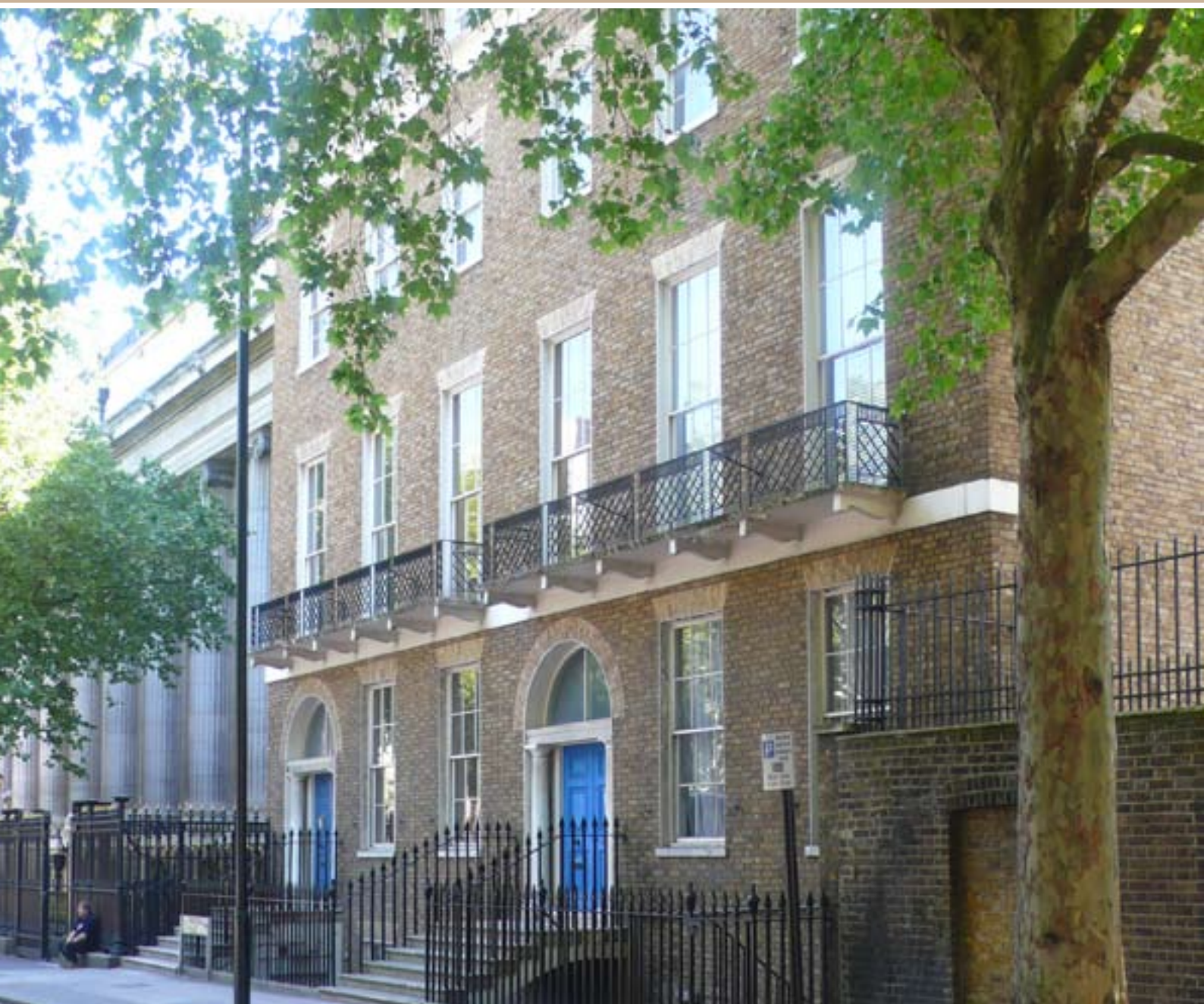


# THE BRITISH MUSEUM BINDERY AND 1–2 MONTAGUE PLACE, LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS REPORT

Johanna Roethe



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**THE BRITISH MUSEUM BINDERY  
AND 1-2 MONTAGUE PLACE,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS REPORT**

Johanna Roethe

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## **SUMMARY**

This report was written in response to proposals which involve the demolition of two buildings in the northwest corner of the British Museum site, the Bindery and 1–2 Montague Place.

Both buildings are inextricably connected to the history of the Museum, its founding, later expansion and its lasting success. Built in 1898 by the Office of Works, the Bindery is the first purpose-built binding workshop on the site. It served the British Museum Library and, from 1973 until 2007, the British Library. It is a general-purpose workshop building, incorporating an earlier boiler house and an extension of 1957–58. It appears to be a rare example of a large-scale purpose-built craft bindery.

The building at 1–2 Montague Place is a purpose-built photographic laboratory of 1970–73, built by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. Its façade replicates two terraced houses of c.1810 previously on the site. These houses were the last survivors of a terrace on the south side of Montague Place, most of which was demolished for the King Edward VII Galleries in 1904. An attempt to refurbish the houses in the 1960s resulted in their demolition, as they were found to be beyond repair.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

Jonathan Clarke provided information on structural aspects of the Bindery. The report was edited by Joanna Smith. Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs were taken by Jonathan Clarke and Johanna Roethe during a site visit on 3 September 2008.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are due to my English Heritage colleagues Susie Barson, Jonathan Clarke, Treve Rosoman, Joanna Smith and June Warrington. Robert Bargery, Robert Chitham, Vicki Humphrey and Philippa Marks also provided useful information. I would like to thank the staff and archivists at the National Archives, the National Monuments Record, the London Metropolitan Archives, Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, the British Museum Central Archive, the Centre for Conservation at the British Library, the British Library Corporate Archive, the RIBA Library Drawing and Archives Collection, and St Bride Library. I am grateful to Sarah Halford for organising access to the Bindery and 1–2 Montague Place, and to Tony Wilson for arranging permission to reproduce plans from the British Museum's conservation plan.

## **ARCHIVE LOCATION**

The associated archive material can be found in the National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ, 01793 414600.

## **DATE OF RESEARCH**

August 2008–June 2009

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*Cover image: 1–2 Montague Place from the northwest, June 2009. Copyright English Heritage (DP070376)*

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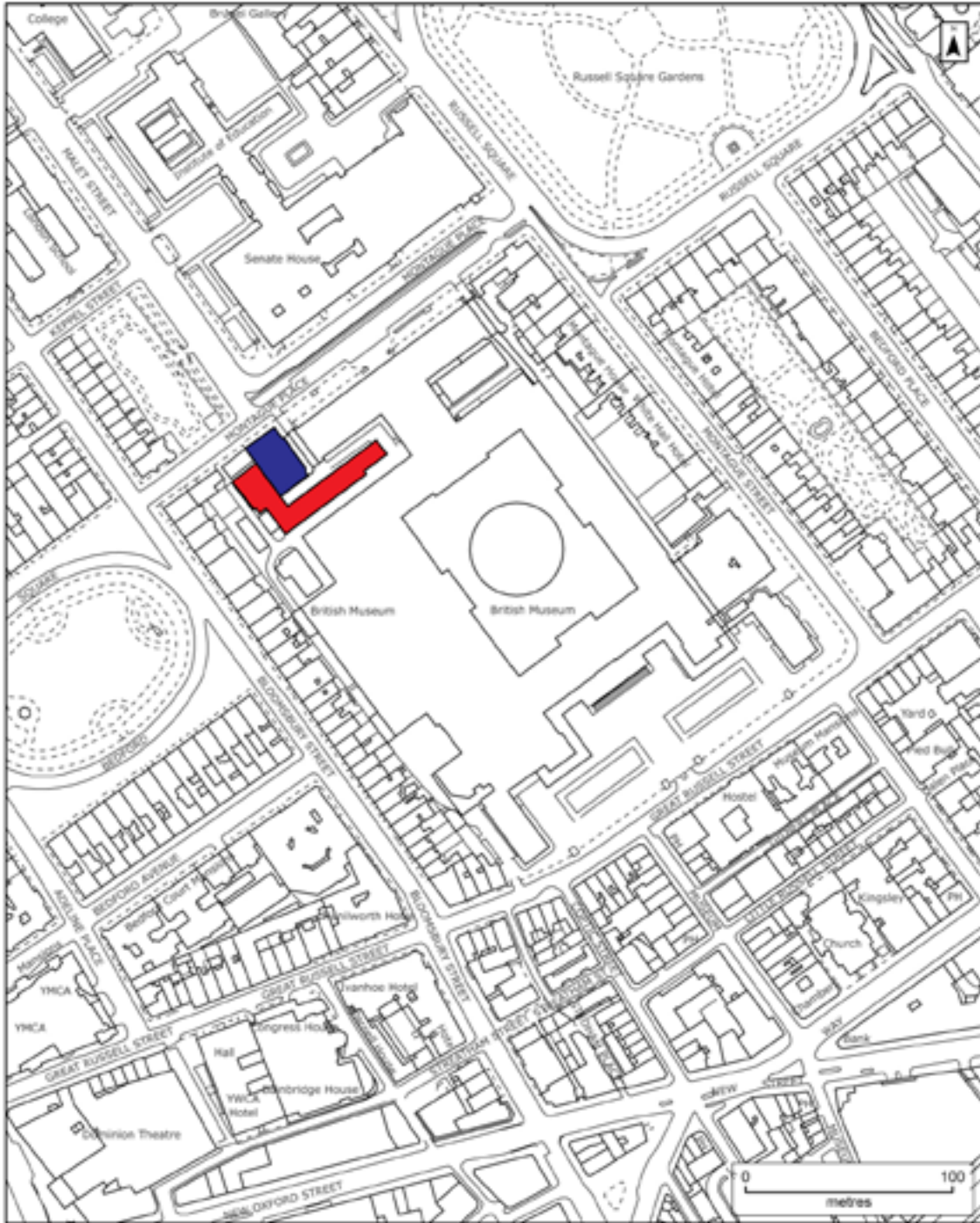


Figure 1 Modern map showing the British Museum and its environs, with 1–2 Montague Place highlighted in blue and the Bindery in red. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2009

## BACKGROUND

### The British Museum

The British Museum was the first national, public and secular museum in the world. It was founded by Act of Parliament in 1753, uniting the collections of Sir Robert Cotton (1570–1631), Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford (1661–1724), and Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753). It was the latter's will which had prompted the foundation of a national repository, as he was determined that his collection should not be broken up after his death.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1759 the Museum opened to the general public in the converted Montagu House in Bloomsbury. This was a seventeenth-century palatial mansion resembling a Parisian *hôtel*, with a large courtyard to the front, gardens to the rear and extensive outbuildings. The first Montagu House had been built in 1675–80 by Robert Hooke (1635–1703) for the Duke of Montagu; this house was rebuilt or reconstructed after a fire in 1686 to a design by a 'Monsieur Pouget'.<sup>2</sup>

Private donations soon rapidly enlarged the collections, which required more space for storage and display. After a single extension in the form of the Townley Gallery (built 1804–1808) by George Saunders (c.1762–1839), the designs of Sir Robert Smirke (1780–1867) transformed the appearance of the whole Museum from the 1820s onwards. Initially in the capacity of Attached Architect to the Office of Works and then as architect to the Museum, Smirke replaced Montagu House in stages with a new quadrangular plan with a grand entrance front to Great Russell Street. Work was continued after his retirement in 1846 by his brother, Sydney Smirke (1798–1877), who famously designed the Reading Room.<sup>3</sup>

### The expansion of the British Museum

Throughout the history of the British Museum, its growing collections required increasingly more space, necessitating numerous additions and extensions. The buildings that are the subject of this report have their origin in such enlargement schemes on an *ad hoc* basis, whenever financial circumstances allowed.

All Museum property is vested in the Trustees and, from 1870 to the abolition of the Property Holdings in 1995, was administered by the Office of Works and its successors.<sup>4</sup> The Office managed the Museum's estate on behalf of the Trustees and all submissions for decisions on policy, approvals and consents were made to the Principal Librarian (as the Director was called until 1973) or the Secretary of the Museum for consideration at the periodical meetings of the Trustees.

In 1879, a long-awaited bequest from William White became available when his widow died. This money went principally towards funding the White Wing on the east side of the Museum but was also used to build several other smaller buildings, among them the Bindery, built in 1898.<sup>5</sup>

In 1895, in order to provide for future growth and building work, the Trustees bought



69 houses and 5 ½ acres of land surrounding the Museum from the Duchy of Bedford. This island site, called the 'British Museum Improvement Property' and bordered by Montague Place, Bedford Square, Bloomsbury Street, Great Russell Street and Montague Street, was intended to allow for the gradual extension of the Museum during the twentieth century, as well as to provide greater security from fire.<sup>6</sup> Only one house on the island site, 1 Montague Place, was acquired later, in 1905.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 2 Bird's eye view looking northwest, drawing by John James Burnet, 1905. Copyright RIBA Library Drawing and Archives Collection (DRI64/4(14))



Figure 3 British Museum extension, Montague Place front, drawing by John James Burnet, 1905. Copyright The National Archives (hereafter TNA) (WORK 33/1212)

The Trustees had planned gradually to develop the whole island site of property, to encase the existing buildings within new wings on three sides. Plans for such a comprehensive scheme had been sketched out by Sir John Taylor (1833–1912), Surveyor of the Office of Works, in 1881 and were revived when John James Burnet (1857–1938) was commissioned in 1904 to build the North Wing, later known as the King Edward VII Galleries, which he designed as the first stage of a much larger scheme (figs 2 and 3).<sup>8</sup>

Burnet's view from Montague Place (fig. 3) shows the King Edward VII Galleries as the central portion with the outer wings planned for later execution. The central dome is the dome of the Reading Room and the dome to the right would have been a domed

lecture theatre with a separate entrance from Bedford Square.<sup>9</sup>

However, Burnet's Galleries remained the only executed part as both lack of funds and the two world wars intervened. After some of the houses on the east side of Bedford Square were listed in 1951, the scheme of clearing all the surrounding houses was no longer feasible.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 4 Plan of the British Museum site, 1829.  
From Dobie 1829. Copyright City of London, London Metropolitan Archives (72.2/DOB)



Figure 5 Ordnance Survey map of 1875, with 1 and 2 Montague Place highlighted in green. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2009

## THE BINDERY

### The development of the site

The 1753 Act stipulated that the collections should not be moved away from the site, neither as loans nor for repair work. Books and paper-based materials formed a significant part of the Museum's collections, and thus also fell under this rubric. Therefore, all binding work and repair had to be done on site.<sup>11</sup> Compared to off-site workshops this also provided a relatively fire-safe environment as the Museum was able to enforce strict rules for fire prevention within its precinct.

The first bindery workshop was located in the basement of Montagu House and then moved to various sites as required. Until 1844 the bindery workshops were located in basement rooms and in 1843 visitors complained about the noise of the bindery which was audible in the Elgin Gallery directly above. The following year, the binders moved into the building formerly used by the Bedford Office, which administered the estate of the Duke of Bedford (fig. 4). This was located between the main building and Montague Street. During its use as a bindery it was extended several times. Throughout the nineteenth century, there were grave concerns over fire safety and sufficient ventilation in the workshops and in 1865 a serious fire broke out. In 1885, this bindery had to make way for the White Wing and, after temporary accommodation in a basement space and iron sheds, the workshops were re-housed in the present building on a site behind 1–7 Montague Place (fig. 7).<sup>12</sup>

In order to make way for the Bindery, a multi-purpose, lean-to workshop building dating from between c.1875 and c.1896 had to be dismantled and re-erected behind 1–10 Bedford Square (figs 6, 8 and 9). This building accommodated workshops for masons, painters, polishers, coppersmiths, as well as police mess rooms, a firemen's room, a fire engine and hose room, a workmen's mess room, a paint store, lavatories and a subterranean boiler house (fig. 8). (Parts of the latter were incorporated into the Bindery.) The remainder of the site was a strip of land behind the gardens of Montague Place, which had been acquired with the Bedford Estate properties (figs 6, 8 and 9).<sup>13</sup>

In 1897, the Treasury agreed to fund the building of the long-promised Bindery and the Office of Works proposed to employ Messrs Mowlem & Co. 'to erect the building in measured work, under their contract for ordinary work and business'.<sup>14</sup>

In October 1897, the Museum Trustees approved the plans and authorised the Principal Librarian 'to settle matters of detail by arrangement with Sir John Taylor'.<sup>15</sup> This suggests the involvement of Sir John Taylor, Surveyor of the Office of Works, either directly or in a supervisory capacity. (Although he retired in March 1898, he completed any unfinished projects as a consulting architect until 1906.<sup>16</sup>) The Bindery was completed by the end of 1898 and early in 1899 the binders were able to move in.<sup>17</sup>

Around 1925 some alterations were made to the boiler house, then called the 'Furniture Store'.<sup>18</sup> After some talk of demolition, the Bindery was extended, according to architectural plans of c.1956 by the Ministry of Works, signed by S. Barnett, presumably

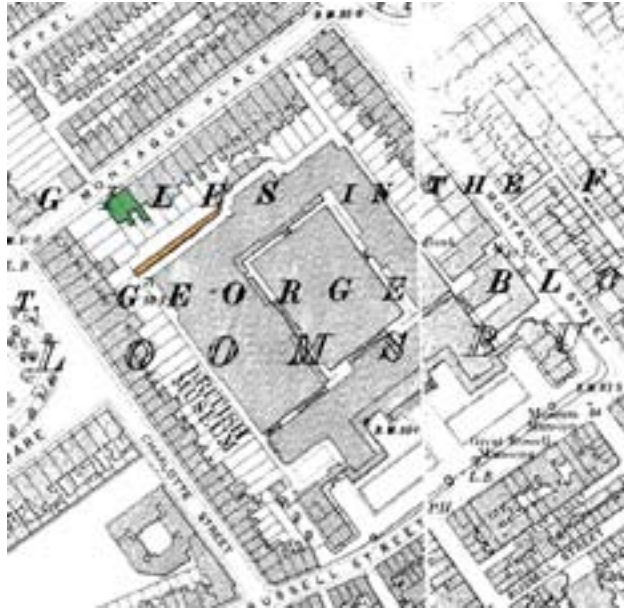


Figure 6 Ordnance Survey map of 1896, with 1 and 2 Montague Place highlighted in green and the workshops building in orange. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2009



Figure 7 Ordnance Survey map of 1916, with 1 and 2 Montague Place highlighted in green and the Bindery in red. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2009



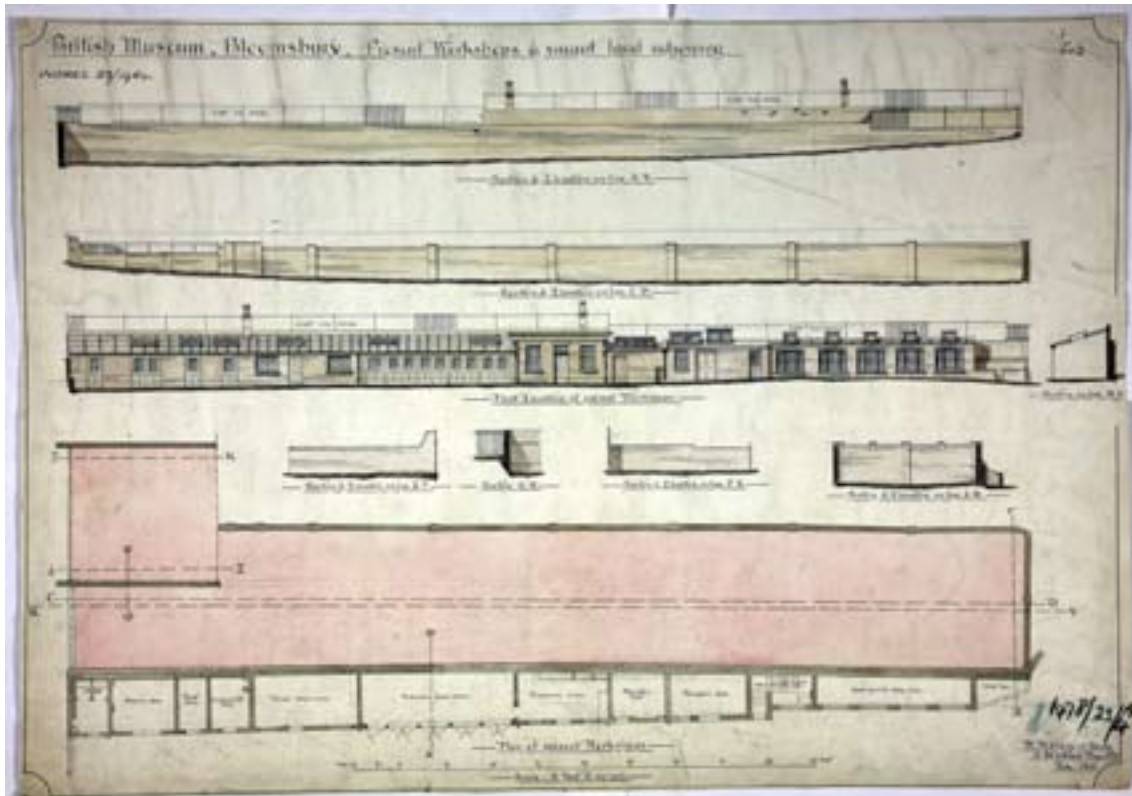


Figure 8 British Museum, Bloomsbury, Workshops and vacant land adjoining, July 1897. Copyright TNA (WORK 33/1962). Parts of the workshops – three bays at the east end – were incorporated into the new Bindery.

the draughtsman. Work started in May 1957 and was completed in March 1958.<sup>19</sup> Initial plans to extend the Bindery upwards by two storeys proved to be impracticable as well as expensive, and instead an extension of two storeys was built at right angles to the existing structure.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the second half of the twentieth century small-scale alterations were carried out, such as the insertion of internal partitions and changes to external door and window openings on the south façade.

### Building description

The Bindery was erected on a narrow site between the then northernmost part of the Museum and the gardens of the houses in Montague Place. It does not have a street façade and is accessed from within the Museum compound. A workshop of functional appearance, the Bindery is an L-shaped two-storey structure, built of stock brick and roofed in slate (figs 10 and 11). The building, which largely dates from 1898, is a long linear building which originally had a single-storey newspaper storage room at right angles in the northwest corner. This was replaced in 1957–58 with a larger two-storey extension (fig. 12). The building as it stands today comprises five distinct parts, which differ in height, roof form and fenestration.

The central block of the building originally consisted of 15 bays, with doors on both sides in the westernmost bay. On the north side this bay is now covered by the 1957–58 extension. This central core, which contained the workshops, is the only one with a tall

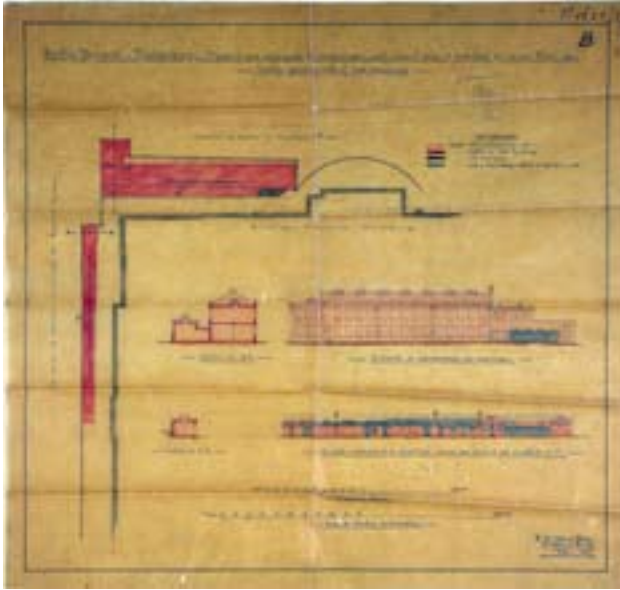


Figure 9 Proposed new workshops for bookbinders [elevation and section in the centre, plan above], and reconstruction of workshops for various trades etc. [elevation and section below, plan to the left]. Sketch shewing [sic] sites of new buildings, December 1897. Copyright TNA (WORK 17/4/3, plan B)

pitched roof, with four ventilators on the ridge, a chimney on the east gable and a party wall roughly at the mid-point (not shown on fig. 10), corresponding to an internal cross-wall. The window openings in this block are, like most of the Bindery's windows, segmentally-headed, with tall pivot-hung timber sashes and bottom-hung hopper windows above. The windows in the east and west end are more varied in size and proportions. All the ground-floor windows of the north elevation have bricks replaced in their window jambs, indicating that at some point there were protective bars in front of the windows, possibly at the time when the Bindery overlooked the gardens of Montague Place (fig. 13).

Beyond the eastern gable is a two-storey block with a flat-roof and two glazed lanterns, which contained the mess rooms and lavatories.

On the north elevation this block is six windows wide, of slimmer form where they light lavatories; on the ground-floor of the south elevation it has two doors and three windows. The block received additional lighting from three windows in its east façade. A further block to the east originally contained the leather store. This was a one-storey block with a flat asphalt roof until the 1960s or 70s when it was slightly reconfigured with a raised roof, a loading bay and large sliding doors to the south. Changes were also made to the window openings.<sup>21</sup>

According to the drawing of 1898, the underground boilerhouse from the workshops previously on the site was incorporated into these two eastern blocks (figs 8 and 9). These retained parts included a stair and an upper part in front of the building line, with glazed brickwork, vents and three low segmentally-headed, three-light windows at ground-floor level. Beyond it to the east was a window of similar form, while above were short windows lighting the interior of the Bindery. The window openings on the first floor are straight-headed. Around 1925, the upper parts of the former boilerhouse were replaced with rectangular smoke vents.<sup>22</sup>

At the western end of the building is a two-storey, three-bay block which originally housed, among other things, the manager's office to the south, whose fenestration of two slimmer windows flanking a central window gives it a slightly different character from the rest of the Bindery. A small room next to the office originally housed the marbling room, the window for which was later converted to a door. At the time of the extension,



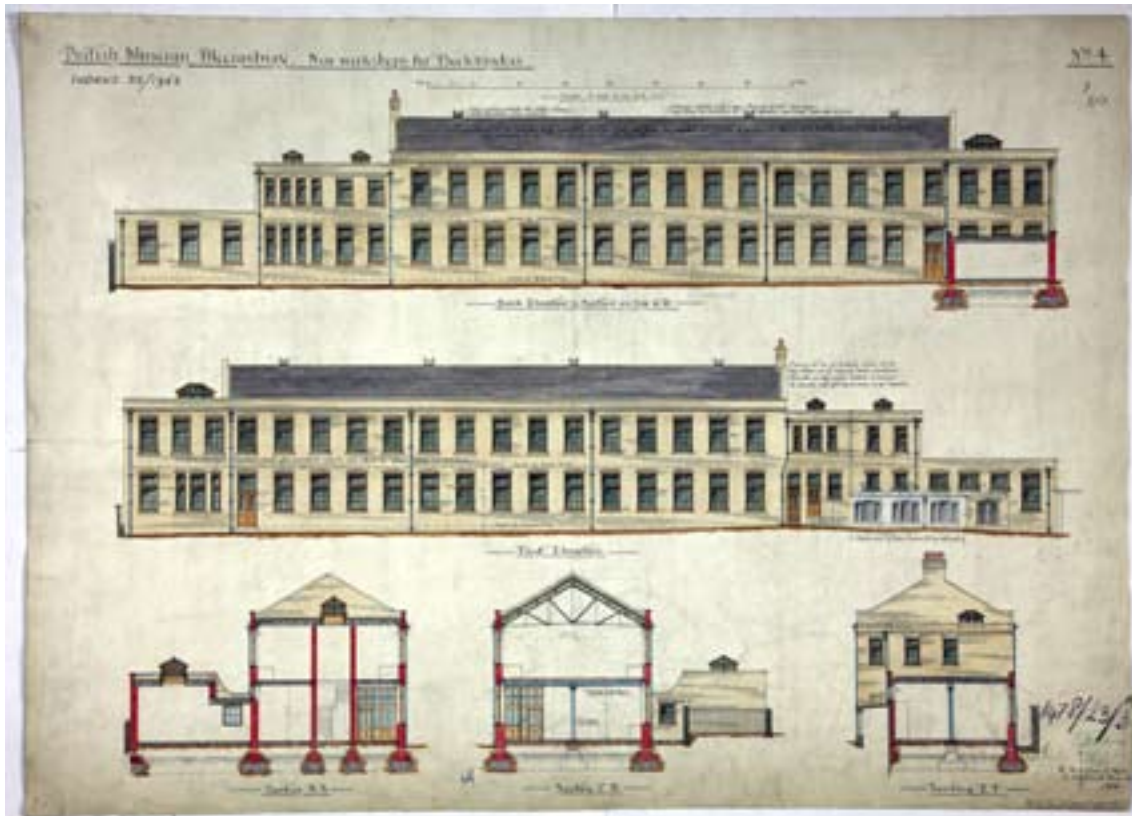


Figure 10 British Museum, Bloomsbury, New workshops for Bookbinders, 1898, elevations and sections. Copyright TNA (WORK 33/1963)

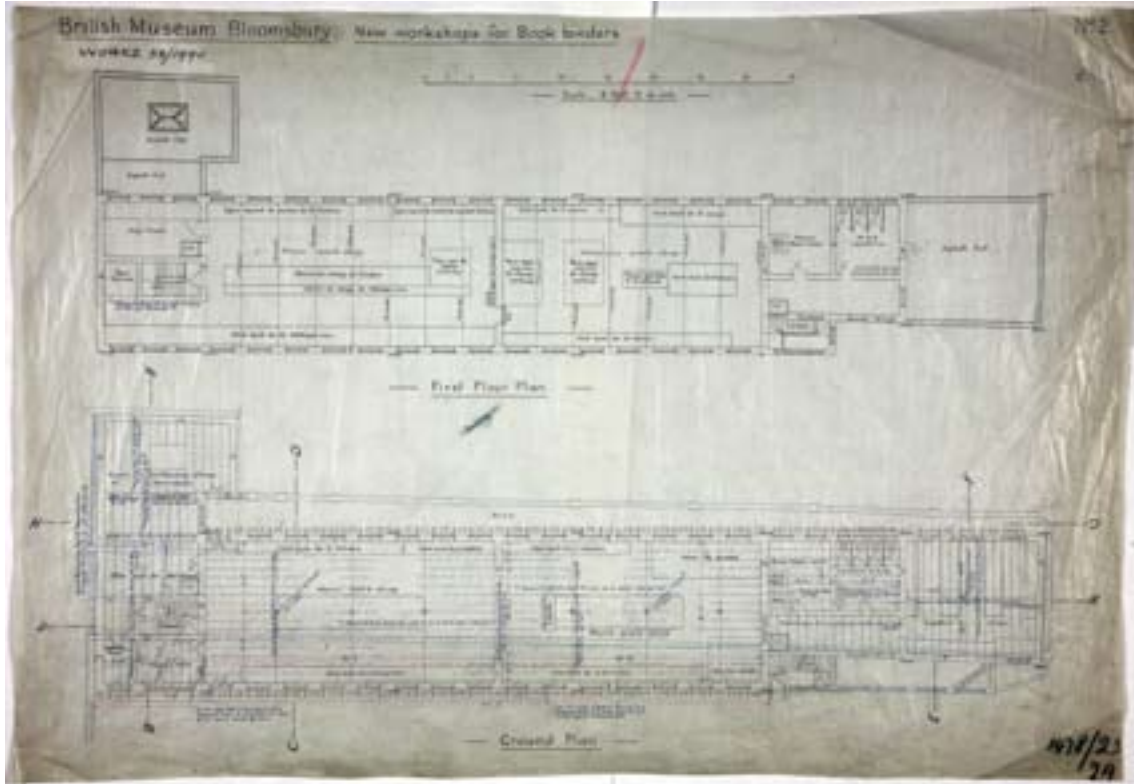


Figure 11 British Museum, Bloomsbury, New Workshops for Book Binders, n.d. (c.1897–98), plans. Copyright TNA (WORK 33/1990)



Figure 12 Plan of the Bindery, 1–2 Montague Place, and the King Edward VII Galleries. Copyright The British Museum, courtesy of Purcell Miller Tritton (Purcell Miller Tritton 2007, Sector F, plan, between pages 144 and 145)



Figure 13 North elevation of the Bindery.  
Copyright English Heritage (DP070361)

this block was slightly altered, internally and externally. A glazed lantern similar to those at the east end of the building was replaced by a shallow plastic rooflight and the four western bays of the north elevation were covered by the extension.

Originally, a single-storey newspaper storage room was attached at right angles to the north west corner of the Bindery, forming a shallow L-shape. This block, lit only by a single window and a glazed lantern on the flat asphalt roof, was demolished for the 1950s extension.

The extension is a two-storey structure of concrete-frame construction clad with brick (fig. 12). It has a flat roof with skylights and two vents. The extension's north elevation with a large second-floor window and a vent is visible above a low electrical substation behind a wall fronting Montague Place. The

drawing of c. 1956 also shows a fire escape door on the ground floor.<sup>23</sup>

The west elevation, marked 'front elevation' on the drawings of c.1956, has, from north to south, five windows, two further windows on the south wall of a re-entrant corner and two windows near where the extension abuts on the west elevation of the older building. The northeast angle abuts 1–2 Montague Place. The central part of the east elevation is only one storey high and originally had a glazed roof. This was later covered over, while providing three modern skylights. On the floor above, this recessed area is lit

by three windows to the east and two windows each on the north and south-facing walls. Close to the corner with the 1898 building, a door provides access to the Bindery and a further window is placed directly above. The windows of the extension have metal frames. The windows in the two southernmost bays of the west elevation of the extension are shown on the drawings of c.1956 to have windows matching those of the older building.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 14 Interior view of the Bindery, ground floor.  
Copyright English Heritage (DP070362)

Internally, both floors of the central core contain large, open





Figure 15 Interior view of the Bindery, first floor.  
Copyright English Heritage (DP070363)

workshops (figs 10 and 11). They are divided into two by a cross-wall which is continued slightly above roof level. A central rank of 9-inch-diameter cast-iron columns runs the length of the ground floor, used to support a thick concrete filler-joist floor above (figs 10 and 16). The first floor is entirely column-free, spanned by light, closely spaced steel trusses which are for the main part concealed by a modern suspended ceiling (figs 10, 15 and 17). While these were originally continuous spaces, plasterboard and metal subdivisions were introduced in the late

twentieth century, forming small offices (figs 14 and 15).<sup>25</sup>

Brick cross-walls, originally fitted with heavy ‘fireproof’ metal doors, and compartmentalized stairs at the ends of the building, are illustrative of the attempts to minimize or halt the spread of fire in a building that housed inherently risky processes. Besides fire-resistance the internal use of iron, steel and concrete helped to open up



Figure 16 Cast iron column, ground floor, Bindery. Copyright English Heritage (DP070364)

the interiors, maximizing light penetration on both floors, both of which were robust enough to accommodate heavy workbenches, presses and other hand-operated machinery.

The walls of the first floor are still lined with workbenches, while the workbenches from the other workshops have been removed. The worktops appear to date from the late twentieth century but the substructure might be original (fig. 19).<sup>26</sup>

At either end of the central core there were originally book lifts and staircases lined with white glazed bricks. The western staircase was removed in 1957–58 and turned into a strong room on the ground floor.<sup>27</sup> The book lifts are still in their original position, however, their doors, cars and operating gear have been replaced.<sup>28</sup>

The west block also contained originally on the ground floor a marbling room, the

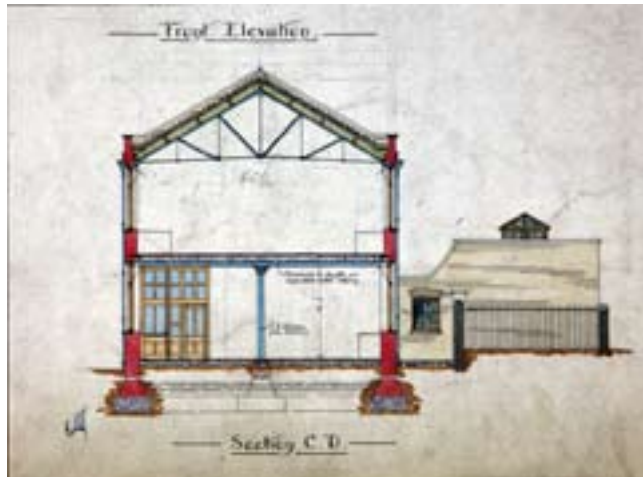


Figure 17 Sectional drawing of the Bindery, 1897.  
Copyright TNA (detail of WORK 33/1990)

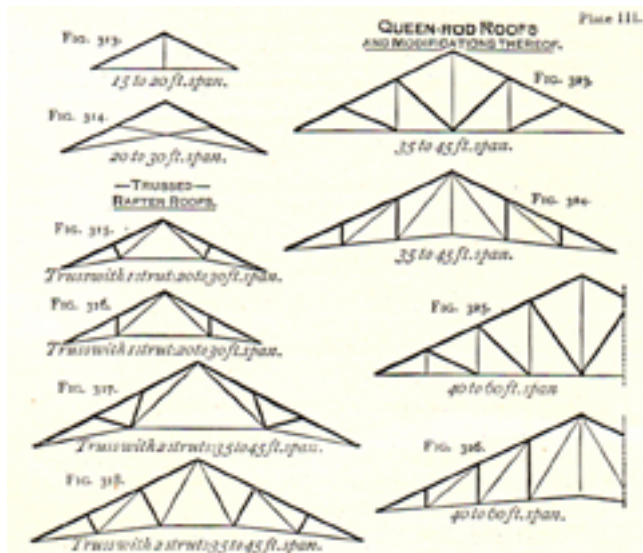


Figure 18 Queen-rod roofs and modifications thereof.  
The Bindery used a standard steel trussed-rafter roof of queen-rod configuration, almost identical to that illustrated in fig. 323 of *Advanced Building Construction*, 1901, plate III.

date from 1957–58.<sup>33</sup> The original herringbone woodblock floor on the first floor survives under linoleum sheeting. Alterations include the replacement of the sanitary ware and the light fittings, as well as the introduction of fan-assisted hot water convectors suspended from the ceiling of the workshops (c.1956) (figs 14 and 15).<sup>34</sup>

In form and construction, there is little to distinguish the Bindery from other generic workshops of the era, with the accent clearly upon non-combustibility, lighting and robustness rather than architectural appearance.

manager's office, a store room for mill boards, a cupboard and a room for the temporary storage of newspapers to the north.<sup>29</sup> As part of the alteration works for the extension, these spaces were reconfigured to include a store, a strong room (the former staircase) and three further rooms.<sup>30</sup> On the first floor, there was the map room, which by c.1956 was used as the laminator room, and the work benches were continued into the southwest corner.<sup>31</sup> The east part contained mess rooms and lavatories on both floors, both of which generally survive as originally built. The leather store on the ground floor originally had a central column like the workshops, which seems to have been removed during the 1960s or 70s when the roof was raised. The room appears to have been subdivided around 1984.<sup>32</sup>

The extension provided space for more workshop rooms, lavatories, two staircases, store rooms and a lobby. Like the older building, this is a functional and well-lit space, with open, mostly top-lit workshops with concrete columns (fig. 20).

Throughout the building, some internal half-glazed timber doors survive from the 1898 building, while the doors of the extension





Figure 19 Bindery workbenches, showing the original substructure. Copyright English Heritage (DP070365)



Figure 20 Interior view of the 1957–58 extension to the Bindery, first floor. Copyright English Heritage (DP070366)

Yet by this date, 1898, this form of construction was commonplace, and, in some respects *retardataire*. More advanced building practice favoured mild-steel stanchions in place of cast-iron columns, and, for greater fire-resistance, their encasement in non-combustible materials. Similarly, the use of gibs and cotters at the feet of the truss to adjust the tension in the tie rod was, at the time of construction, becoming increasingly supplanted by the use of adjustable screw couplings or union joints ('turnbuckles'), although their use here was by no means a late, isolated example: the 'Fish' restaurant, near Borough Market, a recently refurbished low slung market shed, dated 1897, used a similar arrangement (figs 21 and 22).

In terms of the Bindery's industrial aesthetic, the lack of correlation between its constructional form and the processes it originally housed is obvious. Largely because the binding processes were hand-powered, rather than mechanised, there was little incentive to design more than a general-purpose, double-storey brick shed. This, coupled with the building's

'backstage' situation, resulted in an unremarkable, non-specific workshop.

Binderies are not very distinctive building types. Tools were relatively easy to carry and a workshop required only sufficient light and ventilation, and a source of heat for the finishing tools. Thus, most binders could travel to wherever they found work; for example, German bookbinders settled in eighteenth-century London.<sup>35</sup> Craft binderies could be set up in domestic houses, which would typically be adapted over the years, and could be part of a bookseller or publishing house, or both. A good example is P & G Wells Bookshop and Bindery in Winchester which is thought to be the oldest bookshop and bindery still in existence. It was set up around 1770 and moved in c.1790 into the house it still occupies. Originally the bookshop was on the ground floor and the bindery in an extension at the rear.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 21 Gib and cotter joint, the British Museum Bindery, 1898. Copyright English Heritage (DP070367)



Figure 22 Gib and cotter joint, the 'Fish' restaurant, Cathedral Street, Southwark, 1897. Copyright English Heritage (DP070368)

### Building use

The process of bookbinding is divided into forwarding, that is the sewing of the leaves and attachment of the covers, and finishing, that is the decoration of the covers.<sup>37</sup> According to the plan of c.1897–98, the two men's workshops on the ground-floor were used by the menders, forwarders, collators and labellers (fig. 11). The finishers and catalogue-men worked in the western half of the first-floor workshops, with the women's workshop in the eastern part. The tasks of the women are not specified, however, historically, women did the sewing and headbanding.<sup>38</sup>

Some idea of the processes carried out in the Bindery and the use of space is given in an account of a bookbinder. Bernard Middleton served his apprenticeship at the British Museum Bindery from 1940 to 1949. His description of the Bindery in an article from 1953 shows how relatively little had changed in the gender separation, staffing and work processes:

The ground floor consists of a large hall with small rooms at each end...this main workshop is devoted to forwarding and the more advance preparatory work for sewing...The upper floor is divided into two main workshops... with smaller rooms at each end. One of the large rooms is occupied by the finishers and the menders, the two departments being ranged down each side of the building by the windows. The other one is occupied by the women's department.<sup>39</sup>

The general discipline was strict: the men were expected to work standing at their workbench all day, apart from a 4pm tea break.<sup>40</sup> In 1953, 80 binders worked in the building, including 24 forwarders, two collators, nine finishers, 11 menders and 34 women, and around 2,000 volumes were processed each month.<sup>41</sup> Middleton mentions a range of equipment, from standing presses to laying presses, power guillotines and rolling presses.

Work undertaken in the building included the binding of unbound acquisitions and the repair of much-used books as well as valuable books, documents and manuscripts.<sup>42</sup> Occasionally, the Bindery made more lavishly decorated bindings but generally they



Figure 23 Workshop, Bindery extension of 1957–58, photograph labelled 'c.1975'. Copyright British Library, Centre for Conservation



Figure 24 Women's department, first floor, Bindery, photograph labelled 'c.1975'. Copyright British Library, Centre for Conservation

needed to be strong and sturdy, and the repairs, rebinding or restoring had to be dealt with as quickly and inexpensively as possible. In addition, the British Museum Library established a colour classification of bindings, for example green for Geography and red for History, which was continued for some time.<sup>43</sup> All of this work was highly individual and required specialist skills and experience. Thus, like most library binderies, the British Museum workshops were essentially a craft bindery, producing a relatively small number of unique bindings made by hand in the traditional way, as opposed to a larger mechanised workshop, which could bind about 80,000 books each week.<sup>44</sup>

The bindery staff was also involved in the 'Incorporation', that is the process of pasting additional entries into the volumes of the general catalogue. The successive versions of the general catalogue were produced in the Catalogue Shop which was originally located in the Bindery.<sup>45</sup>

During the twentieth century, the role of the Bindery gradually changed. The 1963 British Museum Act made it possible to send routine jobs and certain categories

of books off-site, and the emphasis shifted to conservation. For example, the repair and conservation of existing bindings is now the preferred practice, rather than the total re-binding of a book.

Until 1927, the Museum used contracted binders. In that year HM Stationery Office (hereafter HMSO) took over the running of the Bloomsbury Bindery and, from 1932, also the newly-established bindery at the Newspaper Repository at Colindale; however, the Trustees retained the existing trained and experienced bindery staff.

In 1973, the British Library came into existence and in April 1982 the staff of the two (previously HMSO-run) binderies became employees of the Library. In 1983, the

Department of Conservation and Binding was created to include the various binderies and studios which had previously been managed by the individual Library departments. In 1994, the employees of the conservation binderies were re-graded as 'conservation officers'.<sup>46</sup>

The Bindery continued to be used for its original purpose, even after the British Library had opened in its new premises at St Pancras in 1998. Changes to the original plan of the St Pancras complex had reduced it to one third of the size originally planned and the Centre for Conservation had to be built as a later addition. However, conservation staff from the other constituent libraries and collections moved to the 6th floor of the new building. Until the move of the Bindery staff into the Centre for Conservation in March 2007, conservation work was carried out both at St Pancras and at the Museum.<sup>47</sup>

In March 2007 any surplus equipment was auctioned off in 271 lots, including Victorian furnishings and machinery, such as cast-iron bookpresses and standing presses.<sup>48</sup> Since then, most specialist equipment and furnishings have been removed and the Bindery has been used for occasional storage and workshops, such as mosaics conservation workshops (in the former leather store) and as a furniture store. A plaque which was formerly at the entrance of the Bindery and which commemorated four binders who died during the First World War was removed to the Centre for Conservation.

### **Significance and context**

The Bindery is reputed to be the 'earliest surviving purpose-built book binding workshop', although this statement is not supported with evidence nor qualified in regard to geographical remit.<sup>49</sup> Its veracity is not easily assessed as there is no published or easily accessible research on bindery buildings in England. Initial research has shown that there are earlier surviving, purpose-built mechanised binding workshops (see Appendices 2 and 3). However, the Bindery is one of a small number of purpose-built *craft* binderies and may well be one of the oldest surviving.

The British Museum Bindery is highly unusual in that it was a large craft bindery, yet the size of its operation demanded a substantial purpose-built structure. Thus, it corresponds in scale to a large mechanised bindery factory but in function to small craft binderies accommodated in a single room or a domestic house.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century London, bookbinders could be found in the West End, close to their wealthy patrons, and in the City, near the booksellers in and around Paternoster Row. The workshops in the West End provided richly finished, traditional bookbinding while the binders in the City made simpler bindings, mainly for educational books, Bibles and books for lending libraries.<sup>50</sup> Geographically and functionally, the Bindery did not fit into this pattern as it was independent from both the booksellers and private customers, and was concerned mainly with the needs of the Museum's collection.<sup>51</sup>

University and legal deposit libraries, which are comparable in size and importance to the former British Museum Library, were not bound by clauses like those in the 1753 British

Museum Act and were able to give their books to local binderies. The university libraries at Oxford and Cambridge started to provide in-house binding services from about the middle of the nineteenth century. However, like the early British Museum bindery workshops, these were accommodated in existing buildings, such as the library building, or wherever space could be found. For example, in 1864 a room was constructed for the binders at the west end of the north range of the former Picture Gallery (now Upper Reading Room) of the Bodleian Library. Later the binding workshop moved into the room which had previously accommodated the coin collection.<sup>52</sup> In 1854 Robert Fynn became the first binder to work regularly at binding repairs for Cambridge University Library and in 1859 the Syndics of the Library bought a quantity of binding equipment.<sup>53</sup> More recently, suitable bindery accommodation was created in both libraries in the mid- to later-twentieth century when the binding services became part of the book conservation departments.

There are two listed purpose-built binderies in England, one of them built earlier than the Bindery at the British Museum: the printing and bookbinding factory for the Union Paper and Printing Company Ltd., at 59–61 Tithebarn St, Liverpool, dated 1871; and the printing and binding departments of the commercial premises for the music publishers Novello & Co., 152–160 Wardour Street, Westminster, dated 1898.<sup>54</sup> Both are listed Grade II. (See Appendices 2 and 3 for photos and list descriptions.)

However, these binderies were part of commercial enterprises and had different functions from the British Museum Bindery. The Liverpool example was a bindery for a printing house, and the Westminster building was attached to a music publisher. Both workshops are very likely to have been larger and more mechanised than the British Museum example.

Not only is the British Museum Bindery a rare example of a large-scale purpose-built craft bindery, it also derives significance from its close association with the outstanding collections of the British Museum and British Library. In 1953, Middleton remarked that 'as a craft bindery it [the British Museum Bindery] is one of the most important establishments in the world'.<sup>55</sup> Without the work undertaken in the workshop, the British Library's valuable books and manuscripts would be in a much poorer condition today, or might not have survived at all. Like the more famous Reading Room at the British Museum, the Bindery is an important part of the history of both the Museum and the British Library.

## I-2 MONTAGUE PLACE

### The development of the site

The south side of Montague Place was a street of sixteen terraced houses built in the first decade of the nineteenth century, probably by James Burton (1761–1837) (figs 4, 5 and 25).<sup>56</sup> As with many of the other sites developed by Burton in Bloomsbury, he probably re-leased plots to smaller builders.<sup>57</sup>



Figure 25 British Museum, Elevation of Montague Place, 1904. Copyright TNA (WORK 33/1964)

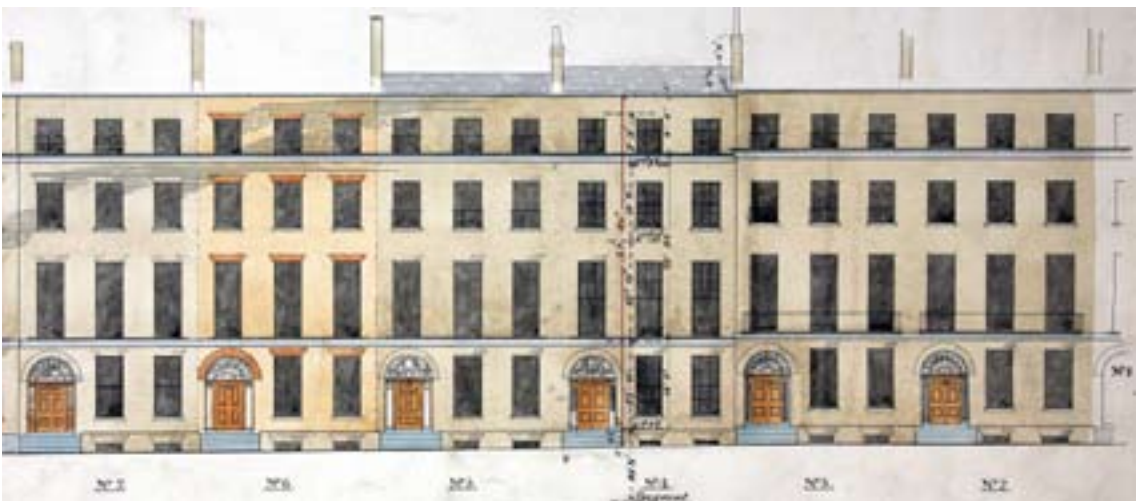


Figure 26 Detail showing 2 to 7 Montague Place, 1904. Copyright TNA (detail of WORK 33/1964)

A record drawing of Nos 2 to 16 of 1904 (figs 25 and 26) shows a terrace of four-storey houses with basements, chimney stacks on the party walls, fan lights above the doors and suggestions of railings, pitched roofs, glazing bars and balconies.

Nos 1 and 2 were identical three-bay wide houses, built of amber brick laid in Flemish





Figure 27 1 and 2 Montague Place, 1950.  
 Copyright City of London, London Metropolitan  
 Archives (SC/PHL/01/164/JMI3932)

bond, with a stucco cornice below the attic windows (fig. 27). The first-floor windows had an iron balcony resting on corbels with a stucco band below. The entrance was in the left-hand bay through a door framed by fluted Doric columns, with a plate-glass fanlight above.

No. 2 Montague Place was acquired by the British Museum from the Bedford Estate in 1895, but No. 1 was, until 1905, used as the Rectory of St George's church, Bloomsbury. The right of purchase of this house had been reserved to the Trustees of the British Museum in 1895, and the Trustees of the Bedford Estate offered to find an alternative rectory house on the Estate. In 1901 there was an interregnum at St George's and negotiations began. In December 1905 the sale was concluded and possession was obtained in February 1906.<sup>58</sup>

While both houses would have been demolished if the whole British Museum island site had been developed, they were exempted

from the North Wing development as early as 1899. Instead Burnet's King Edward VII Galleries (built 1906–14) required the demolition of Nos 3 to 16 in 1904. However, redevelopment was always an option for the two houses and at a discussion of a potential masterplan in 1899, the Principal Librarian expressed his preference for demolition as 'standing alone they would be unsightly in appearance, and the ground which they occupied would be useful for temporary purposes.'<sup>59</sup>

In 1905, Burnet was granted permission to use 'certain spare rooms' in 2 Montague Place for accommodation and office space.<sup>60</sup> He also built a temporary office extension at the back. In 1912 he moved into No. 1 and applied to the London County Council (hereafter LCC) for permission to move the temporary office building in the garden from one house to the other (fig. 7).<sup>61</sup> The house remained the office of his architectural practice, Sir John Burnet & Partners (from 1930 Sir John Burnet, Tait and Lorne), until 1948 when the practice moved to 10 Bedford Square, where it was still registered as a lessee in 1976.<sup>62</sup>

A photo from the 1930s shows an interior in No.1 which had already lost its Georgian features and had been remodelled, probably by Burnet, according to the taste of the



Figure 28 1 Montague Place, interior view showing 'lap' fireplace by Fenning and Co. and sculpture relief by Eric Aumonier, 1930–39. Copyright The National Monuments Record (OP00783)

early twentieth century with a fireplace with a surround made from the artificial stone 'lap' (fig. 28).<sup>63</sup>

In February 1950, 1 and 2 Montague Place were listed Grade III, while the main building of the British Museum was listed Grade I and the King Edward VII Galleries, Grade II (see Appendix I).<sup>64</sup> Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, Grade III included buildings which were not of sufficient architectural or historic quality to justify a higher grade but which should not be destroyed without careful consideration. While Grade I and II buildings were included in statutory lists, Grade III buildings were on supplementary lists with no statutory force. (Grade III was abolished in 1970.)

In 1950, Edward Gordon and A. F. L. Deeson, the authors of *The Book of Bloomsbury* were worried about the future of 1 and 2 Montague Place and recognised their contribution of scale to the street between the King Edward VII Galleries and the Senate House (built 1932–37):

[Montague Place] is almost entirely occupied by the side of Senate House and the most recent addition to the British Museum, the King Edward VII galleries [sic]. However, there still remain two charming Georgian houses on the south side which are in excellent condition and worthy of inspection. It is to be hoped that they will be allowed to remain for they create a striking yet pleasant contrast to the massive modern buildings.<sup>65</sup>

In 1962, the LCC placed a Building Preservation Order on Bedford Square and several other buildings in Bloomsbury, including 1 and 2 Montague Place. This was justified as follows: 'The buildings in Gower Street, Montague Place, Bloomsbury St and Bayley St included in this order are a vital part of the same scene from the [Bedford] Square and were all constructed as part of the same development. Although they are included in a supplementary list they are of special architectural interest in their own account. Considered as a whole the group is of first-rate national importance.'<sup>66</sup> (fig. 29)

As the Museum was, like other civic buildings, exempt from the London Building Acts, there seems to have been some confusion over the listed building control status of the British Museum. A letter from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government of 2 September 1954 to Mr E. J. Weatherley, Estate Surveyor at the Ministry of Works, confirms that all the listed buildings belonging to the Museum will be removed from the



*Figure 29 1 and 2 Montague Place, 1961, photo from the Building Preservation Order. Copyright Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre (H.S.917)*

statutory lists and included in the Crown Property List.<sup>67</sup> However, in a Ministry of Public Building and Works memorandum, dated 2 August 1966, the position is clarified: 'As the Estate is vested in the Trustees and as the Treasury Solicitor has ruled that they are not the same thing as the Crown they are entirely bound by the Building Preservation Order [of 1962].'<sup>68</sup>

In 1968, following the 1967 Civic Amenities Act which introduced the designation of conservation areas by local authorities, 1 and 2 Montague Place were included within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Following the departure of Burnet, Tait & Lorne's architectural practice in 1948, 1 Montague Place became the home of the Museum's Research Laboratory after its previous premises, 39 Russell Square, had been damaged during the war. By 1956, the two houses in Montague Place were occupied as follows: In No.1, the Laboratory occupied the basement, ground and first floors, as well as a purpose-built ground-floor annex and two rooms in an outhouse in the garden; and the second and third floors contained two vacant flats. (A two-storey building at the rear of 10 Bedford Square, now 1A and 1B Montague Place, was also part of the laboratory.) No. 2 was wholly residential in use and contained four flats for Museum staff: two were occupied by members of the Hall staff, and two by the families of two of the Museum firemen, Chief Fireman Thorpe and Fireman Moore.<sup>69</sup>

The Laboratory rapidly outgrew its accommodation and in 1953 a sideways expansion into 2 Montague Place was suggested.<sup>70</sup> Plans progressed slowly and from c.1956 the Ministry of Works tried to convince the Museum that adaptation would be difficult and uneconomic, as the Laboratory would outgrow both houses in the foreseeable future.<sup>71</sup> Eventually, the Laboratory was accommodated in a purpose-built structure behind the original façades of 39 and 40 Russell Square (built 1960–61).<sup>72</sup> While the works were in process, an opening between the ground floor and basement of 1 and 2 Montague Place was made in 1957 to ease - temporarily - the overcrowding in the Laboratory.<sup>73</sup>

Discussions about the future use of the two buildings frequently mention the shabby condition of the interior and in 1958–59 during roof repairs additional work to brick parapets and chimney stacks was found to be necessary (fig. 29).<sup>74</sup> J. H. Davey from the Ministry of Works recommended in 1961 that No. 1 could be let to tenants if the Museum could not make a satisfactory case for the use of the two houses – however, he advised against letting the lower part of No. 2 (presumably because of its bad state of repair).<sup>75</sup>

Demolition is mentioned several times in connection with proposals for a builder's yard or depot for the Ministry of Works with vehicle access to Montague Place. Some of these proposals also included demolition of the old Bindery and the building of an up-to-date replacement in a general 'tidying-up operation' of the northwest corner.<sup>76</sup> However, in 1961, Mr Kendall, Senior Architect, Ministry of Works, advises against the demolition of the two houses: 'I hope nos [sic] 1 and 2 Montague Place can be kept for a considerable time as a screen for activities behind.'<sup>77</sup>

Later that year, the Museum suggested moving its Photographic Service into the buildings.<sup>78</sup> Although this required substantial alterations to the interior, work started in 1964 and, after a delay due to cuts in government expenditure, was resumed in 1966.<sup>79</sup> However, the following year, it was decided that the houses were beyond repair (dry rot is mentioned) and would need extensive reconstruction.<sup>80</sup> In December 1968 plans for the reconstruction of 1 and 2 Montague Place were signed off by the Museum's Trustees, showing only two flats to replace the previous three, due to less demand for rent-free accommodation for security staff.<sup>81</sup>

In 1969 a planning application was submitted to the Planning Applications Sub-Committee of the London Borough of Camden 'to erect a two-storey depot and a three-storey bindery at the rear of the British Museum'. No objections were raised, subject to a number of conditions. Perhaps the most significant was:

This council and the GLC [Greater London Council] being afforded opportunity of commenting upon the elevations, details and facing materials to be used in the proposed reconstruction of nos [sic] 1/2 Montague Place.<sup>82</sup>

In January the same year (presumably after the planning application had been submitted but before it was discussed at the Planning Applications Sub-Committee), the Museum's Committee on Buildings was informed that the reconstruction of 1 and 2 Montague Place and the building of the Ministry of Works depot were to proceed separately.<sup>83</sup>

Photographic evidence shows that in 1969 both houses were already in the process of demolition, with only part of the façade still standing (fig. 30).<sup>84</sup> According to Robert Chitham, formerly of the GLC's Historic Buildings Division, the GLC stipulated a classical building to replace Nos 1 and 2, and the Museum's architects proposed a building with replica façade.<sup>85</sup>

In January 1970, Camden received an application for Listed Building Consent for the rebuilding in facsimile of 1 and 2 Montague Place, including nine drawings of the façade, plans and numerous details of the exterior, prepared by R. I. Greatrex, ARIBA, Senior Architect for the Ministry of Public Building and Works, together with the consulting architects Walter W. Fisk FRIBA & Sidney H. Fisk LRIBA. (The presence of complete design drawings suggests that no original features were retained.) The particulars of the application explain the need for suitable accommodation for the Photographic Service and two residential flats for Museum staff, and propose 'to reconstruct the façade in its entirety' as the original fenestration of the front elevation would suit the requirements of the Photographic Service. Listed Building Consent was granted in July, but required that,



Figure 30 1 and 2 Montague Place during demolition, 1969. Copyright City of London, London Metropolitan Archives (SC/PHL/01/164/69.342)



Figure 31 1–2 Montague Place, after the rebuilding, 1973. Copyright City of London, London Metropolitan Archives (SC/PHL/01/164/73.3759)

are of Flemish-bond brickwork. The building has flat roofs, with parapets, and a single chimney to the front block which is not visible from below. On the roof of the rear part are air-conditioning equipment and various services, as well as a metal fire-escape stair leading up to a door in the west wall of the King Edward VII Galleries.

firstly, 'all new works be carried out in materials selected and used to correspond as closely as possible with the surviving part of the original façade' and secondly, 'that the horns on the sash windows be removed'. The rationale for these conditions was 'to maintain the character and originality of this facsimile rebuilding'.<sup>86</sup> The first condition suggests that at that date some portion of the façade was still standing and could be used as a reference for the detailing.

In January 1973 the new building with the replica façade (now 1–2 Montague Place) was finished and the Photographic Service was able to move in (figs 31 and 12).<sup>87</sup> Of the original building, only six coal cellars of varying size were retained (fig. 32).<sup>88</sup>

### Building description

The building at 1–2 Montague Place has a roughly rectangular plan and was built right up against the King Edward VII Galleries to the east and the Bindery extension to the west (fig. 12). To the rear it extends as far back as the south wall of the King Edward VII Galleries (fig. 1). While the facsimile façade gives the building the appearance of two houses, it is built and used as one, without an internal party wall.

To the north, the building has four storeys and a basement, although the top storey does not extend as far back as the others. All façades





Figure 32 One of the coal cellars of 1–2 Montague Place. Copyright English Heritage (DP070369)

The front façade towards Montague Place is a close copy of the houses previously occupying the site, replicating storey-height, the number of bays, proportions, bricks laid in Flemish bond, and all the details of doorframes, balconies, window openings, sash windows, stucco bands and iron railings (fig. 31). However, the side elevations visible from the street reveal the recent origin of the building. The wall to the east is entirely blind, apart from two small staircase windows in the narrow connecting wall with the King Edward VII Galleries (fig. 33).

To the west, the elevation features six windows which light kitchens and lavatories, three each on the top two floors. Two of these are three-over-three sashes, which are, together with those on the front elevation, the only sash windows of the building. (In the view of 1950 of the same elevation, there are only two slim windows (fig. 27).) At the re-entrant corner on the west side are two windows at first floor level. The west elevation of the rear block has one window on the first floor and two small square lavatory windows on the second floor. The rear elevation is three storeys tall and five windows wide, two of which are staircase windows at differing levels (fig. 34).



Figure 33 Windows between the King Edward VII Galleries and 1–2 Montague Place. Copyright English Heritage (DP070370)

The top floor has two windows to the rear and three doors onto the flat roof immediately adjoining. The south east corner with a staircase is taller than the rear block and provides access to the roof. In general, the small number and irregular spacing of windows in the rear and side elevations is clearly of a modern date, and related to the building's use as a photographic laboratory, with darkrooms, and reliance on artificial lighting.

Internally, the building has mainly offices, darkrooms, laboratories and studios of varying sizes (fig. 35). To the rear these are arranged on either side of a central corridor. There are three staircases, one directly behind the entrance door to the east, another behind the first one at right angles, and one in the southeast corner. The lavatories are located in the southwest corner and for the top floor towards the front behind the west wall.





Figure 34 Rear elevation of 1–2 Montague Place, adjoining the staircase tower of the King Edward VII Galleries. Copyright English Heritage (DP070371)

According to the plans submitted with the 1970 Listed Building Consent application, the rooms facing Montague Place are offices, with darkrooms, studios, a negative store and rooms containing machinery such as a 'giant enlarger' and a 'large roller processer', ranged behind.<sup>89</sup> The top floor to the north contains two flats, originally for Museum staff and now occasionally used as accommodation for visiting curators delivering objects on loan to the Museum.<sup>90</sup>

A comparison of the original and the facsimile façade shows how closely the details were copied (figs 27, 29 and 31). However, there are subtle differences. Most noticeably the 1970s façade has standardised the sash windows. While in 1961 the windows of the top two storeys of both houses had similar three-over-three sashes in the attic and six-over-six windows in the second floor, the detailing of the glazing bars on the lower two storeys varied (fig. 29). The first floor had nine-over-nine sashes in No. 2 which were replaced in the

replica with six-over-six windows similar to those in No.1 (figs 29 and 31). Likewise, the replica building features on the ground floor six-over-six sashes which in 1961 could be found in the windows of No. 2, while No.1 had four-over-four sashes. No. 2 also seems to have had horns on some of its sash windows, to whose replication the condition of the Listed Building Consent might have referred (figs 27 and 29).



Figure 35 Darkroom in 1–2 Montague Place. Copyright English Heritage (DP070372)

Features which were not copied include the protective bars in front of the ground-floor windows, visible in photographs of 1950 and 1961, first only at No. 1 and then also at No. 2 (figs 27 and 29).

Another departure from the predecessor building concerns the basement windows. In 1961, No. 1 had one basement window and No. 2 two (fig. 29). In the 1970s building, the basement windows have been reduced to one in the eastern half of the façade (which replicates No. 2), with a door in



Figure 36 1–2 Montague Place, first floor office. Copyright English Heritage (DP070373)

chimneystacks visible from the front or the side, and the west elevation as seen from Bedford Square clearly lacks any form of gable or roof slope.

the western part, with steps leading up to the pavement (fig. 31).<sup>91</sup> The original building also seems to have had a door in the basement, as steps and handrails lead down from street level (fig. 27).

The present façade is, apart from the details of the sash windows and the basement openings, a facsimile of the façade as it appeared in 1969. Other than the removal of the horns on the sash windows at the stipulation of Camden Council, there was no return to the buildings' earlier or original appearance. For example, the elaborate fanlight above the door of 2 Montague Place, visible in the drawing of 1904, was not reinstated (fig. 26).

In general, the replica is only superficial and does not extend beyond the frontal view of the façade. Neither the original plan form nor other elevations were replicated. At a closer examination, the pretence of the façade becomes apparent: there are no



Figure 37 First-floor window, glazing bars without mouldings. Copyright English Heritage (DP070374)

In the interior, this is even more obvious. The interior layout does not correspond to the plan of a pair of a terraced houses of c.1810 (fig. 12). The front rooms have none of the typical late-Georgian details, such as chimneypieces, window shutters, dado rails, ceiling cornices, moulded glazing bars and window architraves (figs 36 and 37). However, replicating the original interior features may not have been possible as the interior had already been significantly remodelled (fig. 28).

## Significance

The building at 1–2 Montague Place is a purpose-built photographic laboratory with a replica façade which had its origin in a preference for a complete rebuilding, rather than repair and restoration. This was not unusual for the time. While façadism and replicas are now generally unacceptable, during the 1960s and 70s they were considered satisfactory forms of conservation practice. For example, a group of seventeenth-century cottages in Broad Street, Oxford, were demolished and rebuilt with replica façades on a concrete frame in 1970.<sup>92</sup> The scheme won an award from the Civic Trust in 1972.

Other buildings owned and used by the British Museum were treated similarly. As already mentioned, in 1960–61 war damage at 39 and 40 Russell Square was used as an excuse to demolish most of the buildings, and to erect a purpose-built research laboratory behind the retained original façades.<sup>93</sup>

Despite being a replica building of the 1970s, the current building at 1–2 Montague Place does not detract from the character of the neighbourhood. The style, material, scale, proportion and detail of the façade all contribute positively to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, as noted in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2008.<sup>94</sup> The building is the sole reminder of the late-Georgian terrace, and provides a visual link between Bedford Square and Russell Square. It also terminates the vista down Mallet Street and contributes to the perception of scale in the area between the Senate House and the King Edward VII Galleries.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Crook 1972, 39, 47–49; Caygill 1992, 3.
- 2 Crook 1972, 52, 54–58. Horace Walpole mentions in his *Anecdotes of Painting* (1786) that 'Monsieur Pouget, a French architect, conducted the building of Montagu House in 1678 [sic]'. However, an attribution to the French architect Pierre Puget (1622–94) seems unlikely on stylistic grounds. Caygill and Date 1999, 10; Crook 1972, 56.
- 3 Caygill and Date 1999, 17–20, 36.
- 4 Port 1995, 68. For the relevant dates, the successors of the Office of Works (1851–1940) are: Ministry of Works 1943–62, Ministry of Public Building and Works 1962–70, Department of Environment 1970–97, Property Services Agency 1972–90, Property Holdings 1990–95. *The National Archives catalogue*, entries for WORK and CM files [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue>, accessed 25 June 2009]
- 5 Caygill and Date 1999, 55.
- 6 Crook 1972, 211; The National Archives (hereafter TNA), WORK 17/722, typescript note on *British Museum Improvement Property*.
- 7 TNA, WORK 17/455, Office of Works memoranda, 9 January 1906, 6 February 1906.
- 8 British Museum, Central Archive, Trustees' Standing Committee Minutes, 15 April 1899; Crook 1972, 215.
- 9 Crook 1972, 215; *The Times*, 21 January 1911.
- 10 TNA, WORK 17/722, typescript note on *British Museum Improvement Property*. Listing entry for 1–10 Bedford Square. The houses at 1–10 Bedford Square were re-furnished in the 1980s before the Museum sold their leases in order to raise funds for the adaptation of the Montague Street houses for service purposes. TNA, WORK 17/718, WORK 17/719.
- 11 In 1862, the Trustees gave special permission to send some books to an external bindery on the other side of Great Russell St, as the amount of books to be bound exceeded the internal bindery's capacity. The British Museum Act of 1902 permitted the removal and storage of newspapers and other rarely used printed materials to a new storage facility at Colindale. The 1963 British Museum Act eventually made it legal to send books to outside binderies and by the 1970s, routine work was sent to external HMSO binderies and private contractors. Esdaile, 1946, 144, 337; Harris (ed.) 1991, 34; Harris, 1998, 653–4.
- 12 Harris 1998, 18, 78, 150, 223–4, 247, 312, 348.
- 13 TNA, WORK 17/4/3, E. Maunde Thompson, Principal Librarian, British Museum, to the Office of Works, 18 March 1897.

- 14 TNA, WORKS 17/4/3, Office of Works memorandum, 15 December 1897.
- 15 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of the Standing Committee, 9 October 1897.
- 16 Tanner, Henry 2004 'Taylor, Sir John (1833–1912)', rev. M. H. Port, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36435>, accessed 23 June 2009]
- 17 British Museum, Central Archive, General Meetings and Trustees Standing Committee, Original Papers, 1899. Letter from the binders Eyre and Spottiswoode to the Principal Librarian with an invoice for costs incurred during the removal of heavy machinery to the new building, 3 March 1899.
- 18 Purcell Miller Tritton 2007, 153.
- 19 TNA, WORK 17/340, Extracts from Mr Root's Progress Meetings of 25 July 1957 and 31 July 1958; three Ministry of Works drawings of the British Museum Bindery Extension, undated [c.1956], signed 'S. Barnett'.
- 20 TNA, WORK 17/340, J. McIntyre, British Museum, to Mr Gilbin, Ministry of Works, 27 May 1955.
- 21 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 103.
- 22 Purcell Miller Tritton 2007, 153.
- 23 TNA, WORK 17/340, three Ministry of Works drawings of the British Museum Bindery Extension, undated [c.1956], signed 'S. Barnett'.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 105.
- 26 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 107.
- 27 TNA, WORK 17/340, three Ministry of Works drawings of the British Museum Bindery Extension, undated [c.1956], signed 'S. Barnett'.
- 28 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 107.
- 29 In 1952 the newspaper store was used as a mess room, containing a billiard table. TNA, STAT 14/599, assistant secretary, British Museum, to the Controller, HMSO, 1 November 1952; and attached sketch plan.
- 30 TNA, WORK 17/340, three Ministry of Works drawings of the British Museum Bindery Extension, undated [c.1956], signed 'S. Barnett'.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 105.
- 33 Ibid.



- 34 Purcell Miller Tritton 1999, vol. 7, 107.
- 35 Marks 1998, 14.
- 36 Gradually, both took over the whole building. They are still in the original building and the bindery staff use eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tools. For most of their history, Winchester College was their largest customer. Bolton 1991, 9, 50–51, 57.
- 37 Marks 1998, 9, 22.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Middleton 2000, 116.
- 40 Middleton 2000, 22.
- 41 Middleton 2000, 116-117. This compares to a bindery staff of 121 in 1939: 92 men, 5 boys, 21 women and 3 girls. Harris 1998, 523.
- 42 From the nineteenth century books were increasingly sold in bound form, and already in 1770 the Trustees had resolved to buy books already bound wherever possible. Harris 1998, 18.
- 43 Esdaile 1946, 339.
- 44 In 1885 the fully mechanised and machine-powered bindery of James Burn & Co. in Hatton Garden, London, processed about 80,000 books weekly. Darley 1959, 81. By comparison, the British Museum Bindery processed in 1953 only 2,000 volumes each month. Middleton 2000, 116.
- 45 Harris (ed.) 1991, 175, 181, 183.
- 46 Articles by Mike Western, former Bindery manager, and Vicki Humphrey, former Head of Conservation, British Library. Extracts provided by Philippa Marks, Curator of Bookbinding, British Library, email correspondence, 12 September 2008.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 See the catalogue from Dominic Winter Book Auctions for the auction held on 13 March 2007 in the Bindery. Dominic Winter Book Auctions 2007. Some machinery and furnishings predated the 1898 building.
- 49 Purcell Miller Tritton 2007, 154.
- 50 Most of the binderies around St Paul's were destroyed by bombing in 1940. Darley 1959, 25; Comparato 1971, 54.
- 51 Occasionally, the Bindery staff would bind books and manuscripts from outside the Museum, at the expense of the owner. However, this only happened if the item was highly significant and in spare time not needed for Museum work. Harris 1998, 521.

- 52 Craster 1981, 203, 336.
- 53 McKitterick 1986, 522.
- 54 Sharples 2004, 164. The List Description for 59–61 Tithebarn Street, Liverpool, (see Appendix 3) gives c.1870 as the date.
- 55 Middleton 2000, 117.
- 56 The Surveyor's Affidavit, confirming that the buildings meet the requirements of the Building Act, survives for 30 houses in Montague Place, dating from 1803, 1807 and 1811, respectively (London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), MR/B/C/1803/100, 101, 103, 104, 113; 1807/017, 018; 1811/079, 080). The List Description of 1950 gives 'c.1810' as their date (see Appendix 1).
- 57 Summerson 2003, 188.
- 58 TNA, WORK 17/455, E. Maunde Thompson, Principal Librarian, British Museum to the Lords Commissioners of HM Treasury, 26 July 1901; TNA, WORK 17/455, Office of Works memoranda, 9 January 1906, 6 February 1906.
- 59 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of the Standing Committee, 15 April 1899.
- 60 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of Board of Trustees, 14 October 1905.
- 61 LMA, GLC/AR/BR/22/037974, LCC Architects' Department, Temporary Office Building at No.1 Montague Place, letters and certificates of 1912, 1917, 1922, 1927, 1932, 1936, 1937, 1940.
- 62 *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, '(Sir) John Burnet, Tait & Lorne' [[http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200089](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200089), accessed 13 August 2008]; TNA, WORK 17/718, from Battershell to Downing, 18 October 1976.
- 63 Weaver 1929, 57.
- 64 TNA, WORK 17/722, Ministry of Town and Country Planning, February 1950, Provisional List of Buildings of Architectural or Historical Interest for Consideration in Connection with the Provisions of Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.
- 65 Gordon and Deeson 1950, 153–4.
- 66 LMA, ACC 3122/378, LCC, Building Preservation Order for Bedford Square, 6–10 (consecutive) Bayley Street, 1–15 (odd), 2–20 (even) Gower Street, 1 and 2 Montague Place, 24–60 (even) Bloomsbury Street, 1962.
- 67 TNA, WORK 17/722, Ministry of Housing and Local Government to Weatherley, 2 September 1954.
- 68 TNA, WORK 17/722, Memorandum from Davey, Ministry of Public Building and Works, 2 August 1966.

- 69 TNA, WORK 17/339, Gilbin to Davey, 26 January 1956; TNA, WORK 17/339, Davey to Gilbin, 10 February 1956.
- 70 TNA, WORK 17/339, McIntyre, British Museum, to Miss Barber, Ministry of Works, 14 December 1953.
- 71 TNA, WORK 17/339, Leary to Kendrick, British Museum, 12 November 1956; TNA, WORK 17/339, Gilbin to Brown, 5 July 1957.
- 72 Work on 39–40 Russell Square started in June 1960 and finished in October 1961. TNA, WORK, 17/339, Ministry of Works memorandum, 29 March 1957; TNA, WORK, 17/339, Davey to Coules, 7 March 1961; TNA, WORK, 17/339, Estimates 1962–63.
- 73 TNA, WORK 17/339, Gilbin to Brown, 5 July 1957.
- 74 TNA, WORK 17/339, Ministry of Works memorandum, 10 March 1959.
- 75 TNA, WORK 17/339, Davey to Coules, 7 March 1961.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 TNA, WORK 17/339, memorandum from Kendall, 21 March 1961.
- 78 TNA WORK 17/339, Harris to Coules, 13 July 1961.
- 79 TNA, WORK 17/339, Davey to Coules, 25 July 1961; British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of Board of Trustees, June 1964, December 1965.
- 80 TNA, WORK 17/722, note by Murwill, 4 December 1968; British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of Board of Trustees, 17 June 1967.
- 81 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of Board of Trustees, 14 December 1968.
- 82 The other two conditions were: 1. Clearance being obtained from the Board of Trade for approximately 12,000sq ft of floor area for the bindery being used for industrial purposes; 2. The Council being afforded an opportunity to comment upon details and materials to be used on the proposed depot fronting Montague Place, and also on those for the wall also fronting Montague Place. Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, LB Camden, Planning Applications Sub-Committee Minutes, 12 March 1969.
- 83 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of Board of Trustees, 15 March 1969.
- 84 Unfortunately, as the relevant files from Camden’s planning department and the Greater London Council both seem to be missing, I have not been able to find detailed evidence for the reason for the demolition and the rebuilding as replica.
- 85 Conversation with Robert Chitham, 25 September 2008. Anecdotal evidence that the GLC architects helped design the replica façade seems to be incorrect.

- 86 London Borough of Camden, Planning Application, application number 107.
- 87 British Museum, Central Archive, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 20 January 1973.
- 88 Judging from their weathering, the front steps to both front doors also might be original. Conversation with Michael Morrison of Purcell Miller Tritton, 3 September 2008.
- 89 Planning Application, Camden Council, application number 107.
- 90 Conversation with Michael Morrison of Purcell Miller Tritton, 3 September 2008.
- 91 Planning Application, Camden Council, application number 107.
- 92 Listed building description for 'Trinity College, front quadrangle, south range with the main gate' (grade II).
- 93 TNA, WORK, 17/339, Davey to Coules, 7 March 1961; TNA, WORK, 17/339, Estimates 1962–63.
- 94 Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners 2008, 99.

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## APPENDIX I

List Description for 1 and 2 Montague Place (1950)

Ministry of Town and Country Planning, February 1950. Provisional List of Buildings of Architectural or Historical Interest for Consideration in Connection with the Provisions of Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947

Holborn Metropolitan Borough

Sheet and No. on map: 3/141

Grade: III

Item: Montague Place: Nos 1 and 2

Notes:

Circa 1810. Probably by Jas. Burton. 4s. and basements. 3w. Amber bk. Stucco cornices and bands below parapets. Gauged flat arches to recessed windows with g.b. Iron balconies at 1st fl. Entrances in semi-circular-headed recesses with fluted Doric cols. at side of door frames.

Source: TNA, WORK 17/722.

## APPENDIX 2

### List Description for 152–160 Wardour Street, Westminster



*Figure 38 Printing and binding departments of Novello & Co. (centre), façade facing Sheraton Street, Westminster. Copyright English Heritage (DP070375)*

In the entry for: TQ 2981 SW & SE, CITY OF WESTMINSTER, WARDOUR STREET, WI; 57/34; 58/4; 24.1.69; Nos 152 to 160 (even); GV II

the description shall be amended to read as follows:

Commercial premises. 1906 by F L Pearson, built for Novello's music publishers. Red brick with lavish stone dressings in Portland ashlar, slate roof Free style underpinned by careful reference to Nordic late Renaissance, viz Pevsner 'The Hanseatic Town Hall' and comparison with the Bremen Rathaus. 3 storeys and deep dormered mansard. Stone columned arcaded ground floor in a free Ionic order with depressed arches projecting to carry 5 windows wide full-height upper storey with large transomed 3-light windows surmounted by pediments alternately segmental and triangular. There are side entrances but the former main entrance is in left recessed bay with elaborate oriel window above. Entablature over ground floor, large bracketed stone cornice and parapet with coiling. Plainer return to Sheraton Street 6 windows wide.

Interior continues classical theme in more late C17 English style. Main entrance leads into hall panelled in plaster imitating wood. Fireplace with eared and scrolled surround. Rectangular opening set with cartouche and swags under heavy egg and dart cornice leads to open stairwell closely modelled on Ashburnham House, Westminster School (q.v.). Cantilevered stair with bulbous balusters and rail. Giant Ionic order above egg and dart dado, its base set in a band of fruit and swags, and with panels featuring musical instruments. Heavily banded flat ceiling is broken by central cupola, with paired Corinthian columns. Double screen of Ionic columns leads to anteroom with heavy cornice and bolection-moulded fireplace under massive cartouche of fruit and flowers. Double door with openwork swags leads to Great Hall, a recital room 5 bays by 3 and of double height. Bolection-moulded wooden panelling and giant fluted Corinthian order, musicians' gallery with curly balusters reached by dog-leg stair. Trabeated ceiling has modillion cornice. Matching 3-bay ends have central double doors under broken segmental pediments with Corinthian columns and busts, flanked by glazed bookcases.

Windows have shutters and scroll pediments. 2 chandeliers. Rear part of premises 1898 by F L Pearson as printing and binding departments is a simplified version, with three storeys, arcaded ground floor; two main upper floors with cross-mullioned windows and attic above cornice.

Source: Survey of London vol. XXXIII, 1966

TQ 2981 SW & SE, CITY OF WESTMINSTER, WARDOUR STREET, W1; 57/34; 58/4; Nos 152 to 160 (even); 24.I.69; GV II

Commercial premises. 1906 by the younger F.L. Pearson, built for Novello's. Red brick with lavish stone dressings in Portland ashlar, slate roof. Free Style underpinned by careful reference to Nordic late Renaissance, viz Pevsner "the Hanseatic Town Hall". 3 storeys and steep dormered mansard. Stone columned arcaded ground floor in a free Ionic order with depressed arches projecting to carry 5 windows wide full height upper storey with large transomed 3 light windows surmounted by pediments alternately segmental and triangular. There are side entrances but the former main entrance is in left recessed bay with elaborate oriel window above. Entablature over ground floor; large bracketed stone cornice and parapet with coping. Plainer return to Sheraton Street 6 windows wide. Rear part of premises date from 1898 with frontages to Sheraton and Hollen Streets, simplified version of front block with 3 storeys, arcaded ground floor; 2 main upper floors with cross-mullioned windows and attic above cornice.

Survey of London; Vol. XXXI

Listing NGR: TQ2950881211



## APPENDIX 3

### List Description for 59–61 Tithebarn Street, Liverpool



*Figure 39 Nos 59–61 Tithebarn Street, Liverpool. Copyright English Heritage (DP028705)*

The following building shall be added:

SJ 3490 NW, [LIVERPOOL,] TITHEBARN STREET; 48/2000; Nos 59–61; II

Printing and bookbinding factory and warehouse. Circa 1870 (for the Union Paper and Printing Company Ltd). Brick, possible partly iron-framed; roof material not visible. 4 storeys with attic and basement.

Integrated building with workshops, office showrooms and warehousing. Regular 4 window range with full height taking-in opening to right, the latter with round-headed arch under gable, with recessed double planked doors at each level. Glazed basement. Ground floor under moulded stone cornice over name board fascia, with principal entrance to left flanked by debased Corinthian rusticated pilasters; double half glazed doors under rectangular overlights. Windows to all floors in entrance bay with

brick surrounds and shouldered arches. All other windows with iron columns dividing lights, with varied capitals and lintel treatment. Attic is a half storey similarly treated. Real with almost continuous glazing to all floors. Interior not inspected but understood to contain cast iron columns to all floors. A good example of a Victorian integrated printing factory.

Listing NGR: SJ3431690810



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