe (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.117; Sturdy, 1975).

5.6.2 Records suggest that the Civil War defences were rapidly constructed to protect London from Royalist forces. Whilst their primary purpose was to keep the Royalists out, one contemporary observer, the Venetian Ambassador, speculated that "the shape they take betrays that they are not only for the defense against the royal armies, but also against the tumults of the citizens and, to ensure a prompt obedience on all occasions". Their resemblance to siege lines may not be coincidental; the threat of internal rebellion must have seemed very real after the politician Edmund Waller's plot of 1643 was discovered, which no doubt compounded the "nervousness" that pervaded the city throughout that year (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.118).

5.6.3 The London defences were predominately built by an estimated 20,000 untrained citizens of the city, including men, women and children from all social classes, presumably under the direction of an unknown number of professionals. This may explain why their design has been described as "amateurish" or "naïve" (Smith & Kelsey 1996, p.139). Construction began in October 1642 (Harrington, 2003 p.40) and continued through an unusually harsh autumn and an extremely wet winter (Smith & Kelsey 1996, p.143), with a second bout of fortification in the spring of 1643, which may be when the outer ring was constructed (Flintham, 1998 p.233). The defences were installed on the periphery of the city at the expense of many acres of farmland and some pre-existing structures. Much cultivated land was covered by the works or made inaccessible and large swathes of pastoral land were ruined for many years when vast quantities of turf were stripped to create the rampart (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.143).

5.6.4 Although the bulk of the Lines of Communication were probably made of earth, it is likely that stone, brick and timber structures were also present. Evidence for this can be found in government accounts that include entries detailing the expenditure paid to carpenters, bricklayers and stonemasons (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.128). Cartographic evidence (Figure 3) coupled with contemporary accounts suggest that the defences were made up of a combination of hornworks, irregularly shaped positions, batteries and rectangular bastioned forts or sconces, including "star forts" or "trace italienne", linked by a defensive ditch and bank (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.138).

5.6.5 The most detailed contemporary descriptions of the Lines of Communication were made by the Scottish traveler William Lithgow, who toured the defenses in April 1643. He noted twenty-eight works, including several with inner and outer elements and two outworks covering the Mile End Road. The encircling Lines were described as a ditch "three yards thick, with a ditch side twice as high" with a bank behind. Lithgow also recounted the design of the fort at Wapping, as consisting of "turffe, sand, wattles and earthen worke" with "nine port holes and as many cannon" along with a palisade, which may have been constructed from fir timber. Unfortunately, many contemporary commentators suggested that Lithgow's descriptions were exaggerated, describing him as "lugless Will" and "Lying Lithgow" (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.123 & 125).

5.6.6 The whereabouts of the defences have proved notoriously difficult to pinpoint. The diarist and writer John Evelyn visited them in 1642, but did not describe their physical appearance or position. Observations made by Lithgow, the Venetian Ambassador, the historian John Rushworth and the lawyer and politician Bulstrode Whitelocke indicate that the northern section probably ran from Wapping to Shoreditch before turning west to Hyde Park and southeast to Tothill Fields. On the south bank, they probably ran from Vauxhall to St George's Fields before turning towards Elephant and Castle and then east to Rotherhithe (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.121 &125). Unfortunately, these accounts allude to very general locations and cannot be used to determine the exact trajectory.

5.6.7 No contemporary drawings or maps of the Lines of Communication are known to exist, the only potential example, allegedly by Captain John Eyre, being a relatively recent forgery (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.123). The earliest cartographic depiction dates to 1720 and can be found in William Stukeley's book *British Coins.* The depiction is simplistic, showing a total of fifteen forts, batteries and hornworks linked by lines. Other than the Thames, no obvious additional geographical landmarks are shown. The drawing's accuracy is circumspect as the sources used to create it are unknown. A more detailed engraving by George Vertue, known as "A Plan of the City and Suburbs of London as fortified by Order of Parliament in the Years 1642 & 1643", (Figure 3) was first published in Maitland's *History of London* in 1739. Twenty-one forts connected by a possible ditch and rampart are shown, along with two outworks in the form of a fort and a small redoubt at Islington. Considerable map detail is also included, enabling the Civil War features to be placed in a rough geographical context. The map was allegedly based upon the results of "an examination of the ground" that was carried out by the physician and antiquary Dr Cromwell Mortimer (*c.*1693–1752) in the mid 18$^{th}$ century, many decades after the defences had fallen out of use (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.121-122). It is this depiction that shows the Lines of Communication crossing the British Museum site. Unfortunately, several factors suggest that it may be inaccurate. Firstly, it shows the defences at a very small scale with a greatly exaggerated width. Secondly, contemporary accounts suggest that the earthworks were levelled soon after the first Civil War ended in 1647 and they were not necessarily re-established along their entire length during the second Civil War (Smith & Kelsey, 1996 p.144); if this was the case, Mortimer may have found it difficult to conclusively identify them many decades later. Thirdly, some commentators have suggested that the map may be a copy of a much earlier proposal plan rather than a map of the finished article, which may explain why predictions based primarily on this source concerning the location of London's Civil War defences have been unreliable in the past.

5.6.8 Some elements of the Lines of Communication may be recognisable on other 17th and 18th century maps, compiled for a range of different purposes. An example that holds particular relevance for the British Museum site can be found on a plan of the Manor of Bloomsbury, compiled in 1664-5 (Figure 4). The preserved remnants of a possible "star fort" can be seen to the east of the site and later maps and artistic depictions suggest that this was incorporated as an ornamental feature within the grounds of a stately home known as Southampton House (Figure 5 & Figure 6). If this interpretation is correct, then the Civil War defences must have been situated on or very close to the North West Development site, suggesting that the Virtue map may be reasonably accurate, at least in this particular instance.

5.6.9 The Civil War defences survive into the present day as earthworks in just one location. The remains of a fort can be found in the park next to the Imperial War Museum near Elephant and Castle (Sturdy, 1975, p.337).

5.6.10 The Civil War ditch may have been identified during archaeological interventions on a handful of occasions. A section of the feature may have been found at the junction of Houndsditch and Aldgate in the City of London in 1977. Geotechnical prospecting in 1995 may indicate that it runs across Hoxton Square. Test pits at Pear Tree Street in Islington contained peaty fills, and it was speculated that these could be contained within the feature (Flintham, 1998 p.233).

5.6.11 Until the excavation at the British Museum, the most convincing section was unearthed during archaeological work at the London Hospital and Medical College in Whitechapel. This revealed a large, Post-medieval ditch on the proposed line of the Civil War defences, which was 5.5m wide and 1.40m deep. These dimensions are similar to other excavated examples of Civil War ditches including those found at Exeter, Gloucester and Taunton (*ibid*). Environmental sampling suggested that this section was wet and that it silted up gradually during the 18th Century. This tallies with the annotations made on Vertue's map of 1739 by Cromwell Mortimer, who suggested that some sections were wet whilst others were dry (*ibid*).

5.6.12 It should be noted that none of the examples cited here definitely formed parts of the Lines of Communication, although they do appear to date to the right period and were found close to the feature's approximate predicted position.

5.6.13 Excavations at St. Alphage Street in 1949-50 and nearby Fore Street in 1960 suggest that the medieval City Ditch was re-cut or backfilled in the mid 17th Century. This may indicate that it formed an inner defensive ring during the Civil War, along with the City Wall (Flintham, 1998 p.233).

## 5.7 Mid 17th to 18th Century

5.7.1 Southampton House was constructed on the site of the original manor of Bloomsbury in the mid 17th Century and was home to the Southampton family. Ownership passed to William Lord Russell, Duke of Bedford, in 1669 when he married the heiress of the last Lord of Southampton. Southampton House, which was situated to the immediate east of the site in the location of modern day Russell Square, was renamed Bedford House as a result of this union (Wilson 2002, p.25).

5.7.2 Montagu House was built to the west of Southampton House between 1675 and 1679 on land purchased by the Duke of Montagu from the Duke of Bedford. The house itself was a brick mansion built in the style of a Parisian *hôtel* (Figure 7), designed by the architect Robert Hooke (Wilson 2002, p.25). A "great garden" and orchard could be found to the north of the property, which occupied approximately seven acres. It was originally laid out in the French style, with fountains and parterres (Wilson, 2002 p.25). Although Montagu house itself was situated to the south of the excavation area, historic maps indicate that the northwest corner of its ornamental garden occupied the southern and eastern sections of the site (Figure 5).

5.7.3 Historic maps suggest that a semi-circular "bastion" formed part of the northern garden wall of Montagu House. This could represent another relic of the Civil War defences, which could have been re-used as the construction trench for the most northerly stretch of this garden wall. This runs up to and around the "bastion", before adjoining the western side of the "star fort" in the gardens of neighboring Southampton House to the east (Figure 5). This hypothesis is somewhat diminished by the fact that neither the "bastion" nor a boundary ditch in the location of the northern garden wall are shown on maps pre-dating the construction of Montagu House (Figure 4).

5.7.4 Montagu House was destroyed by fire in 1686 and was immediately rebuilt by the architect "Monsieur Pouget" (Wilson, 2002 p.25). It is thought that the reconstructed building closely resembled the original design.

5.7.5 A quadrilateral extension to the western side of Montagu House's gardens appears to have been made before 1725 (Figure 8). The maps consulted suggest that the northern portion of this extension fell within the site boundary.

5.7.6 Bloomsbury underwent a process of urbanization from the mid 18th century onwards as it was gradually transformed from open countryside into an aristocratic and upper middle class suburb of London (Wilson, p.25).

5.7.7 Montagu House was sold to the government by Sir Edward Montagu and the Dowager Duchess of Manchester on 3rd April 1754. The building was converted into the first national museum and library, which opened in 1759 after £17,000 had been spent on repairs and alterations (Wilson, 2002, p.25-26). The gardens, which were now in the care of the Trustees of the museum, were maintained and "much altered" over the years, being used as a "pleasant and safe resort" by the residents of the increasingly fashionable area (Wilson 2002, p.25).

5.7.8 The land to the north and west of the site remained open until 1780, when terraced housing was erected on Bedford Square (Figure 9). Historic maps indicate that the rear gardens of these properties extended across the excavation area (Figure 9). Whilst they superseded the 1725 extension to Montagu House's gardens they respected the original perimeter wall, which continued to form the boundary of the British Museum estate until the late 19th century.

5.7.9 The Gordon Riots of June 1780 caused some damage to the surrounding area, but did not directly affect the British Museum. In nearby Bloomsbury Square, the houses of the Lord Chancellor and the Archbishop of York were sacked. As a result, the York Regiment of Militia was garrisoned in the grounds of the Museum, to protect both the collections and the wealthy dignitaries that lived nearby. This encampment lasted for almost two months, during which time it became a popular visitor attraction (Wilson, 2002 p.48). It is illustrated in an anonymous watercolour, which also shows the northwest corner of the museum's gardens in some detail (Figure 10).

## 5.8 Early to Mid 19th Century

5.8.1 Terrace housing was constructed along Montague Place in the early 19th century. The gardens of these properties extended across the excavation area, up to the boundaries of the British Museum estate, which remained unchanged (Figure 11).

5.8.2 The rear garden of Number 6 Bedford Square was extended in the early 19th Century. This was done at the expense of the gardens along Montague Place, which were shortened. The extended plot, known as "Lord Eldon's Walk", was named after the occupant of Number 6 Bedford Square, John Scott, 1st Earl of Eldon (1751-1838) and Lord Chancellor of Great Britain.

5.8.3 By 1820, it was clear that Montagu House had fallen into a dire state of disrepair (Wilson, 2002 p.78). As a consequence, the architect Robert Smirke was commissioned to build a new museum in the Greek Revivalist style, which consisted of a courtyard building that encircled the former gardens of the estate. The new structure evolved slowly as new galleries and wings were added and it was not until 1842 that the demolition of Montagu House and the construction of the "South Range" began (Wilson, 2002, p.94). In 1846, Robert Smirke was succeeded by his younger brother, Sydney, who designed the round reading room and the Museum's railings and gates (*ibid*, p.78). The layout of the new museum can be seen in Figure 12.

## 5.9 Late 19th to Mid 20th Century

5.9.1 Numerous additions to the British Museum were made throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries, which necessitated a gradual expansion of the grounds (Figure 13). As a result, areas that were occupied by the gardens of the properties that fronted Bedford Square and Montague Place were gradually annexed. Additions that hold particular relevance to the excavation include the Bindery and the King Edward VII Gallery.

5.9.2 The Bindery building was built in 1898 on the former site of "Lord Eldon's walk" as shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1914 (Figure 13). It was used for the conservation of books and manuscripts.

5.9.3 The construction of the King Edward VII Gallery in 1907 resulted in the demolition of all but two of the terraced houses that fronted Montague Place (Figure 13). These were pulled down between 1968 and 1987, when they were replaced with a mock Georgian building that housed the Museum's Photographic Department and two residential units.

5.9.4 The British Museum suffered some bomb damage during World War II (Figure 14).

5.9.5 The Bindery was extended to the west and repaired in the 1950s.




Figure 3
The Virtue Map of 1739 Entitled "A Plan of the City and Suburbs of London as Fortified by Order of Parliament in the Years 1642 & 1643
Not to Scale

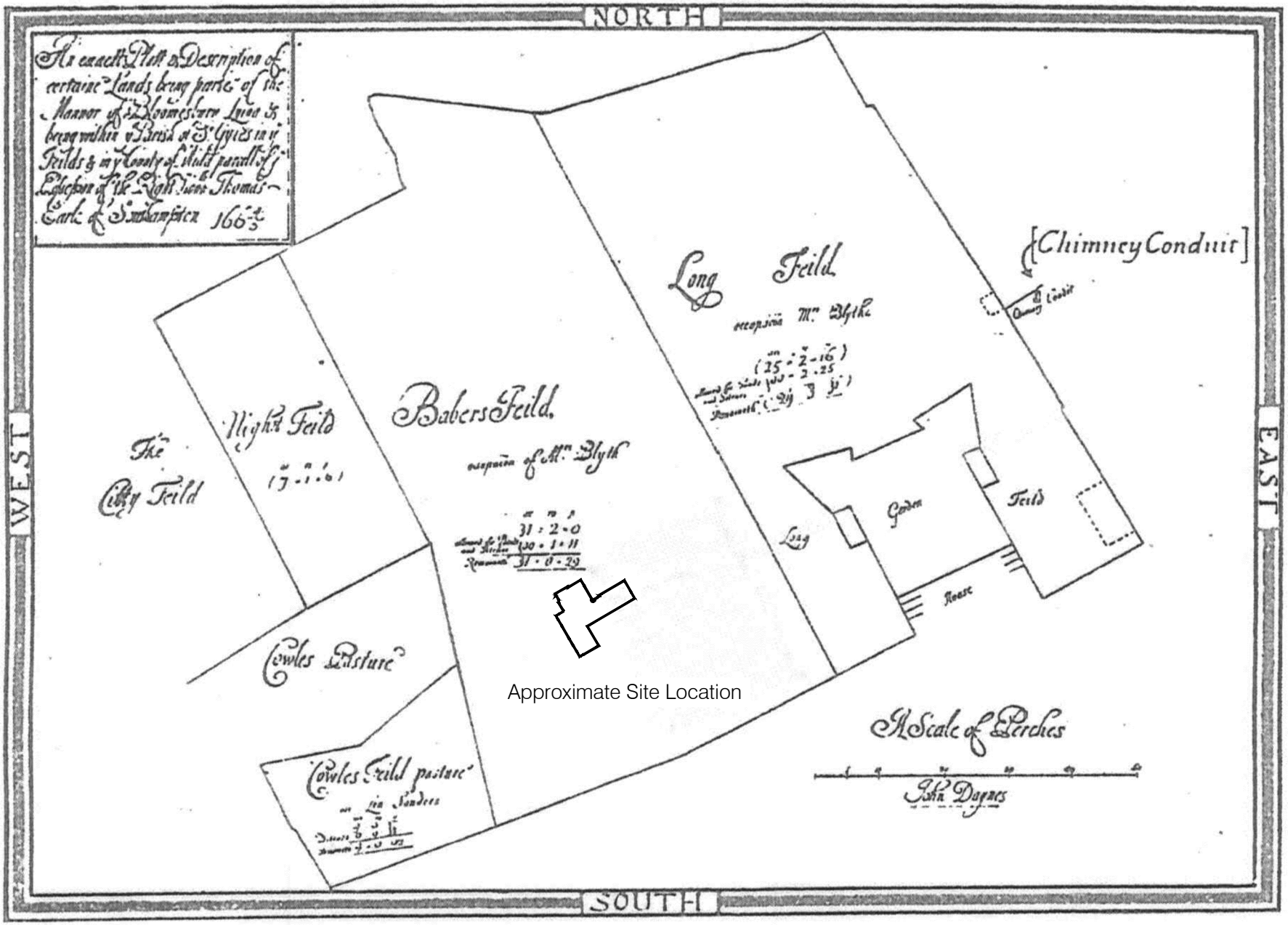




Figure 4
Plan of Part of the Manor of Bloomsbury, 1664-5
Not to Scale