

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

For

**BENTLEY HOUSE  
200 EUSTON ROAD  
CAMDEN  
LONDON**

**National Grid Reference: TQ294824**

**Colin Lacey BA MSc PlfA**

**23/06/2010**

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*for*  
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**200 EUSTON ROAD**  
**CAMDEN, LONDON**

*by*

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Site Name	Bentley House
Address	200 Euston Road
Borough	Camden
County	Greater London
NGR	TQ 294824
Listing	Not Listed
Conservation Area	Bloomsbury

**Abstract**

The development is located 180m east of Tottenham Manor. A possible piece of Palaeolithic worked flint was found 200m to the southwest and a Neolithic stone axe was found 250m to the south. This represents a very low concentration of archaeological material.

Buildings have been present on the site of Bentley House from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The modern building contains a basement of c.2.5m deep and it can thus be shown that the ground has been disturbed to about 3m in depth. There is no realistic possibility that archaeological remains be discovered on the land.

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## 1. Summary

Bentley House is located in an area of London that was not properly colonised before the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. A terrace of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century houses is thought to have been the construction on the site.

There is a small amount of evidence for archaeological remains in the area predating the 1756 construction of Euston Road, namely a Neolithic polished axe and a possible piece of flint waste from the Palaeolithic period.

It is noted that a single **possible Palaeolithic** artefact was the only prehistoric find recovered from an excavated area totalling 33.75 - 37.5m<sup>2</sup>. The possible artefact was recovered from river gravels and may have been deposited with these, rather than being made in-situ.

A small number of detached finds of Saxon and Medieval remains are known in the Euston Road area, along with a number of Victorian and modern deposits.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nearby excavations for the Metropolitan Railway created a great amount of ground disturbance in the area, although there is no evidence that this encroached on the terrace present before the construction of Bentley House. Euston Square station is located beneath Euston Road immediately outside Bentley House.

The terraces along Euston Road and Stephenson Way were demolished for the construction of Bentley House in the mid 1930s, immediately prior to the Second World War.

Bentley House has a substantial basement, the floor level of which is 2.52m below the pavement level of Euston Road. The basement has a floor slab of at least 300mm and underlying services are present.

Bombing during the Second World War did not affect Bentley House in any great way. The building suffered superficial damage as a result of blast from bombs exploding nearby. This had no effect on any underlying archaeology.

A London Underground cable tunnel was bored beneath the basement of Bentley House in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, carrying cables to Euston Square station. The proposed development has an exclusion zone around this tunnel.

Bentley House is located in an area of fairly low archaeological potential. There is also a high level of disturbance beneath the building, particularly relating to the construction of the previous terraced buildings, to their demolition and to the construction of Bentley House. The excavation of the cable tunnel is also a factor in truncating any archaeology that may be present in the location.

It is considered that there is no realistic possibility of archaeological remains surviving on this land.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 The Client

This report was commissioned by Richard Morris of Faithful & Gould for and on behalf of The Wellcome Trust who are the landowners.

### 2.2 Confidentiality and Copyright

This document is to remain confidential for a period of 12 months or until it forms part of a formal planning application or until otherwise indicated by the client. The copyright of this report belongs to The Historic Environment Consultancy and the client. No liability to third parties is accepted for advice and statements made in this report.

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### 2.3 Location

The site is located on the northern side of the A501 Euston Road, Camden, London. Stephenson way runs to the rear of the property. The general location is shown in Figure 1 and the specific location in Figure 2.

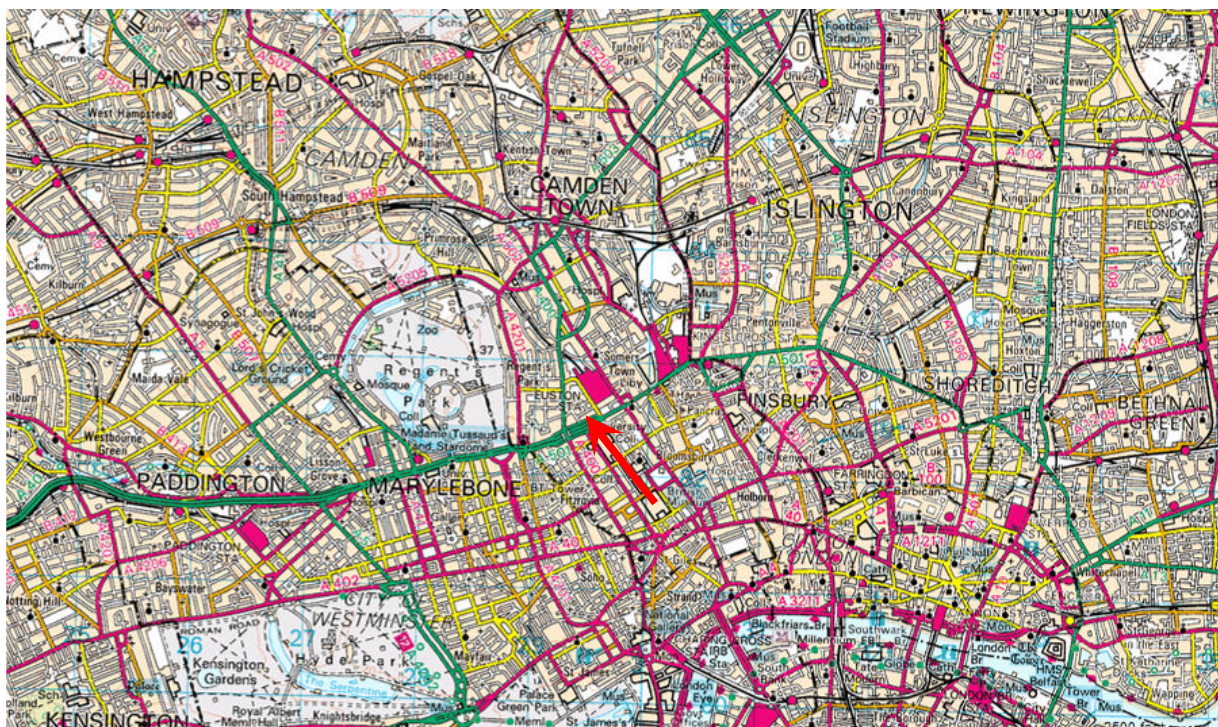
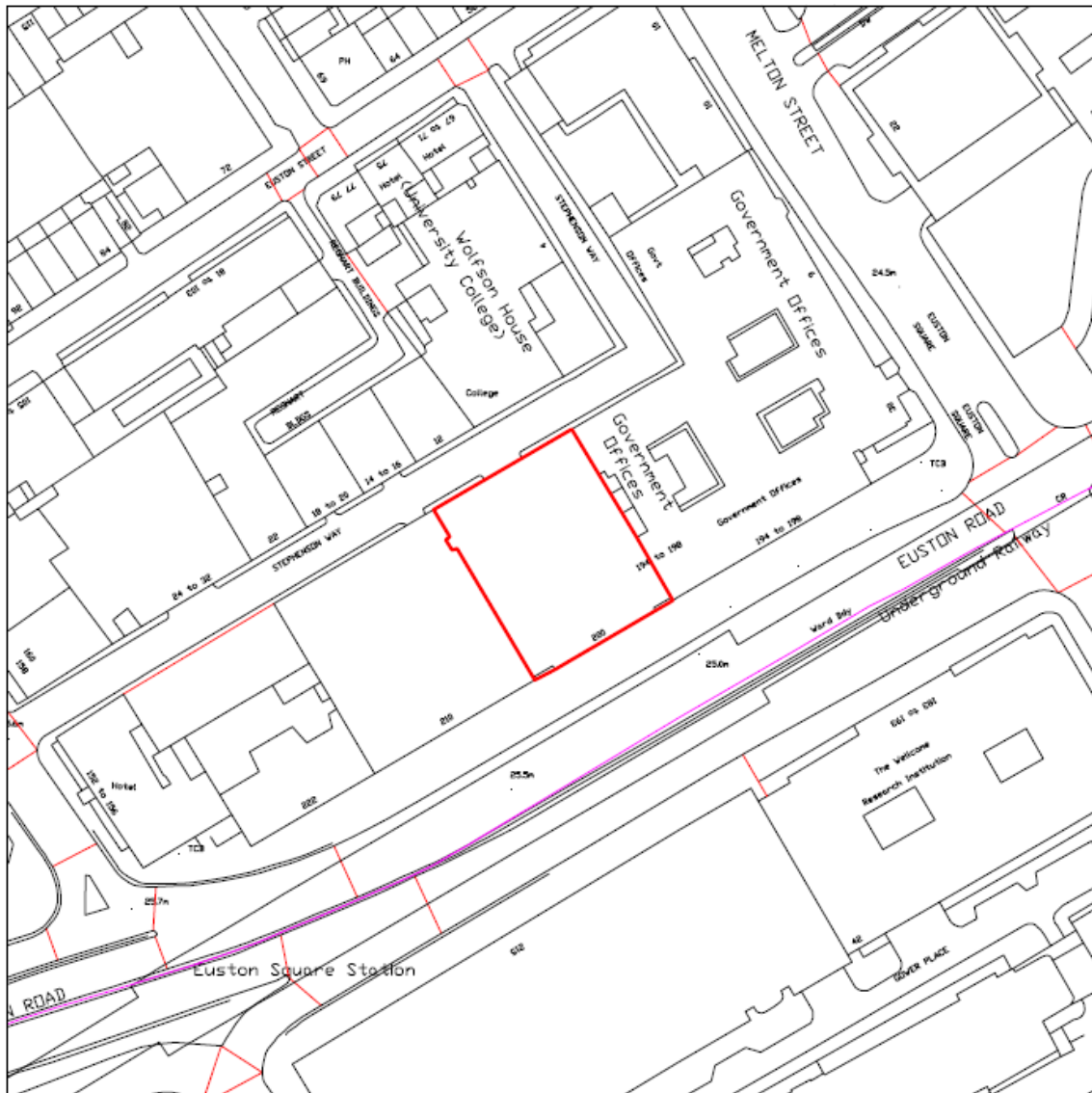


Figure 1: General Location Plan (not to scale)



**Figure 2: Detailed Location Plan (1:1250 @ A4)**





Plate 1: Front elevation, Bentley House



Plate 2: Rear elevation, Bentley House

## 2.4 Site Visit

Colin Lacey visited the site on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

## 2.5 Historic Background

Bentley House was built in 1937 as a printing works for Cambridge University Press. The crest of the University is still present on either side of the rear of the building.



**Plate 3: Crest of Cambridge University, above fire exit on rear wall of Bentley House**

Euston Road, originally known as 'New Road', was built in 1756 by the second Duke of Grafton as a by-pass route for driving cattle to Smithfield Market whilst avoiding Oxford Street and Holborn. It is thought that prior to the construction of the road, the land was under agriculture, known as the 'Long Fields'.

Euston Square, northeast of the site, was built in 1827. The name 'Euston' originates with the owners of the land - the Fitzroys, Dukes of Grafton and Earls of Euston. New Road was renamed Euston Road in 1857.

A hub of rail transport, Euston Road is home to Euston Station (1837), Kings Cross Station (1852) and St Pancras International (1822). A number of underground stations are present along the road, indicating a large amount of below-ground disturbance has occurred in the area.

In 1989, the Wellcome Trust refurbished Bentley House and moved its library collection to the building. To facilitate the move, a tunnel was excavated beneath Euston Road leading from existing Wellcome Trust buildings. The tunnel is still maintained, providing access to Bentley House from the main Wellcome Trust buildings.

In 2007, the library was moved to the Gibbs Building, opposite at 215 Euston Road. Bentley House has been disused since this date.



### **3. Archaeological Background**

#### **3.1 Prehistoric**

Groundworks on Euston Road directly opposite Bentley House (1990) revealed an irregular channel, interpreted as a minor tributary of the River Fleet.

A 2001 watching brief on the site of University College Hospital, Gower Street (200m SW of Bentley House), revealed one possible piece of Palaeolithic struck flint in the natural gravel in what is possibly a palaeochannel. Rather than being a tool in its own right, it is suggested to be a piece of debitage relating to the construction of a tool.

A Neolithic polished stone axe was found during excavations for the University College Hospital on Gower Street, c. 250m south of Bentley House.

#### **3.2 Roman**

No Roman evidence is known from the immediate area around Bentley House. The Roman settlement of Londinium was confined to an area further south, roughly similar to that of the City of London.

#### **3.3 Post-Roman / Medieval**

Excavations in 1979 at the junction of Euston Road and Tolmers Square c. 180m west of the site revealed a stone garderobe pit containing 16<sup>th</sup> century deposits together with yard surfaces and fragments of walls. This was interpreted as the possible site of Tottenhall Manor House.

The Prebendal Manor of St Pauls, mentioned in the Domesday book, was located c.130m west of the site. This was recorded as dilapidated in 1649, and the extant remains were destroyed in 1808. Some excavation has occurred at the site, which in 1979 revealed a small amount of Saxon pottery.

#### **3.4 Post-Medieval**

A 1995 exercise at St Pancras Church, c. 350m west of the site exposed 19<sup>th</sup> century - modern dumps of building waste or redeposited natural deposits, interpreted as being evidence of the construction of the church in 1822.

Archaeological exercises at Kings Cross Station in 2001 showed that the make-up of the ground in the area is of natural clay sealed by 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century rubble and clay, with modern made-ground above. Some Victorian below-ground remains were also revealed, including a pair of brick icehouses and connecting tunnel and a well (all dated to the 1860s) thought to relate to the London Smallpox Hospital or the Great Northern Hotel, previously located on the site of the station.

Work at Kings Cross Station in 2006, c. 1km northeast of Bentley House, revealed natural clay below made-ground, cut by 19<sup>th</sup> century structural remains of the station. Similar results occurred in a 2007 exercise in which natural brickearth was overlain by 19<sup>th</sup> century made ground, modern structures and sewer pipe. Further work on the site in 2008 revealed 19<sup>th</sup> century foundations, modern make-up and modern deposits.

2006 excavations at 360-376 Euston Road, 1-56 Osnaburgh Street and 23-43 Longford Street c. 550m west of the site revealed 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and building material over natural brickearth.

### **3.5 *Negative Archaeological Evidence***

It is noted that no buried soils or prehistoric evidence was found during the work at St Pancras Church mentioned above.

It is also of note that the possible Palaeolithic flint fragment was the only find during the excavation of three evaluation trenches ranging in size from 2.5m x 4.5m to 2.5m x 5m (a total area of 33.75m<sup>2</sup> to 37.5m<sup>2</sup>).

### **3.6 *Historic Environment Record***

A search of the Greater London Historic Environment Record in a 250m radius around Bentley House was conducted. A summary of the results is appended.

A recent archaeological desk-based assessment on the construction of 215 Euston Road is mentioned in the Historic Environment Record. This report is currently unavailable.

## 4. Analysis of Historic Maps

### 4.1 Map Regression Exercise

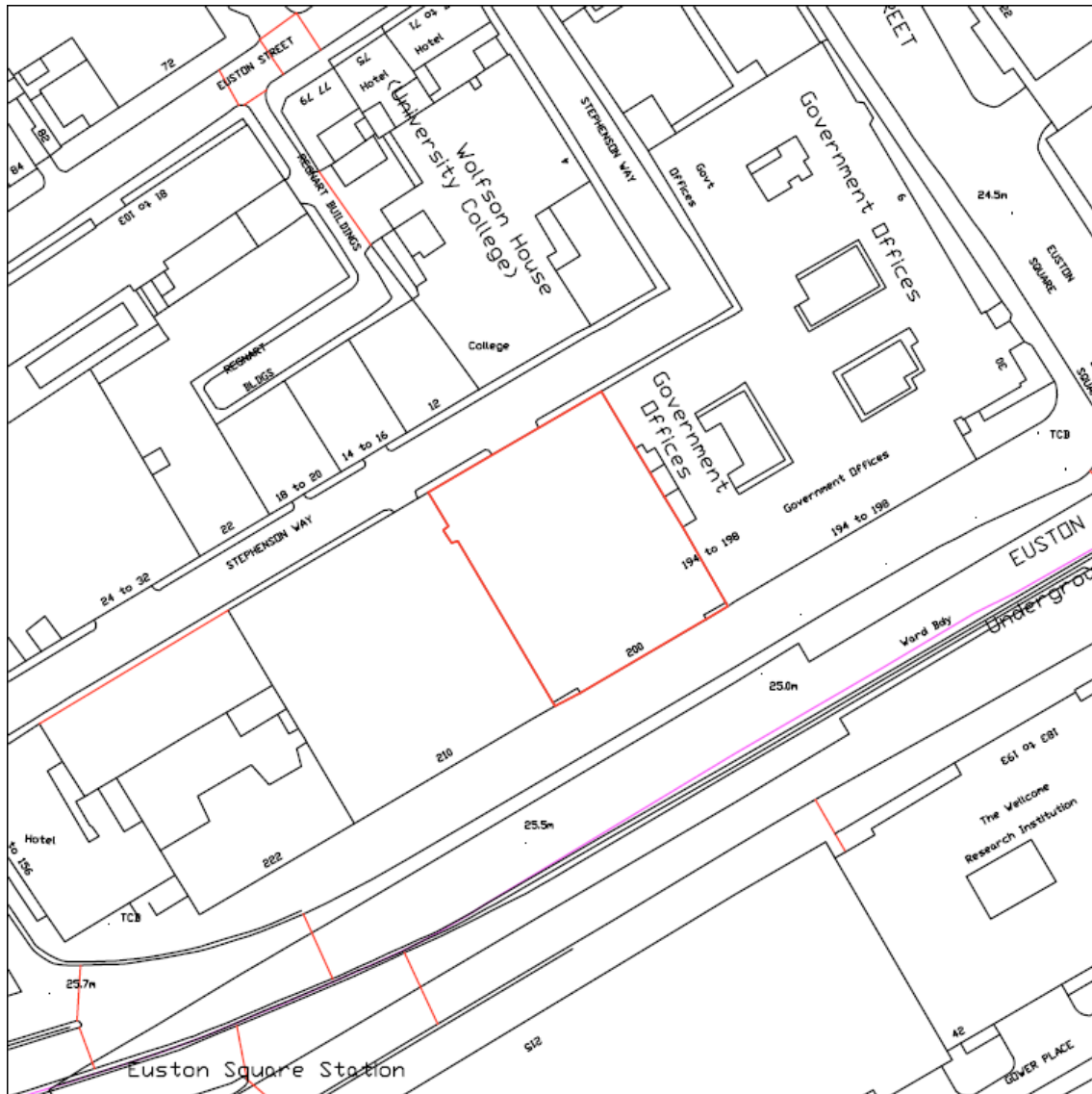
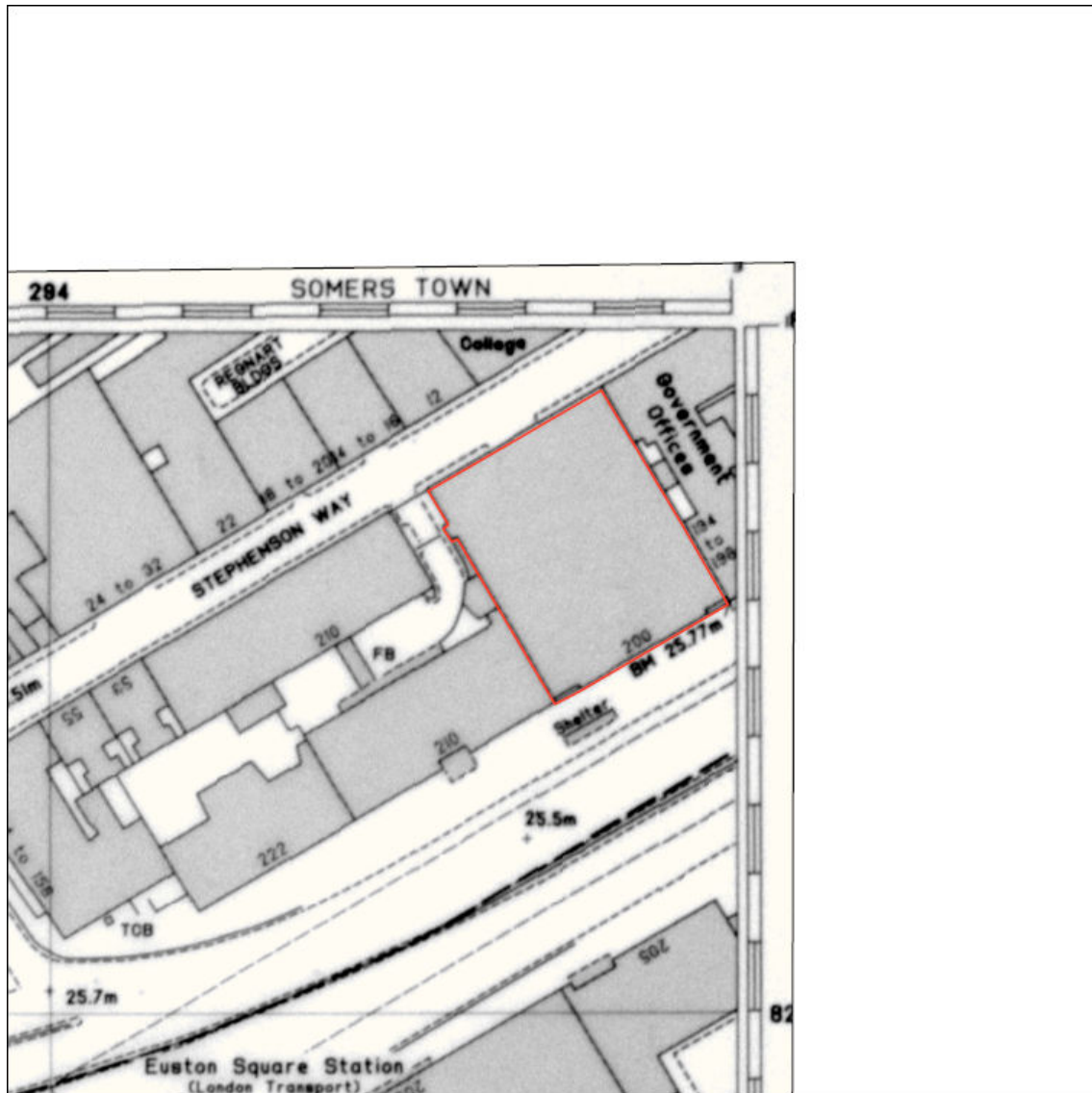


Figure 3: Modern Ordnance Survey plan, 1:1000@A4

The building is depicted as it stands today.



**Figure 4: 1987 Ordnance Survey plan, 1:1000@A4**

Bentley House is in its current form, however the neighbouring 210 Euston Road is in a distinctly different form, with rear access via a yard off of Stephenson Way. A footbridge connects the front and rear parts of the building, over the yard. 53 and 55 Stephenson Way appear separate, in contrast to their current form.

On the opposite side of Euston road, the current Wellcome Trust building (215 Euston Road) had not been constructed.

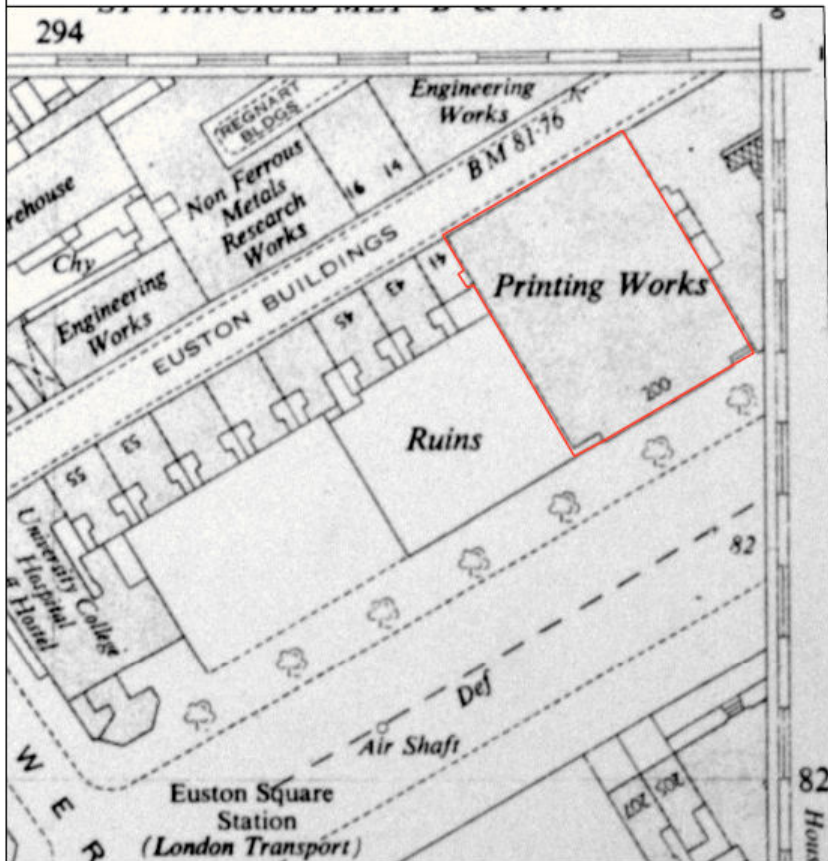
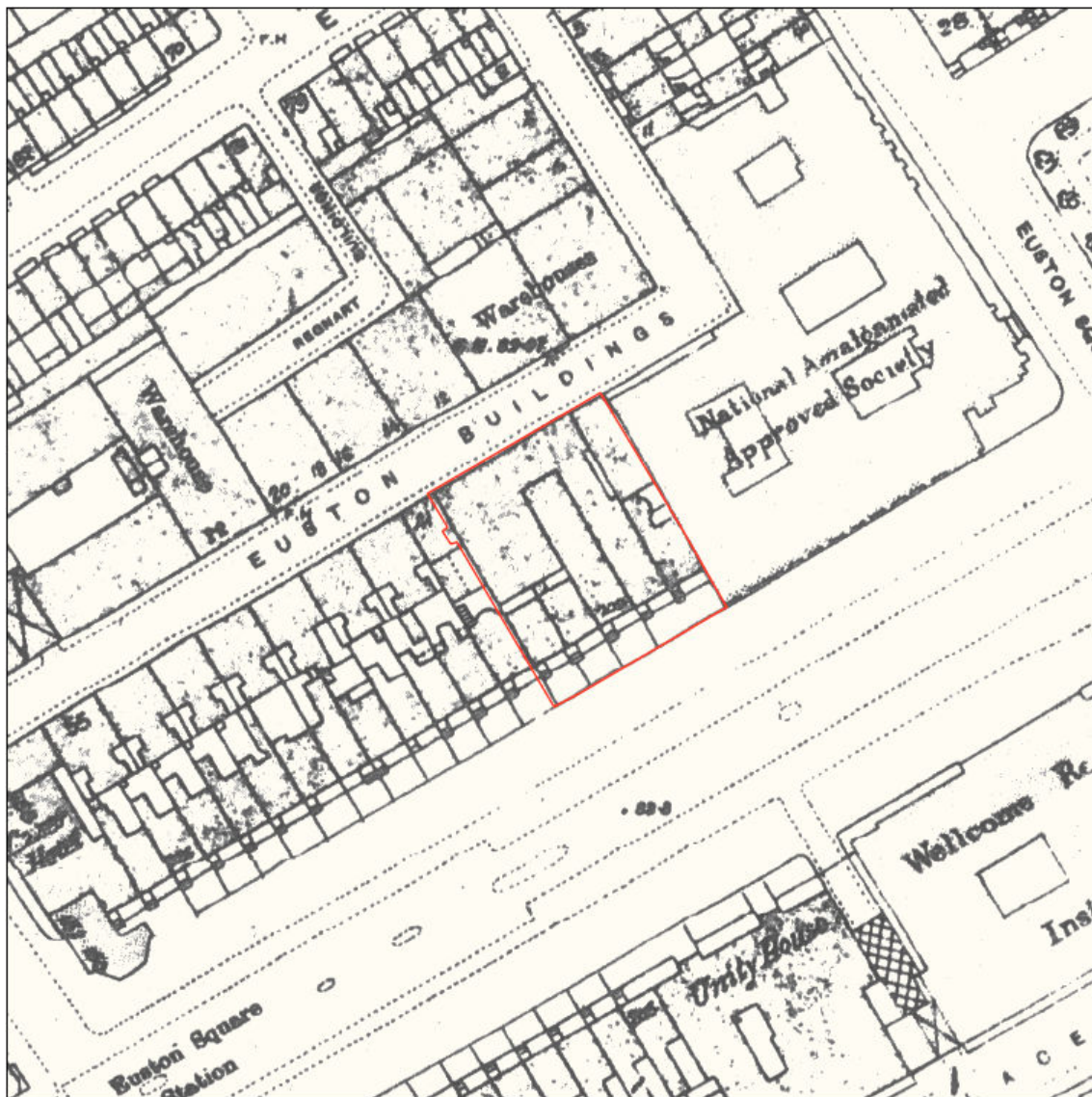


Figure 5: 1951 Ordnance Survey plan, 1:1000@A4

Bentley House is highlighted on this map as a printing works, reflecting its ownership by Cambridge University Press. The neighbouring property to the west is marked as ruins.

Stephenson Way is at this point named Euston Buildings.





**Figure 6: 1921 Ordnance Survey plan, 1:1000@A4**

Prior to the construction of Bentley House, the site was occupied by smaller properties with front garden areas. The westernmost two properties are believed to be residential houses. The central property stretches over twice the length of the houses toward Euston Buildings, surrounded by the next property to the east which takes up the majority of the land covered by Bentley House. East still, a pair of properties are present, one facing on to Euston Road, the other on to Euston Buildings.



**Figure 7: 1913 Ordnance Survey plan, 1:1000@A4**

The layout of buildings is superficially the same as on the later map, however the two separate buildings to the east are depicted as part of the larger property.

At this point in time, Euston Road had not yet been widened to its current level. The properties along both sides of the road have considerably longer front gardens.