

Print Culture and the Rebuilding of London after the Fire: The Presumptuous Proposals of Valentine Knight

Mark S. R. Jenner

Abstract Histories of the Great Fire of London regularly mention and reproduce Valentine Knight's scheme for London's reconstruction, published in 1666, and note that he was imprisoned for his pains. His proposal, with new streets laid out on a rough grid and a canal through the heart of the city, has attained a walk-on part in *longue durée* histories of urban planning. However, Knight has remained a mysterious and little studied figure; the significance of his imprisonment and of the fact that his was the only scheme to be published remain unexplored. By reconstructing his biography and discovering the reason for his incarceration, and by relating his and the other proposals for the rebuilding of the capital after the fire to the history of public opinion, this article uses this episode to explore the tacit rules governing the discussion of public affairs in Restoration England. Further, by examining the publication history of all the immediate post-fire schemes for rebuilding London from 1666 to 1750, it traces how architectural plans gradually became objects for critical discussion in the worlds of print and periodical.

The *London Gazette* of 1 October 1666 announced that two days previously,

by a Warrant from his Majesties principal Secretary of State, the Person of *Valentine Knight* was committed to the custody of one of His Majesties Messengers in Ordinary, for having presumed to publish in Print certain Propositions for the rebuilding the City of *London*, with considerable advantages to His Majesties Revenue by it, as if His Majesty would draw a benefit to himself, from so publick a Calamity of his people, of which His Majesty is known to have so deep a sence, as that he is pleased to seek rather by all means to give them ease.¹

Mark S. R. Jenner is reader in early modern history at the University of York, and this article was nurtured by the hugely stimulating research culture of the university's remarkable interdisciplinary Centres for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies and for Eighteenth-Century Studies. In preparing this piece he profited greatly from conversations with Mike Berlin, Mark Hallett, Catriona Kennedy, Emily Mann, Alison O'Byrne, and Koji Yamamoto, from attending meetings of the University of York-Tate Britain research project, *Court, Country, City: British Art, 1660–1735*, and from helpful feedback at a seminar at the Institute of Historical Research. Staff at the Yale Center for British Art provided enormously generous assistance. He particularly thanks Anthony Geraghty, Natasha Glaisyer, and Frances Maguire, who each offered penetrating and constructive commentary on a draft. Above all, he expresses his gratitude to Patricia Greene for multiple readings, for support, and for encouragement.

¹ *London Gazette*, 92 (27 September–1 October 1666). For his committal, The National Archives (hereafter TNA) C202/58/7. The Earl of Arlington was secretary of state.

Some chronicles of Charles II's reign and antiquarian accounts of London history recycled this announcement,² but Knight's broadside, *Proposals of a new Modell for Rebuilding the City of LONDON*, received little scholarly attention until the early twentieth century, when both Walter Bell and Elbert Peets described it alongside the other schemes for rebuilding the city. Bell also reproduced the plan which was on a version he owned (figure 1).³ Subsequent histories of the Great Fire have mentioned Knight's proposal and have used this image as an illustration.⁴ It has gained a walk-on part in *longue durée* histories of planned urban form.⁵ But in the last eighty years, no scholar has explicated this episode. Its capacity to illuminate the complex relationship between the story of post-Fire reconstruction and the longer-term development of print culture has thus been overlooked.

This is somewhat surprising. The history of the Great Fire and of London's rebuilding in brick has been told time and time again. These accounts always include descriptions of the unrealized plans for a new city with a radically different street pattern that were drawn up immediately after the conflagration, before the less ambitious framework for reconstruction was enacted in 1667. One reason that Knight's misadventure has been treated cursorily may be that most of these retellings are heavily indebted to the rich historiography on the topic written between the 1920s and the 1940s, a period when British architecture's historical relation to print culture excited little interest and less analysis.⁶ Indeed, his fate appeared "ludicrous" to Bell, a career journalist who celebrated Fleet Street in his historical writing, and odd to the democratically minded city planner Peets, who commented wryly that jailing was "a form of discouragement the modern town planner is usually spared."⁷ Theirs was an era when the *Town Planning Review* aspired to be "a general mart to which all may come" in order to discuss city design, and when "popular support" was reckoned to be key to the success of initiatives in urban planning.⁸

As we see below, Knight was incarcerated precisely because his recommendations entered the "general mart" of print and thereby became the most widely disseminated

² James Heath, continued by J. P., *A chronicle of the late intestine war ... to which is added a continuation to ... 1675* (London, 1676), 555; *An Historical Narrative of the Great and Terrible Fire of London* (London, 1769), 47–48; Henry Thomas, *The Wards of London*, 2 vols. (London, 1828), 1:219.

³ Walter G. Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666* (London, 1920), 241–42; Elbert Peets, "Famous Town Planners: IV. The Plans for Rebuilding London in 1666," *Town Planning Review* 14, no. 1 (May 1930): 13–30, at 23. See also Sydney Perks, *Essays on Old London* (Cambridge, 1927), 45; Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *London: the Unique City* (London, 1937), 111–12, 117–18.

⁴ See, for example, Cynthia Wall, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge, 1998), 39, 41; Julianne Hanson, "Order and Structure in Urban Design: The Plans for the Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666," *Ekistics* 56, nos. 334–35 (January–April 1989): 22–44, at 31–33; Adrian Tinniswood, *By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of London* (London, 2003), plate 19; Stephen Porter, *The Great Fire of London* (Stroud, 1996), 103.

⁵ See, for example, Paul D. Spreiregen, *Urban Design: The Architecture of Towns and Cities* (New York, 1965), 23; John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, 2002), 15.

⁶ See, above all, Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666*; T. F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (London, 1940).

⁷ Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666*, 241; idem, *Fleet Street in Seven Centuries* (London, 1912); *Who was Who?*, s.n., <http://www.ukwhoswho.com/>; Peets, "Famous Town Planners," 24.

⁸ "Editorial Note," *Town Planning Review* 1, no. 1 (April 1910): 1–4, at 2; Patrick Abercrombie, "Wren's Plan for London after the Great Fire," *Town Planning Review* 10, no. 2 (May 1923): 71–78, at 71.

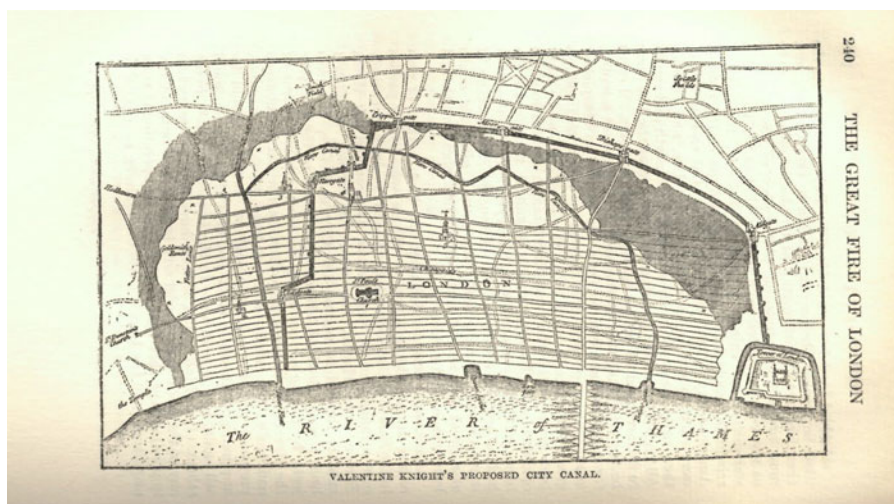


Figure 1—Valentine Knight’s proposals as reproduced in Walter G. Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666* (London, 1920), 240. Author’s copy.

(and potentially “popular”) proposal for rebuilding the city. His experience reveals the tacit rules governing the promotion of ideas about the future shape of the capital, attests to how Charles II’s government restricted discussions of civic planning, and brings out the limits placed upon the world of print in Restoration England. Furthermore, it has wider implications for how we might conceptualize this world. In recent decades, historians of mid- and late-seventeenth-century England have emphasized that print, especially cheap print, transformed news and political culture, leading, many have argued, to the emergence of a public sphere.⁹ Most of this literature sets itself up in opposition to previous revisionist trends in early modern English political history. Its horizons are generally confined to the political, narrowly defined, and do not address the broader (more Habermasian) understandings of the public sphere to be found in cultural histories of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ It does not, for example, explore how far aesthetic judgments were articulated with reference to notions of the public or the extent to which the printing press was the medium by which to debate the state of metropolitan architecture.¹¹

⁹ Steven Pincus, “‘Coffee Politicians Does Create’: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,” *Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (December 1995): 807–34; Joao Raymond, “The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century,” *Prose Studies* 21, no. 2 (July 1998): 109–36; Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007).

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, 1992), 29–33, 38–43. See also note 13 below.

¹¹ Seventeenth-century British architectural history remains more concerned with questions of patronage and magnificence, see, for example, Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture without Kings: The Rise of Puritan Classicism under Cromwell* (Manchester, 1995); Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King: Architecture and Politics in Restoration London* (New Haven, 2013); Eileen Harris and Nicholas Savage, *British Architectural Books and Writers, 1556–1785* (London, 1990).

Knight's *Proposals* was, I show, republished in the 1730s and in the 1740s, a period when urban improvements were beginning with increasing frequency to be "examined ... in print, in newspaper columns and pamphlets, graphic satire and view-making".¹² Around the same time, Christopher Wren's and John Evelyn's 1666 manuscripts were engraved and published; they became widely known. Theirs and Knight's proposals for the post-Fire city served both as antiquarian visualizations of the past and as points of reference in the debates about public taste that studies of eighteenth-century cultural criticism see as constitutive of the polite public sphere.¹³ They were also regularly invoked in books, articles, and pamphlets arguing about how to improve the shape of London's street pattern and the state of its environment. Although as Matthew Craske has noted, the "history and standards" of architecture became "a matter of public debate" in the 1730s, most studies have focused on the 1760s and, above all, on the work of the architect and city planner John Gwynn. In particular, Miles Ogborn has pointed out how Gwynn's *London Improved* (1766) used Wren's 1666 plan to frame its claim for architectural authority in a new market-oriented world in which "everyone was a critic."¹⁴ Tracing the publication and reception history of Knight's broadsheet from the 1660s to the 1750s not only shows that there is more to be discovered about the Fire and its aftermath—topics that sometimes seem to have been exhaustively researched—but also offers a lens through which to explore some of the material texts by and in which metropolitan public space was imagined and reimagined over this period.¹⁵

THE PREPOSTEROUS PROPOSAL

First, let us first sort out the *Proposals*' bibliography. The English Short Title Catalogue lists five versions of the broadside, all with a publication date of 1666.¹⁶ In fact, only three survive from that year. One was printed by Thomas Leach, another by Henry Brugis (also known as Bridges). Both were published by the London stationer, Samuel Speed.¹⁷ The third was printed in York by Stephen

¹² John Bonehill, "'The Centre of Pleasure and Magnificence': Paul and Thomas Sandby's London," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Autumn 2012): 365–92, at 390.

¹³ Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism* (London, 1984); David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1993), esp. the introduction and chap. 1; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. the introduction.

¹⁴ Matthew Craske, "From Burlington Gate to Billingsgate: James Ralph's Attempt to Impose Burlingtonian Classicism as a Canon of Public Taste," in *Articulating British Classicism*, ed. Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (Aldershot, 2004), 97–118, at 115; Miles Ogborn, "Designs on the City: John Gwynn's Plans for Georgian London," *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 1 (January 2004): 15–39, at 19, 26. See also Bonehill, "Centre of Pleasure"; F. M. Dodsworth, "Shaping the City, Shaping the Subject: Honour, Affect and Agency in John Gwynn's London and Westminster improved (1766)," in *Portraits of the City: Dublin and the Wider World*, ed. Gillian O'Brien and Finola O'Kane (Dublin, 2012), 76–90; Jerry White, "City Rivalries and the Modernisation of Eighteenth-Century London, 1720–1779," *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 43, nos. 2–3 (2010): 83–101.

¹⁵ For a recent bold reframing of how we historicize the Great Fire, see David Garrioch, "1666 and London's Fire History: A Re-evaluation," *Historical Journal* 59, no. 2 (June 2016): 319–38.

¹⁶ English Short Title Catalogue (hereafter ESTC) nos. R25444, R224586, R206528, R41646, and R29936.

¹⁷ These are Wing K693 (double counted as ESTC R224586 and R41646) and K694 (ESTC R29936).

Bulkley for the bookseller Francis Mawbarne.¹⁸ A mid-eighteenth-century republication of Knight's broadside was wrongly given a Wing number; this has caused confusion.¹⁹ The 1666 *Proposals* is an unillustrated single-sheet broadside setting out the advantages that "will accrew" from the scheme (figure 2). The illustration that scholars regularly describe as "Knight's" was done and engraved for the eighteenth-century republication. Its draftsman clearly knew the final ground plan of St. Paul's and represented the other churches in their post-Fire form (figure 3). Its upper caption states, "This was ... printed 20th September 1666. without any Draught or Delineation" and describes the plan as "this Sketch now done."²⁰

Knight's *Modell ... to be forthwith set out by his Majesties and the City Surveyors* proposed that a row of substantial four-story buildings "built Uniform with stone or brick" be built along the Thames, set back from the high-water mark to create a wide riverfront wharf, with behind them another row facing north. "[B]etween every two houses" was to be "a Shore [sewer] ... to the Thames, over which shall be to each house ... an house of Office [privy]." An "open Newell" or light well, "6 foot wide and 20 foot long" was to be inserted between every four properties "to give light to their several Stare Cases" and houses of office. Knight also put forward a new street layout. Two thoroughfares, each sixty feet wide, and twenty-two more, each thirty feet wide, were to run across the City from west to east. Intersecting with these, and creating a rough grid in the western and central districts, were to be six sixty-foot and six thirty-foot streets running down to the river. On both sides of all thirty-six thoroughfares there was to be "a Peyatsoe [arcade] ... paved with free stone for people to walk dry and easy." A sewer (as big as six feet deep and four feet wide in the larger ones) was to run down the middle of every street. There was also to be a thirty-foot wide "Cutt" dug through the City "from Billingsgate" "to Holborne-bridge" lined with wharves "for the Thames to run in, and Barges to swim in at high water." It would connect with another canal running along the River Fleet to the Thames (figure 3).

Knight further addressed financing this whole undertaking. "The Owners of all the Ground," he declared somewhat opaquely, would "have their proportions [presumably the dimensions of their land] ... set out as near the place where it was, as may be." They were "to be enjoyned to lett the same to build" at a permanent annual rate of 3s. "for every foot in the front." (House lots were to be twenty-five feet deep). The builders of each property was to be paid "8 *per Cent*" of the money they laid out, secured in perpetuity upon a rent charge on what they erected. Knight concluded by confidently itemizing what all this would cost and what each property should be let for. The 891 houses on the widest streets and by the Thames would each cost "but 250*l.*" to build; the 6,206 on the thirty-foot thoroughfares "but 200*l.*" The former would be let on twenty-one year leases for £70 p.a. with a £70 entry fine; the latter for £50 p.a. with a £50 fine "and not for more or

¹⁸ TNA, SP29/179/97. It has no Wing number and is ESTC R206528.

¹⁹ Valentine Knight, *Proposals of a new Model for Rebuilding the City of LONDON* (n.d.) was produced in 1749–50. The Huntington Library copy is Wing K694A, it has the ESTC number R25444, and it is on Early English Books Online. Cataloguers followed the date on Knight's proposal: "20 September 1666." Some are correcting this: Prints and Drawings, k1268420, London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA).

²⁰ Knight, *Proposals*. This caption is often cropped.

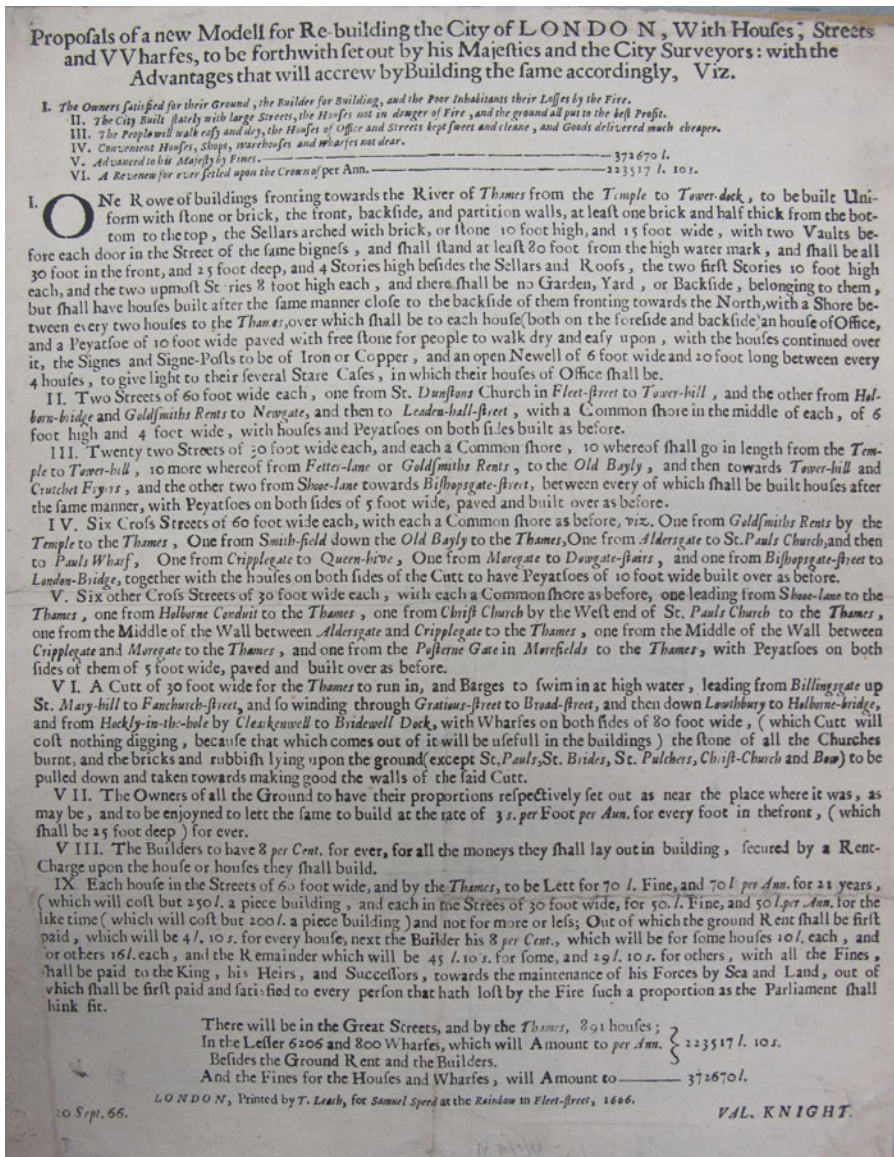


Figure 2—Valentine Knight, *Proposals of a new Modell for Rebuilding the City of LONDON* (London, 1666). By permission, Guildhall Library, City of London.

less.” The ground rent for each of the properties would be £4 10s (thirty times 3s.); the builders would receive twenty or sixteen pounds a year (eight per cent of the £250 or £200 they had expended). The “Remainder”—£45 10s and £29 10s depending on the house and its location—“with all the Fines, shall be paid to the King, his Heirs, and Successors, towards the maintenance of his Forces by Sea and Land, out of which shall be first paid ... to every person that hath lost by the Fire such a proportion as the Parliament shall think fit.” This, Knight stated with alluring

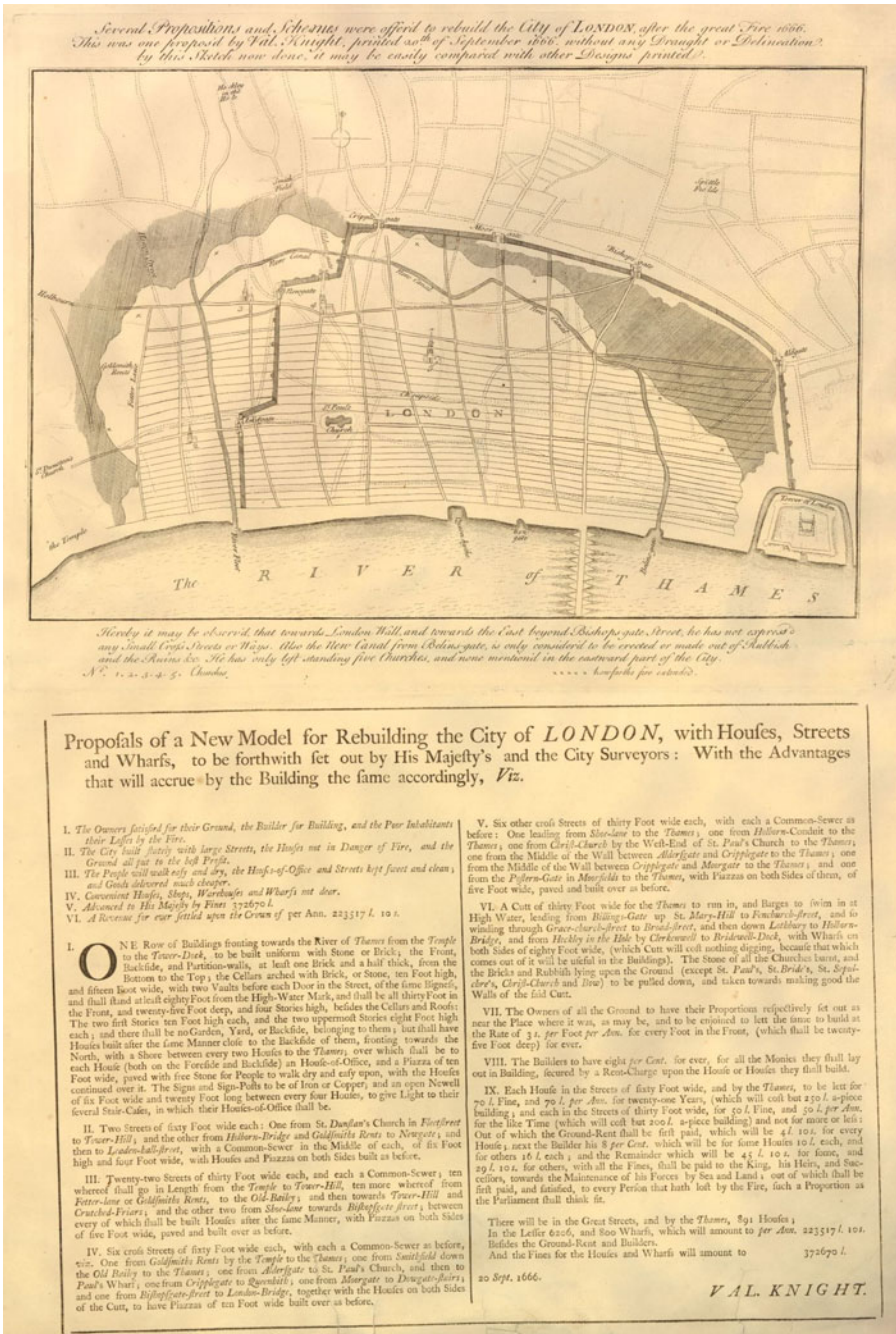


Figure 3—Valentine Knight, *Proposals of a new Model for Rebuilding the City of LONDON* (c. 1749–50). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

exactitude, would produce a windfall of £372,670 and provide a perpetual annual revenue of £223,517 10s. for the army and navy. These were amounts far exceeding the total hearth tax revenue.²¹

Dated 20 September, fourteen days after the end of the Fire, and seven after Charles II's declaration promulgating his desire for "a much more beautiful City," Knight's *Proposals* had been put together swiftly.²² However, his was by no means the first plan for a new metropolis. These began to be devised while the ashes were still warm. A letter of 8 September reported that "Men begin now everywhere to ... think of repairing y^e old and rebuilding a New City," adding that the City "had sent to y^e King to desire a New Modell."²³ On 10 September the City established a committee to consider its "recovery out of the ... deplorable ruins,"²⁴ and Henry Oldenburg, secretary to the Royal Society, wrote to Robert Boyle that he had attended "many meetings of ye principals Cittizens ... who ... discoursed almost of nothing, but of a survey of London, and a dessein for rebuilding ... wth Bricks, and large Streets." Oldenburg hoped that Royal Society members "will signalize themselves in this Survey and Dessein, wch when done to the satisfaction of the king, may by his Majty be offered and recommended to the Parlemt."²⁵ Three days later, the diarist, John Evelyn, brought to court his "Plot for a new City, with a discourse on it." He found that Wren had discussed the shape of a new city with the king two days earlier.²⁶ On the same day, 13 September, Charles II issued his declaration, which promised that with the assistance of the Mayor and aldermen a design would be set out in "a short time."²⁷ Plans developed apace. On 19 September, the day before Knight's broadsheet, Robert Hooke presented "his model for rebuilding the city" to the Royal Society. As the Mayor and aldermen preferred it "very much" to the one drawn up the City surveyor, Peter Mills, the Royal Society recommended it to the king.²⁸ Francis Lodwick, merchant, friend of Hooke, and writer on language systems, drew up one that may have been passed around in Royal Society circles.²⁹ The Somerset gentleman surveyor Richard Newcourt sent

²¹ The hearth tax was farmed for between £145,000 and £170,000 p.a., C. D. Chandaman, *The English Public Revenue 1660–1688* (Oxford, 1975), 92.

²² Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration to His City of London, Upon occasion of the late Calamity by the Lamentable Fire* (London, 1666), 2.

²³ Letter to Lord Conway, TNA, SP29/450/36. See also *HMC Hastings II*, 369–72.

²⁴ Journal of Common Council (hereafter Jnl) 46, fol. 120, LMA.

²⁵ *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, vol. 3, 1666, ed. A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (Madison, 1966), 226. See also E. Bedel to John Locke, 10 September 1666, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1976–89), 1:293.

²⁶ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1955), 3:463; British Library (hereafter BL) Add. MS 78298, fols. 159v–160, 162; John Evelyn, *London Revived, Considerations for its Rebuilding in 1666*, ed. E. S. de Beer (Oxford, 1938), 46n. Manuscripts of Wren's design (which cannot be the document discussed with Charles) are All Souls' College Library, Oxford, I.7, I.8, I.101; Anthony Geraghty, *The Architectural Drawings of Sir Christopher Wren at All Souls' College, Oxford* (Aldershot, 2007), 254–56; Wren Society *Publications*, 20 vols. (Oxford, 1923–43), 12: plates 24, 25.

²⁷ Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration*, 4.

²⁸ Thomas Birch, *History of the Royal Society*, 4 vols. (London, 1756), 2:115; Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*, 53. In late September the Common Council declared "their good Acceptance & Approbation" of Hooke's "Exquisite Modell or draught for rebuilding of this City", Jnl. 46, fol. 141, LMA. Recollections of this are set out in *The Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke* (London, 1705), xiii.

²⁹ Royal Society London, Classified Papers 1660–1740 XVII No. 7, edited in Francis Lodwick, *On Language, Theology, and Utopia*, ed. Felicity Henderson and William Poole (Oxford, 2011), 295–97,

his plan for the new city up to the capital.³⁰ Most of these figures had relevant experience: Newcourt had already mapped London and could draw his “Modell” for a new street layout “by the selfe same Scale;”³¹ Evelyn and Wren had advised on the reconstruction of St. Paul’s; Hooke and Mills had carried out extensive surveying work; Wren, Hooke, and Mills were appointed by king and City to survey the ruins. But who was Valentine Knight? What led him to offer these apparently unsolicited suggestions? And how did Knight’s *Proposals* compare with the others?

THE PROJECTOR’S LIFE

Previous accounts have provided no details of Knight’s life. The *Proposals* are signed “Val. Knight,” but both Bell and Peets described him as “Captain.” Subsequent scholars continue to give him this rank, although none has referred to any source to justify this claim.³² He was indeed a captain. When the Privy Council considered his petition for release, its register styled him “Captain Valentine Knight.”³³ This title derived from his former position in Royalist armies. He can be found in the 1663 *List of “truly-loyal” officers*,³⁴ and shortly after the Restoration, “Captain Valentine Knight” was thought suitable for the Order of the Royal Oak, an honor intended for men with a record of particular service to the crown.³⁵ Around this time he outlined his Cavalier credentials in a petition to the king. He had raised a troop of horse for Charles I and had been imprisoned at the end of the first Civil War; undaunted, he had raised another troop at the time of the 1648 Kentish Rising and had been locked up once more; escaping, he had attended Charles II before the battle of Worcester in 1651; thereafter he had “been upon all occasions, aydeing, assisting and p[ro]moteing” the king’s interest. As he now had “a convenient Brewhouse” near Westminster, he asked to be made the King’s Brewer.³⁶

397–99; Matthew C. Hunter, *Wicked Intelligence: Visual Art and the Science of Experiment in Restoration London* (Chicago, 2013), 201–2.

³⁰ Richard Newcourt, Maps and Proposals for Rebuilding London, CLC/481/3441, LMA. Parts were printed (rather inaccurately) in T. F. Hughson, *London: Being an Accurate History and Description and Description of the British Metropolis*, 6 vols. (London, 1805–9), 1:251–58. See also T. F. Reddaway, “The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire: A Rediscovered Plan,” *Town Planning Review* 18, no. 3 (July 1939): 155–61.

³¹ CLC/481/3441, pp. 1, 9, LMA. He also made a design for Whitehall Palace, Howard Colvin, *Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, 4th ed. (New Haven, 2008), s.n., “Newcourt, Richard.”

³² Bell, *The Great Fire of London in 1666*, 241; Peets, “Famous Town Planners,” 24; Porter, *The Great Fire of London*, 97.

³³ TNA, PC2/59, p. 182.

³⁴ *A List of officers claiming the sixty thousand pounds & c. granted by His Sacred Majesty for the relief of his truly-loyal and indigent party* (1663), col. 100. On this, Peter R. Newman, “The 1663 List of Indigent Officers Considered as a Primary Source for the Study of the Royalist Army,” *Historical Journal* 30, no. 4 (December 1987): 885–904.

³⁵ *The Flemings in Oxford: Being Documents Selected from the Rydal Papers in Illustration of the Lives and Ways of Oxford Men 1650–1700, Vol. 1: 1650–1680*, ed. John Richard Magrath (Oxford, 1904), 514. On the order, see Antti Matikkala, *The Orders of Knighthood and the Formation of the British Honours System 1660–1760* (Woodbridge, 2008), 68–72.

³⁶ TNA, SP29/2/149. He was not successful; Anna Keay, *The Magnificent Monarch: Charles II and the Ceremonies of Power* (London, 2008), 103. Knight was sued for brewing without being free of the Brewers’

This brewery lay in St. Andrew Holborn, in a block of property that Knight owned and began to develop in c. 1659.³⁷ This caused problems for his neighbors: in 1662 the Middlesex sessions found Knight guilty of dumping forty cartloads of clay on the highway.³⁸ In June 1666 the benchers of Gray's Inn petitioned the Privy Council, complaining that Valentine Knight had not only erected an alehouse near Gray's Inn Lane but was about to build "twenty or thirty tenements" there. The houses, they claimed, would be "onely convenient to receive Highway men, thieves, [and] dissolute Persons." Even worse, Knight was intending to burn bricks there. This would cause "unwholesome Ayres," "much inconvenient to the primacy and sweetness" of Charles's private way to Newmarket.³⁹ Knight's building work generated other conflicts.⁴⁰ He borrowed money for it; his failure to repay these loans led to law suits and time in prison.⁴¹ According to the widow of a man who leased him a brewery, inn, and other tenements, Knight did substandard repairs, ripped out fittings and took the lead from the gutters so that few tenants could "lye drye in their beds;" furthermore, he subdivided them into habitations "fitt onely for poore indigent p[er]sons" and packed them with homeless people after the Fire. Indeed, he allegedly tried to burn down the inn; when the widow extinguished the fire, he not only threatened to kill her, but fired a pistol at her.⁴² It is unexpected to find that the author of the *Proposals*, which prescribed fine piazzas and greater cleanliness, had been convicted of causing pollution and apparently engaged in shoddy building projects.

Other factors besides experience in questionable property development spurred Knight to formulate his recommendations and advance them in the way he did. His focus on cost and profit was not aimed at personal enrichment. Rather, the scheme's intended contribution to the "maintenance" of royal "Forces by Sea and Land" reflected a pugnacious martial commitment to the crown.⁴³ Knight may have been emboldened by his position on the fringe of court and his contacts in the Privy Council, and, as we will see, by a record of making suggestions about public affairs through the medium of a printed broadside. He was acquainted with Henry Guy, a friend of the king during his exile and a future treasury minister, and

Company; Worshipful Company of Brewers, Register of Persons sued for brewing without being members of the Company, 1655–1666, GL MS 5448A, 38.

³⁷ TNA, C5/137/18; C10/81/64, Bill of Complaint; C10/102/101; C5/48/77. Thoroton Hildyard, Estate Papers, THF/E/2/2/2, Nottingham University Library (hereafter NUL); THF/E/2/2/1; THF/E/2/2/7. He was living in the area when his children were baptized, P82/AND2/A/1/6667/4, 25 October 1657, 9 November 1658, LMA. He paid the 1663 subsidy in St. Andrew Holborn, TNA, E179/143/393, m. 2v. On metropolitan property development, Elizabeth McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: the Development and Design of the City 1660–1720* (Manchester, 1999), chaps. 2–3.

³⁸ MJ/SR/1258/277, LMA.

³⁹ TNA PC2/59, 22 June 1666, 68. Gray's Inn records do not mention this petition, although they comment on many nearby building developments: Gray's Inn Archives, London, Book of Orders, vol. 1 (2) and vol. 2.

⁴⁰ It probably lay behind an alleged assault on Knight in 1665, MJ/SR/1308/81, 85 and 91, LMA.

⁴¹ TNA, C10/81/64; C10/102/101; C10/168/5; C6/34/43; C5/48/77, Answer of Perkins and Langeford; C78/750, no. 20, http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT7/C78/C78no750/IMG_0038.htm.

⁴² TNA, C5/48/77, Answer of Perkins and Langeford; C6/181/72, Answer of Perkins.

⁴³ This is captured in a petition to Charles asking for a commission in a privately endowed military force designed to serve the king, TNA, SP29/281A/79.

Sir William Pulteney, a Westminster JP and, like Knight, former captain in the Cavalier army.⁴⁴ In May 1662 Charles considered granting Pulteney, Guy, and Knight the licensing of hackney coaches under the terms of a recent Act of Parliament.⁴⁵ Although he did not do so, Pulteney and Guy were made commissioners for hackney coaches and Knight became overseer of the hackney coachmen.⁴⁶

This post and this Act of Parliament provide a context for Knight's interest in the condition of London. The statute established a commission to oversee the coachmen. This included Roger Pratt, who would be appointed by Charles II to supervise the rebuilding of the capital.⁴⁷ But the Act dealt with more than hackney coaches. It was drawn up immediately after John Evelyn's denunciation of London smoke pollution, *Fumifugium*, and was recommended to Parliament by the king and Privy Council. It deplored how highways in and around London and Westminster had become "noisom dangerous and inconvenient," and established a commission for highways and sewers with an annual income of £2,000 from coach license fees.⁴⁸ This latter body was empowered to remove nuisances and irregular buildings and to require new paving and other improvements. Its remit extended throughout Westminster and the City of London (infringing the rights of many civic bodies).⁴⁹ Its first members included not only Evelyn but also Sir John Denham and Hugh May, the master and paymaster of the King's Works, respectively, as well as the political arithmetician William Petty, the poet Edmund Waller, and important court figures like Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans. (Evelyn, Petty, and St. Albans were all dropped in 1663.) In July 1666 both Pratt and Christopher Wren were made commissioners.⁵⁰ Through work for the hackney coach commission, liaising with

⁴⁴ In the 1660s and 1670s both were engaged in West End property development. Basil Duke Henning, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1660–1690*, 3 vols. (London, 1983), s. n., "Guy, Henry"; Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley and D. W. Hayton, eds., *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1690–1715*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 2002), s. n., "Pulteney, Sir William"; London Planning Committee, *Survey of London*, vols. 29 and 30, *Parish of St. James Westminster* (London, 1960), 22, 27, 467n, 533; idem, *Survey of London*, vols. 31 and 32, *Parish of St. James Westminster* (London, 1963), 116–19, 341n, 367.

⁴⁵ TNA, SP29/448/14. This must date from between 7 May 1662, when the statute became law, and 27 May 1662 when the commission was issued. Worcester College, Oxford TC 20.14(38), hackney coach licenses.

⁴⁶ TNA, C181/7, p. 151; E101/263/1, fol. 3; E101/628/1, Items 2 and 6 (1663); E101/635/14. Knight's salary was £80pa. For his work, E101/623/2, Order of 23 March 1664; E351/1744. By spring 1667 Knight was no longer in post, E101/623/5.

⁴⁷ TNA, C181/7, 151; R. T. Gunther, ed., *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt, Charles II's Commissioner for the Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (Oxford, 1928), 12–14.

⁴⁸ 14 CII, c. 2; Evelyn, *Diary*, 3:295–97, 310; TNA, PC2/55, 240; *Commons Journal* (hereafter *CJ*) 1660–67, 364, 378; Mark Jenner, "The Politics of London Air: John Evelyn's *Fumifugium* and the Restoration," *Historical Journal* 38, no. 3 (September 1995): 535–51, at 549; idem, "Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches, c. 1640–c. 1740," in *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore (London, 2003), 40–53, at 41–42.

⁴⁹ Stevenson, *City and the King*, 122–24. On jurisdictional conflict and the commissioners, Mark S. R. Jenner, "Guildwork," in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London, 1450–1800*, ed. Ian A. Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London, 2000), 163–70, at 164–65.

⁵⁰ *By the Commissioners appointed by his Majesty for the Repairing the High-Wayes and Sewers* (1662); TNA, E101/623/3; E101/623/5. Lisa Jardine stated that this commission's work "established the tone and temperament of the rebuilding which followed the Fire." Not having examined its records, she incorrectly suggested that its meetings offered an opportunity for Evelyn and Wren to discuss the improvement

commissioners for highways and sewers, Knight was therefore involved in attempts to bring greater order and salubrity to the streets of the metropolis. Indeed he could have had contact with all three of the surveyors for rebuilding the city nominated by the king: Pratt, May, and Wren.⁵¹

Designed, as it must have been, to curry favor as well as to influence policy, it is not surprising that Knight's *Proposals* repeated elements of Charles's declaration of the week before, and resembled other (now more celebrated) plans for the reconstruction of London. His emphasis on brick or stone construction was shared by other schemes. His Thameside row echoes the king's call for "a ... Key or Wharf on all the River side" lined with "fair Structures," Wren's design for a "spacious" quay, Evelyn's for a riverside embankment free from "stairs, bridges," and warehouses, and Newcourt's for "One straight goodly Row of Noble buildings" facing the river.⁵² Knight's arcades imitated Inigo Jones's Covent Garden, a model cited by other schemes.⁵³ His street widths were in line with Charles's, Wren's, and Evelyn's rebuilding projects.⁵⁴ Architectural historians generally pass over sanitary provision in their treatments of urban design, but the captain's attention to privies was not an eccentric violation of decorum. Keeping streets "sweet and clean" and the eradication of stench were common aims of early modern urban Utopias.⁵⁵ In 1666 Evelyn hoped for a city which was "sweeter for health." Newcourt condemned the "noysomenes" of metropolitan "houses of Office." Lodwick recommended relocating slaughterhouses, candle- and soap-making "for the sweetnes of the Citty."⁵⁶ Knight's six-foot sewers would have made sense to contemporaries—such water-courses were an important part of urban environmental regulation.⁵⁷ The captain's plans for a canal may strike the modern reader as absurd because they make no reference to the city's gradients, but the construction of inland waterways, sometimes through unpromising terrain, was a recurrent theme in seventeenth-century projects for economic improvement.⁵⁸ In 1666 Petty wondered whether "certaine Riv's ...

of London. They never coincided as commissioners: *On a Grander Scale: The Outstanding Career of Sir Christopher Wren* (London, 2002), 261–63.

⁵¹ May paid Knight's salary and expenses in 1662–63, TNA, E101/635/14. Wren frequently attended meetings in Scotland Yard. Knight could also have met Peter Mills and Sir John Denham, through the Commissioners for Highways and Sewers and through William Pulteney, E101/635/14, 4 August 1663; Wren Society *Publications* 18: 32, 34.

⁵² Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration*, 5–6; Stephen Wren, *Parentalia*, facsimile ed. (Farnborough, 1965), 268; Evelyn, *London Revived*, 36, 44; CLC/481/3441, 2, LMA. See also Lodwick, *On Language*, 296. Sydney Perks, "The Scheme for a Thames Embankment after the Great Fire of London," *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd ser., 31 (1924): 445–61, at 445–46.

⁵³ CLC/481/3441, 2–3, LMA. The "piazzas" of Evelyn's design would have been similar; Evelyn, *London Revived*, 40–41, 49.

⁵⁴ Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration*, 5; Evelyn, *London Revived*, 37; Wren, *Parentalia*, 268; CLC/481/3441, 2–3, LMA.

⁵⁵ Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias* (Oxford, 1982), 33–41.

⁵⁶ Evelyn, *London Revived*, 54–55; CLC/481/3441, 7–8, LMA; Lodwick, *On Language*, 297.

⁵⁷ Mark S. R. Jenner, "Early Modern English Conceptions of 'Cleanliness' and 'Dirt' as Reflected in the Environmental Regulation of London, c. 1530–c.1700" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1991), 366–95; Lisa M. Bowers Isaacson, "The Building Society: Speculative Building in the West End of London, 1660–1760" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1992), chaps. 4–5.

⁵⁸ For the physical and technological challenges facing seventeenth-century canals, see Raphaël Morera, "Surveying Conflicts over the Briare Canal: Local Contractors, Dutch Engineers, Paris Masons and the

may wth profit be made navigable if the Citty be vigourously rebuilt, w^{ch} before could not;” Evelyn and Wren recommended and attempted the canalisation of the River Fleet to permit the passage of barges.⁵⁹

While much of the content of Knight’s proposals was similar to others, its form was quite different. First, it is far briefer than John Evelyn’s *Londinum Redivivum* or Richard Newcourt’s “opinion for the modelling” of London, both of which are quite long essays.⁶⁰ Secondly, as we have already seen, whereas other schemes remained in manuscript, Knight’s was printed.⁶¹ Thirdly, unlike most of the others, it contained no plan.⁶² Wren’s, Hooke’s, and Evelyn’s designs were graphic or geometrical: they invited and expected mental comparison with the plans of ideal cities illustrated in Vitruvius. Knight’s imagination and representation of the new city, by contrast, was numeric and financial. It specified how many houses would be built and at what cost; it tabulated fiscal benefits to the crown.⁶³

In so doing, it conceptualized the reconstruction of London as a logistical exercise and an economic challenge and opportunity. Some other contemporaries addressed these themes, rather than answering Thomas Sprat’s call for “better *models*, for *Houses, Roofs, Chimnies, Conduits, Wharfs, and Streets*.”⁶⁴ William Petty set about calculating how much money was needed to rebuild the capital and “The proportions in measure weights and price of all the ... Materials.” A month after Knight’s imprisonment, Roger L’Estrange, Charles’s Surveyor of the Press, licensed the *Experimented Proposals* of Sir Edward Ford, water-company proprietor and advocate of herring fishing and farthing tokens, which outlined how paper bills of credit based upon future tax revenue could fund the rebuilding of London.⁶⁵

Because architectural historians have viewed Knight’s *Proposals* in relation to the canon of town planning, they have not appreciated how closely it resembled the advice papers and lobby documents on public policy, statecraft, and fiscal matters drawn up, circulated and sometimes printed in mid- and late-seventeenth-century England.⁶⁶ In Francis Lodwick’s library it was bound with works on trade, money and taxes, such as John Bland’s *Trade Revived* (1659) and Thomas Firmin’s *Some*

State (1604–1612),” in *Fields of Expertise: A Comparative History of Expert Procedures in Paris and London, 1600 to Present*, ed. Christelle Rabier (Newcastle, 2007), 237–60, at 244–46.

⁵⁹ BL Add. MS 72867, fol. 3; Evelyn, *London Revived*, 34–35; Wren, *Parenthalia*, 268; Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*, chap. 8; Michael Cooper, “A More Beautiful City”: *Robert Hooke and the Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (Stroud, 2003), chap. 14.

⁶⁰ Evelyn, *London Revived*; CLC/481/3441, LMA.

⁶¹ A schematic plan appeared on *Platte Grandt de Stadt Londen met de Aenwysinghe hoe die Afgebrandt is* (Amsterdam, 1666). Cooper, “More Beautiful City,” 112–13, debunks suggestions that this was Hooke’s.

⁶² I can find no evidence for Joseph Monteyne’s suggestion that Knight had a drawing at his house that “interested parties” could consult, in *The Printed Image in Early Modern London: Urban Space, Visual Representation, and Social Exchange* (Aldershot, 2007), 131. He cannot recall what led him to suggest this. I am grateful to him for helpful e-mail discussions about this matter and for checking his notes. See also note 134.

⁶³ Knight did not visualize cartographically: the later drawing reveals that the absence of north-south streets in part of the city, Knight, *Proposals*.

⁶⁴ Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal-Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London, 1667), 123.

⁶⁵ BL Add. MS 72867, fol. 2; Edward Ford, *Experimented Proposals* (London, 1666), 3 (2nd pagination, 2).

⁶⁶ Jason Peacey, “Print and Public Politics in Seventeenth-Century England,” *History Compass* 5, no. 1 (January 2007): 85–111; Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660–1720* (Oxford, 2001), chap. 4.

Proposals for the Employing of the Poor (1678), not with architectural manuals like Balthazar Gerbier's *Counsel and Advice to all Builders* (1663).⁶⁷ This similarity becomes even clearer if one examines Knight's other piece of printed political advice, a broadsheet which has hitherto escaped scholarly attention. In late 1661 or early 1662 "Capt Val. Knight" authored *Reasons for Passing of the Bill for the Ease of SHERIFFS in Passing their Accompts in the EXCHEQUER*.⁶⁸ Printed, like the 1666 *Proposals*, on one side with numbered heads or paragraphs, this was designed to assist the progress of what became the "Act for Preventing the Unnecessary Charge of Sheriffes and for Ease in Passing their Accounts," legislation which aimed to reduce the expenses incurred by those appointed to the shrievalty.⁶⁹

Given that Knight moved in the orbit of Privy Councilors and had made policy suggestions before, his imprisonment seems even more surprising. It is unlikely that his temporary incarceration was simply due to Knight's suggestions for how the crown might benefit from the disaster. Baptist May, the keeper of the King's Privy Purse, openly rejoiced that the City was now stripped of its defenses and could no longer threaten the crown.⁷⁰ The Great Fire led William Petty to develop distinctly authoritarian thought experiments: "Supposeinge all the ground and Rubish were some one mans who had ready mony enough to carry on ye worke together wth a legislative power to cut all Knots."⁷¹ Nor was it necessarily beyond the pale to think of using metropolitan (re)developments for income generation. In 1657 Parliament passed an Act fining the owners or tenants of all buildings constructed in the metropolitan area since 1620.⁷² Similar measures received serious consideration in the 1670s and 1680s.⁷³ Knight's travails stemmed less from what he proposed, than from the manner of the *Proposals*' dissemination.

THE PERILS OF PUBLICITY

His "humble Peticon" "craving Pardon" was considered by the Privy Council on 17 October 1666, when he had been in prison for just over a fortnight. Missed by Walter Bell and all those writing in his wake, it reveals that it was *publication*, not printing per se, that had got him into trouble. Shortly after the Great Fire, Knight had, he

⁶⁷ Felicity Henderson and William Poole, "The Library Lists of Francis Lodwick FRS (1619–1694: An Introduction to Sloane MSS. 855 and 859, and a Searchable Transcript" *Electronic British Library Journal* (2009), Article 1, pp. 114–15 and 72, <http://www.bl.uk/ebli/2009/articles/article1.html>. Ford's *Experimented Proposals* was bound in the same volume.

⁶⁸ MS Clarendon 131 (4, 5), Bodleian Library (hereafter Bodl). It is not in the ESTC.

⁶⁹ 14 CII c. 21. For the bill, *CJ 1660–1667*, 136, 276, 317, 321, 359, 363, 431, 433; *LJ 1660–66*, 385, 399, 461, 466.

⁷⁰ E. Hyde, *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon ... Written by Himself*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1857), 2:295–96; Andrew Barclay, s.v., "May, Baptist (bap. 1628, d. 1697)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter ODNB), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18418>, accessed 28 September 2016.

⁷¹ BL Add. MS 72867, fol. 2. (Presumably these were Gordian knots.)

⁷² C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (London, 1911), 1223–24; Carolyn A. Edie, "New Buildings, New Taxes, and Old Interests: An Urban Problem of the 1670s," *Journal of British Studies* 6, no. 2 (May 1967): 35–63, at 39.

⁷³ Edie, "New Buildings," 41–60; Chandaman, *English Public Revenue*, 152–55; *Arguments concerning the New-buildings in the Parishes within the weekly bills of mortality without the city of London* (n.d., 1677/8?); BL Add. MS 32471, fols. 65–72v; Add. MS 72867, fols. 7–8.

explained, “shewen Proposals by him drawne for rebuilding of the City, to several of his Maties most Honoble Privy Councill.” They, apparently, “seemed to like the same.” Knight “was thereby encouraged to Print some of them for his ffreinds.” He was *not*, he assured the Privy Council, “intending to publish them.” “But Mr Speed a Stationer unadvisedly did.”⁷⁴ Knight was probably telling the truth. The Privy Council accepted his account, and released him.⁷⁵ And although many historians still assume that every early modern printed broadside or pamphlet once sat on booksellers’ stalls or in peddlers’ packs, recent scholarship has shown that the printing press was often used to produce works for specific and limited circles.⁷⁶ It is thus plausible that Knight intended a defined and circumscribed readership for the *Proposals*.⁷⁷ His earlier *Reasons for Passing of the Bill* has no details of imprint and only survives in the Clarendon MSS in Oxford’s Bodleian Library, suggesting that it had the restricted circulation that Knight claimed to have intended in 1666.⁷⁸ Minute examination of the two versions of the *Proposals* printed for Speed reveals that although they bear the names of different printers, they are otherwise typographically identical, with the same inverted letter, “*Aun*” for “*Ann*” in point VII, indicating that the form was transferred between the two presses, possibly so that one could run off additional copies for sale.

However it came about, publication ran contrary to the government’s strenuous efforts both to manage reports of and responses to the Great Fire, and to restrict discussions of the future shape of the capital. Sir Joseph Williamson, who was the driving force of the king’s intelligence system and of his secretariat, enlisted the power of the press to promulgate an official narrative of the disaster, its origin, and the nature of the response.⁷⁹ On 10 September the *London Gazette*, with its print run of between 13,000 and 15,000, disseminated the official account of the conflagration. This described how Londoners, seeing the king and the Duke of York assisting the firefighters, “forgot their own misery, and filled the Streets with their Prayers for his Majesty, whose trouble they seemed to compassionate before their own.”⁸⁰ A few days later the king’s emollient declaration was published. This went far beyond the usual proclamations for fasts in times of adversity: it expressed

⁷⁴ TNA, PC2/59, p. 182.

⁷⁵ Hereafter Knight fades from the historical record. In 1668 he remarried, Lambeth Palace Library VMI/5 25 May 1668; 1668 and 1672 saw law suits over his London property, TNA, C78/750, no. 20; C10/168/5. He was probably the Valentine Knight of St. Andrew Holborn indicted for recusancy in 1679, MJ/SBB/361, 20, LMA; John Cordy Jeaffreson, ed., *Middlesex County Records*, vol. 4 (London, 1892), 130. If so, he died that year, P82/AND/A/010/MS06673/5, 7 October 1679, LMA; TNA, PROB11/362/243. A son sued about Holborn property in 1698, TNA, C5/137/18.

⁷⁶ Jason Peacey, “The Politics of British Union in 1642 and the Purpose of Civil War Pamphlets,” *Historical Research* 80, no. 210 (November 2007): 491–517; idem, “The Print Culture of Parliament, 1600–1800,” *Parliamentary History* 26, no. 1 (February 2007): 1–16, at 11–12.

⁷⁷ Compare Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009), 169, chap. 7; Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), 238–45, 317–22.

⁷⁸ Clarendon MS 131 (4, 5), Bodl.

⁷⁹ TNA, SP29/171/10. See also SP29/171/25, 27, 38, 40. More generally, H. M. Weber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington, KY, 1996).

⁸⁰ TNA, SP/29/170/151; *London Gazette*, 3–10 September 1666; Thomas O’Malley, “Religion and the Newspaper Press, 1660–1685: A Study of the *London Gazette*,” in *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Harris and Alan Lee (Cranbury, 1986), 25–46, at 31. On the

Charles's "great and constant affection ... for ... Our Native City," and remitted seven years' hearth tax on all houses rebuilt according to the agreed plans.⁸¹ Such political spin went hand in hand with the suppression not only of inflammatory rumors that it had been started by conspirators and dangerous claims that it was a punishment from God, but also, it seems, of all unauthorized reports of the inferno.⁸² In York in October 1666 Bulkeley and Mawburne were arrested by a royal messenger, and held until they entered into bonds not to print, publish, or sell "unlicenced, scandalous, or seditious Books." Copies of their republication of Knight, of *Londons Lamentation, Or its Destruction by a Consuming Fire*, a febrile broadsheet announcing that "the Dutch, french and Jesuite are the formentors in this treacherous design," and of their thoroughly loyalist reprint of the official account of the Fire in the *London Gazette* were all seized.⁸³ The following year the Privy Council's desire to ensure that its narrative remained the sole version of these events, led it to order the public burning of the pamphlet setting forth the evidence presented to the Commons' inquiry into the causes of the Fire.⁸⁴ The captain's release went unreported in the *Gazette*.

It is easy to see how the publication of Knight's scheme caused hackles to rise. The *Proposals* may have aimed to re-edify London "for use and beauty" and may have offered the crown a massive windfall, but it contradicted the conciliatory tone of Charles's declaration, which emphasized the extent of the king's losses by the Fire and his solicitude for the city.⁸⁵ In particular, Knight's ideas for revenue generation would have intensified Londoners' concern that Charles might expropriate land. On 13 September, the lawyer, Sir Nathaniel Hobart, touched on this in a letter to his friend Sir Ralph Verney. "The rebuilding," he wrote, "will not bee soe difficult as the satisfying all interests, there being so many p[ro]prietors[;] some say the King will purchase the whole land and looke upon it as a thing of noe great difficulty for the Streetes and all the grounds that have bin encroacht upon are his already." In October James Broderick told the Duke of Ormonde of a proposal for an astonishingly arbitrary division of the burnt area: "the gen^{ll} Estimate dividing y^e whole 312 Acres into three parts ... 1/3 the Kings, in Highwayes, Waste, & Incroachments, 1/3 belonging to y^e City, y^e is, to y^e Chamber of London, the Companies & Hospitalls,

diffusion of this narrative, Chetham's Library, Manchester MS A-2-128 (unfoliated); Wall, *Literary and Cultural Spaces*, 7-13.

⁸¹ Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration*, 2-3; TNA, SP29/171/94; *London Gazette*, 13-17 September 1666; Kevin Sharpe, *Rebranding Monarchy* (New Haven, 2013), 31-32; Annabel Patterson, *The Long Parliament of Charles II* (New Haven, 2008), chap. 3; Natalie Mears et al., eds., *National Prayers*, vol. 1, *Special Worship since the Reformation* (Woodbridge, 2013), 690.

⁸² *The Right Honourable the Earle of Arlington's letters to Sir W. Temple*, 2 vols. (London, 1701), 1:96; *The Correspondence of John Cosin*, part 2, ed. G. Ormsby (London, 1870), 155; TNA, SP29/171/12, 24, 29, 32; James Raine, ed., *Depositions from the Castle of York ... in the Seventeenth Century* (Durham, 1861), 146; Richard L. Greaves, *Enemies Under his Feet: Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664-1677* (Stanford, 1990), 167-84.

⁸³ TNA, SP 29/179/47, 48, 49; SP29/170/121,150; SP 29/187/166.

⁸⁴ Frances Dolan, "Ashes and 'the Archive': The London Fire of 1666, Partisanship, and Proof," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 391-93; TNA, SP29/187/172; SP 29/209/75, 75I.

⁸⁵ Charles II, *His Majestie's Declaration*, 1-3, 9-10; Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*, 49-53.

1/3 to perticular Propriet^{rs}.” However, he continued, “this Calculacon is uncertayne.”⁸⁶

In fact, Charles II trod carefully. The Restoration regime had made determined efforts to “instil confidence that the king would not sacrifice economic well-being to the whims and pockets of his courtiers,” emphasizing its concern with public good.⁸⁷ But Charles I’s London building regulations were still remembered as an avaricious project to mulct the nation.⁸⁸ In 1666, in the midst of an expensive and unsuccessful war, triggering heavy taxes, many of which were farmed out, the regime worried about its legitimacy. It was especially sensitive to suggestions that it might profit from the fire. No wonder that it turned to the *London Gazette* to announce to as many people as possible that Charles II had repudiated Knight’s “Propositions” and in order to reiterate just how acutely he appreciated the enormity of this “publick ... Calamity.”⁸⁹

The Privy Council’s concern about Knight’s broadsheet may have been more acute because its printers and publishers had come to the government’s attention before. In 1663 Leach was arrested and examined in connection with the printing of a narrative of the trial of the Regicides, John Barkstead, Miles Corbet, and John Okey; Henry Brugis’s premises were searched for unlicensed books in 1664.⁹⁰ In 1663 Speed’s name appeared in a list of printers and stationers alleged to be producing seditious books; in May 1666 he was arrested and charged in connection with the republication of a Protectorate law text.⁹¹ In August of the same year Stephen Bulkeley was indicted at York assizes for infringing the Licensing Act.⁹² However, commercial opportunism probably lay behind the *Proposals*’ publication. As we saw above, Bulkeley and Mawburne brought out divergent accounts of the Fire. Secretary of State Williamson’s York informant, the deputy postmaster, Jonas Mascall, vouched for their loyalty. Bulkeley was “well beloved amongst the ould Cavaliers;” Mawburne was “a quiet man.”⁹³ Both, however, were in economic difficulties. Not long before the Fire, the Stationers Company had fined Mawburne £95 for publishing and

⁸⁶ Hobart to Verney, 13 September 1666, BL Microfilm 636/21; Broderick to Ormonde, 27 October 1666, Carte MS 35, fol. 109v, Bodl.

⁸⁷ Brian Weiser, *Charles II and the Politics of Access* (Woodbridge, 2003), 121; Blair Hoxby, “The Government of Trade: Commerce, Politics, and the Courtly Art of the Restoration,” *ELH* 66, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 597–627; Koji Yamamoto, “Distrust, Innovations, and Public Service: ‘Projecting’ in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England” (PhD diss., University of York, 2009), chap. 3.

⁸⁸ Ne L 80, NUL; Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), 407–12; Jessica Ratcliff, “Art to Cheat the Common-Weale: Inventors, Projectors, and Patentees in English Satire, ca. 1630–70,” *Technology and Culture* 53, no. 2 (April 2012): 337–65.

⁸⁹ The London barber Thomas Ruge, recorded the announcement in his diurnal, BL Add. MS 10117, fol. 178v.

⁹⁰ TNA, SP29/67/30, 81, 161; SP29/89/87; SP44/9, 224; Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers ... at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (London, 1907), s.n.; Donald McKenzie and Maureen Bell, *A Chronology and Calendar of Documents Relating to the London Book Trade 1641–1700*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 2005), 1:496; TNA SP29/99/164; Plomer, *Dictionary ... 1641 to 1667*, s.n.

⁹¹ TNA, SP29/67/161; *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1665–1666*, 386, 409, 413; Stephen Wright, s.v., “Speed, Samuel (*bap.* 1633, *d.* 1679?),” ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26096>, accessed 28 Sept 2016.

⁹² Raine, *Depositions*, 145; R. Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press* (repr., York, 1988), 98; H. R. Plomer and R. A. Peddie, “Stephen Bulkeley, Printer,” *Library* 8, no. 29 (January 1907): 42–56, at 54–55.

⁹³ TNA, SP29/175/28.

selling almanacs.⁹⁴ Neither the books available at Speed's shop, nor his publications, suggest a hostile attitude towards the monarchy.⁹⁵ His arrest occurred because he had inadvertently offended the government by republishing Cromwellian legislation within a work on manor courts. His losses then and in the Great Fire caused him spiraling financial difficulties which led him into infringements of other printers' licenses, law suits, and debtors' prison.⁹⁶

Knight's broadsheet must have seemed vendible. There was a national appetite for news and representations of the scale, cause, and meaning of the Fire,⁹⁷ which proclamations, sermons, and fast day books did not sate.⁹⁸ There was surely a market for publications about the future shape of the metropolis. Knight's *Proposals* were, after all, republished in York. Writing from Weymouth in October 1666, one John Pocock asked James Hickes, the Senior Clerk in the Post Office, to send him "y^c Mod^{ll} of the New City if in print."⁹⁹ Pocock's desire could not be satisfied. Although Sir Positive At-All in Thomas Shadwell's *The Sullen Lovers* announced that he had devised "seventeen Modells of the City of London of my own making," and Evelyn wrote in late September 1666 that "Every body brings his Idea,"¹⁰⁰ deliberations about such plans largely took place behind more-or-less closed doors, in City, Privy Council and parliamentary committees, at the Royal Society, among courtly coteries, and in meetings between the City surveyors and the Royal Commissioners for Rebuilding. They were not reported in the *London Gazette*. Parties to this process took some care not to release any interim conclusions to wider audiences.¹⁰¹ The Court of Aldermen was very irritated when Alderman Richard Ford presented to the House of Commons committee "as proposalls from this Court for rebuilding the City," papers "which were only in preparacon and not Agreed on nor ordered to be preferred to the ... Committee or otherwise publicly produced." Ford was sternly dispatched to recover them; the former Lord Mayor, Sir John Lawrence, was sent to the Lord Chancellor to "excuse the preposterous delivery of the same proposals."¹⁰² Such texts were certainly not printed and published.

⁹⁴ Stationers Hall, London, Court Book D, fols. 121v, 123–23v.

⁹⁵ Works sold at the Rainbow are listed in his editions of William Sheppard, *Actions upon the Case* (London, 1663), after the table at back, and William Noy, *The Compleat Lawyer* (London, 1665) 123–27. For his publications, see ESTC.

⁹⁶ Wright, "Speed, Samuel;" S. [Speed], *The Prisoner's Complaint* (London, 1673); *Fragmenta Carceris, or the Kings Bench Scuffle* (London, 1674).

⁹⁷ Monteyne, *Printed Image*, chap. 3; Peter Hinds, *"The Horrid Popish Plot": Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London* (Oxford, 2010), chap. 10. Five of the forty-four items published in York during the 1660s concerned the Great Fire, ESTC, 6 August 2013.

⁹⁸ William Sancroft, *Lex Ignea* (London, 1666); Edward Stillingfleet, *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at St. Margarets Westminster, Octob. 10, 1666* (London, 1666); *The Letters of George Davenport 1651–1677*, ed. Brenda M. Pask (Woodbridge, 2011), 189–91; Sharpe, *Rebranding*, 42.

⁹⁹ TNA SP29/175/5. See also *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, vol. 4, 1667–1668, ed. A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (Madison, 1967), 174–75.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Shadwell, *The Sullen Lovers* (London, 1668), 65; BL Add. MS 78298 fol. 160.

¹⁰¹ Matthew Walker, "The Limits of Collaboration: Robert Hooke, Christopher Wren and the Designing of the Monument to the Great Fire of London," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 65, no. 2 (June 2011): 121–43, esp. at 124–25, 138–39; Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire*, 54–90; E. S. de Beer, review *London in Flames, London in Glory: Poems on the Fire and Rebuilding of London, 1666–1709*, by Robert Arnold Aubin, *Review of English Studies* 20, no. 78 (April 1944): 166–68, at 167; Patterson, *Long Parliament*, 14–16.

¹⁰² Jnl 46, fols. 120v, 121v, LMA.

Although the reconstruction of the city ultimately involved a considerable range of social actors, it was court centered in conception. Charles presented decision making as an imperiously top-down process pursued “with a gracious impatience.” He declared that once the burnt-out area of the city had been surveyed, “We shall cause a Plot or Model to be made for the whole building through those ruined places.” This “being well examined by all those persons who have most concernment as well as experience ... We make no question but all men will be well pleased with it, and very willingly conform to those Orders and Rules which shall be agreed for the pursuing thereof.”¹⁰³ The printing press was regularly used to promulgate such orders and rules. The Privy Council prohibition of new building without surveys was “Printed and Published;” the 1667 Act of Common Council listing the streets and lanes that were to be widened was “Printed and Published in all convenient places” in London.¹⁰⁴ The city commissioners for sewers commanded that their “Rules and Directions” “be forthwith imprinted and dispersed in all convenient places.”¹⁰⁵ The reconstruction of both city and St. Paul’s was partly funded by collections orchestrated by the printed prayers for the October 1666 fast and through the use of thousands of printed briefs and letters sent into the country.¹⁰⁶ Print was thus used to disseminate regulations for metropolitan planning. As Knight learned, and as the reporting of his case underlines, it was not, and was not to be, used to debate the city’s future shape or the organization and funding of its reconstruction. The situation changed considerably by the reign of George II.

OLD PLANS, NEW TIMES

Urban historians have shown how the provisions and the phraseology of the 1667 Statute for Rebuilding were a blueprint for English town planning for the next century.¹⁰⁷ Architectural historians have demonstrated how the more ambitious, unrealized 1666 plans for rebuilding London were commonly invoked in the second half of the eighteenth century. However, the texts of these schemes had disappeared into muniment rooms, libraries, and archives. Surprisingly little attention

¹⁰³ *London Gazette*, 13–17 September 1666; Charles II, *His Majesty’s Declaration*, 8–9; Stevenson, *City and the King*, 136–39.

¹⁰⁴ *At the Court at Whitehall the eight of May 1667* (London, 1667); London, Court of Common Council, *An ACT declaring what Streets and streight and narrow passages* (London, 1667). See also, *A Table of the severall scantlings & sorts of tumber that shall bee used ... within the city of London* (London, 1666); London, Court of Common Council, *Whereas in the act of this present Parliament for re-building the City of London* (London, 1667); *London Gazette*, 30 December 1666–2 January 1667. The rebuilding statute was in *A collection of all the statutes at large* (London, 1667), 161–75, bought by provincial gentlemen: Dominic Winter Auctions, *Printed Books and Maps 19–20 April 2014*, lot 308.

¹⁰⁵ City of London, Commissioners of Sewers, *Rules and Directions ... for the Pitching ... the Streets* (London, 1667); *Rules and Directions ... for the Pitching ... the Streets* (London, 1668).

¹⁰⁶ Mears et al., *Special Worship since the Reformation*, 690–91; Wren Society *Publications* 13: 105, 125, 168; Frances Maguire, “The Power of the Ephemeral: Print, Record Making and Government in Seventeenth-Century England” (MA thesis, University of York, 2013), chap. 2; Jacob F. Field, “Charitable Giving and Its Distribution to Londoners after the Great Fire, 1666–1676,” *Urban History* 38, no. 1 (May 2011): 3–23.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Borsary, *The English Urban Renaissance* (Oxford, 1989), 45–47, 90–95; Michael Farr, ed., *The Great Fire of Warwick 1694* (Hertford, 1992), xiii–xiv.

has been paid to the process by which they re-emerged and gained a wider readership. In 1735 *The Grub Street Journal* reprinted Knight's proposal; fifteen years later it was republished as a broadside. Engravings of Wren's 1666 plan for London were produced in 1721 to 1724 and in 1744. Between 1748 and 1750 prints showing both Wren's and Evelyn's plans for post-fire London went on sale. In the process they all gained a much greater currency and took on new meanings as aesthetic objects, antiquarian curiosities, relics of skilled artists, and admonitory maps of architectural paths not taken.

The way in which Knight's *Proposals* acquired a wholly different resonance when it was republished on 8 May 1735 illuminates the nature of this transformation.¹⁰⁸ *The Grub Street Journal* was a weekly periodical full of often sardonic cultural commentary. It exemplified the textual spaces and cultural institutions which had sprung up in the decades since the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*. Its two thousand subscribers were used to reading about questions of aesthetic and literary merit.¹⁰⁹ (Knight shared a page with verses on Handel.) When its editors decided that republishing Knight's scheme would "not be unacceptable" to its readers, they were responding to a skirmish in the culture wars of Grub Street. In 1733–35 these focused not only on literature and painting but also on architecture.¹¹⁰

Between October 1733 and April 1734 the *Weekly Register*, apparently seeking a distinctive place in the market, ran a lengthy polemical survey of London's buildings and funeral monuments.¹¹¹ Its author, James Ralph, the journal's editor, then turned it into a book, *Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues and Ornaments In, and about London and Westminster*, adding a dedication to Lord Burlington.¹¹² Ralph's commentary was profitably controversial. It critiqued buildings across the capital, declaring that "No nation can reproach us for want of expence in our publick buildings, but all nations may for our want of elegance and discernment in the execution."¹¹³ No dwelling was too grand to escape censure. Marlborough House was an "instance of great expence, but no taste;" the Monument was "the noblest modern column in the world," but "Nothing ... can be more ridiculous than its situation."¹¹⁴ The *Critical Review* provoked something of a storm.¹¹⁵ Rivals in the febrile and intensely self-referential world of the periodical press attacked Ralph, a

¹⁰⁸ *Grub Street Journal* (hereafter *GSJ*), 280 (8 May 1735). This has hitherto escaped scholarly notice.

¹⁰⁹ James T. Hillhouse, *The Grub-Street Journal* (Boston, 1928); Bertrand A. Goldgar, introduction to *The Grub Street Journal, 1730–33*, 4 vols. (London, 2002) 1:vii–xv; Alexander Pettit, *Illusory Consensus: Bolingbroke and the Polemical Response to Walpole, 1730–1737* (London, 1997), chap. 5. On the wider culture of criticism that emerged in the early eighteenth century, see Solkin, *Painting for Money*.

¹¹⁰ This architectural turn was not without precedent; see Morris R. Brownell, *Alexander Pope and the Arts of Georgian England* (Oxford, 1978), part 3 and esp. plate 54.

¹¹¹ *Weekly Register*, 189–213 (20 October 1733–6 April 1734); Craske, "From Burlington Gate."

¹¹² James Ralph, *Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues and Ornaments In, and about London and Westminster* (London, 1734; facsimile ed., Farnborough, 1971). On Ralph, poet, historian, and partisan of Hogarth, see Harris and Savage, *British Architectural Books*, s.n.; Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth His Life, Art and Times*, 3 vols. (New Brunswick, 1991), 2:52–57, 78–79, 137–38.

¹¹³ Craske, "From Burlington Gate"; Hillhouse, *Grub-Street Journal*, 71–74; Ralph, *Critical Review*, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47, 8–9.

¹¹⁵ Craske, "From Burlington Gate." The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey took great umbrage when it suggested that they might be profiting from the viewing of the tombs, *Weekly Miscellany*, 73 (4 May 1734); *Gentleman's Magazine*, 4 (May 1734), 246; Ralph, *New Critical Review*, 2nd ed. (London, 1736), 84–91.

“low writer” in Pope’s opinion, as unqualified to make his confident assertions, seizing with malice and pretension-puncturing delight upon apparent lapses in logic or expression.¹¹⁶ Much sport was had when this “MAN OF TASTE” lamented that London lacked an “octangular square”—how within the laws of geometry could a quadrangle have eight sides?¹¹⁷ Such was the heat of this controversy that between November 1733 and February 1734 the satirical weekly, *The Hyp-Doctor*, temporarily renamed itself *The Free-Mason* in order to exploit architecture’s sudden topicality.¹¹⁸

The *Grub Street Journal*, a bitter rival of the *Weekly Register*, ran the most prolonged response. In July 1734 it carried the proposals of VITRUVIUS GRUBEANUS. Until March 1735 virtually every subsequent issue of the *Grub Street Journal* contained an acerbic and sniping commentary on metropolitan architecture and the *Critical Review*.¹¹⁹ Written by the architect Batty Langley under the pseudonym Hiram, it matched Ralph in self-confidence and acerbity. Unlike the *Critical Review*, Langley championed indigenous British architectural expertise, the Gothic, and the work of Nicholas Hawksmoor. For example, Ralph dismissed the latter’s St. Anne’s Limehouse as one of London’s “Gothique heaps of stone, without form or order.” Langley hailed it as “a most surprising beautiful structure.”¹²⁰

The *Grub Street Journal* reprinted Knight’s *Proposals* just as Hiram’s survey ended. It had apparently been sent in by a gentleman with “a large Collection of such curiosities.” Intriguingly, the editors wrote that the captain’s scheme related “to the same subject” as Langley and the *Critical Review*.¹²¹ In so doing they repackaged—for a general readership and “a publick” stirred up to give “attention” to debates about architecture and taste—a fiscally minded broadside originally addressed to king and surveyors.¹²² By May 1735 this was perhaps a tired controversy, but the editors’ claim for Knight’s relevance had some plausibility. A number of voices had begun to describe the unrealized schemes of 1666 as exemplifying the standards that the metropolis should adopt in order to hold its head up on the international stage. Ralph’s *Critical Review* recounted how over the previous century England had become the center of architectural innovation and excellence. It characterized Wren as the genius who awoke “the spirit of science” in architecture, a man whose “glorious scheme” for the capital had been stymied by “the calamities of ... circumstance” and by “the hurry of rebuilding.”¹²³ Seven years earlier Nicholas Hawksmoor had lamented how “if the Citizens had been capable of Advice, and pursued the Plan ... prepared by that incomparable Architect Sir *Christopher Wren*,” then

¹¹⁶ Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*, ed. James Sutherland (London, 1963), 165. On derivative expression, see *Universal Spectator*, 300 (6 July 1734).

¹¹⁷ *GJS*, 230 (23 May 1734) and 240 (1 August 1734); *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 4 (May 1734), 261.

¹¹⁸ Some issues are reprinted in Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones, and Douglas Hamer, eds., *Early Masonic Pamphlets* (Manchester, 1945).

¹¹⁹ *GJS*, 237–71.

¹²⁰ *GJS*, 237; Harris and Savage, *Architectural Books*, s.n. Langley. For Hawksmoor’s response to Ralph’s views, see Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor* (London, 1959), 255.

¹²¹ *GJS*, 280.

¹²² Ralph, *Critical Review*, 1. Langley would soon take up cudgels in the next architectural pamphlet war of the 1730s: the dispute about Westminster Bridge in the mid-1730s. See Alison O’Byrne, “Composing Westminster Bridge: Public Improvement and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century London,” in *The Age of Projects*, ed. Maximilian E. Novak (Toronto, 2008), 243–70.

¹²³ Ralph, *Critical Review*, sheet facing p. 1, 3–4. See also *GJS*, 227 (13 July 1734).

London would have been “regular, uniform, convenient, durable and beautiful”¹²⁴ Hawksmoor had extensive personal knowledge of Wren and his drawings,¹²⁵ and a few of his readers may have been able to look at engravings of the latter’s plan for the capital, published in small numbers in the early 1720s and again in 1744.¹²⁶

That the *Grub Street Journal* reprinted Knight’s *Proposals* in its entirety, including the financial sections with no conceivable relevance to contemporary debates, underscores how in the early eighteenth century the texts of these schemes for rebuilding London had antiquarian as well as architectural value. From its outset the Society of Antiquaries was concerned with the recording of buildings, objects and manuscripts, and its members were keen to have depictions of them.¹²⁷ Much of the pre-Fire city had disappeared almost as completely as its Roman antecedent; antiquaries were therefore fascinated by records of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London and by documents relating to the conflagration. George Vertue, for instance, produced a version of the “Agas” map of Elizabethan London, presented the Society with a lengthy account of Wenceslaus Hollar’s mid-seventeenth-century long view of the city, and engraved John Leake’s survey of the post-Fire city.¹²⁸ And after its vice president, Sir John Evelyn, brought in some of his grandfather’s papers, the Society of Antiquaries sponsored the publication of two prints of post-fire proposals in 1748. Engraved by Vertue, one shows two of John Evelyn’s plans for London, the other shows Wren’s and a third plan of Evelyn’s (figure 4).¹²⁹ These works artfully combined the documentary and the decorative. They included few allegorical figures and eschewed the image of a Phoenix to be found on the 1724 and the 1744 engravings of Wren’s plan. Unlike the latter, which quoted Psalm 48: “walk about Sion, and go about her; and tell the towers thereof. / Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses: that ye may tell them that come after,” they gave no religious gloss.¹³⁰ They closely

¹²⁴ N. Hawksmoor, *Remarks on the founding and carrying on the buildings of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich* (London, 1728), 7.

¹²⁵ Vaughan Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders* (London, 2002).

¹²⁶ Harris and Savage, *Architectural Books*, s.n., Wren; Timothy Clayton, “Hulsbergh, Henry (d. 1729),” ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14120>, accessed 28 September 2016; Wren Society *Publications*, 9: plates 25, 26; Wren Society *Publications*, 14: xii–xiv, plates 1–5 and 12–13; BL Add. MS 25071, fols. 65–65v; J. A. Bennett, “A Study of *Parentalia*, with Two Unpublished Letters of Sir Christopher Wren,” *Annals of Science* 30, no. 2 (June 1973): 129–47, at 136n, 139n; John E. Moore, “The Monument, or, Christopher Wren’s Roman Accent,” *Art Bulletin* 80, no. 3 (September 1998): 498–533, at 512; Paul Fourdrinier, *A Plan of the city of London, after the great fire in the year of Our Lord 1666 with the modell of the new city according to the design and proposal of Sr Christopher Wren* ([London], 1744), <http://purl.pt/3475>.

¹²⁷ Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries* (London, 2004); Clayton, *English Print*, chap. 2; Enright, “Richard Rawlinson,” 319–21; Martin Myrone, “Graphic Antiquarianism in Eighteenth Century Britain: The Career and Reputation of George Vertue,” in *Producing the Past*, ed. Martin Myrone and Lucy Pelz (Aldershot, 1999), 35–49; Joan Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford, 1956), chaps. 4–7.

¹²⁸ Society of Antiquaries, London (hereafter SoA) MS 264B, 199–201; SoA Minute Book 1, 51; SoA Minute Book 3, 95. Vertue’s 1737 version of Agas is Victoria and Albert Museum, Prints and Drawings, 29190:1–8, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/name/ralph-agas/79077/>; George Vertue, *Vertue Notebooks*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 1937–38), 108; *An Exact Surveigh of the Streets, Lanes, and Churches, Comprehendd. within the Ruins of the City of London* (London, 1723); Pettit, *Illusory Consensus*, 36; Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, 70.

¹²⁹ SoA Minute Book 4, fols. 198–99; Minute Book 5, 205, 227; *Londinum Redivivum* (London, 1748); *A Plan of London* (London, 1748).

¹³⁰ Moore, “The Monument,” 512; Fourdrinier, *Plan of the city of London*, <http://purl.pt/3475>.

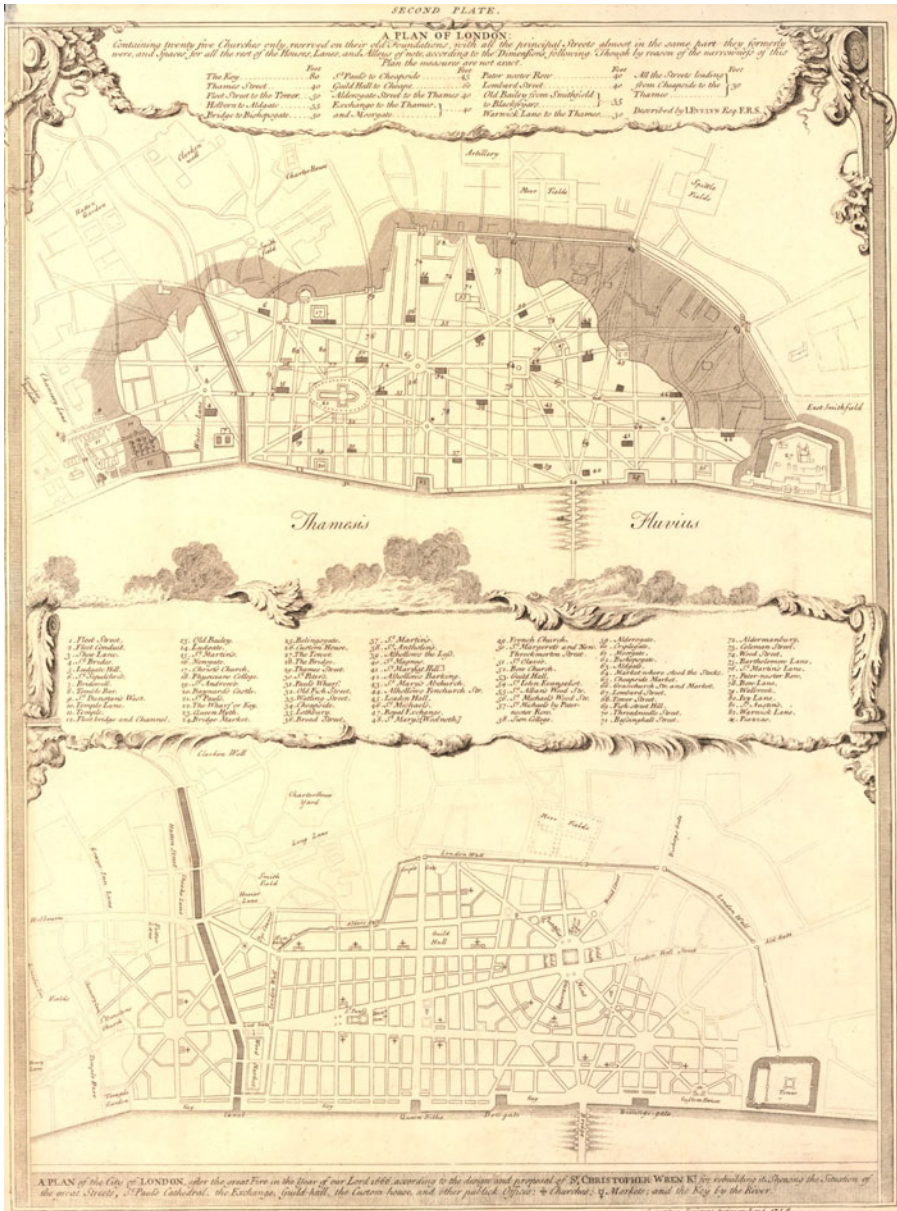


Figure 4—Plan of London, Designed by John Evelyn after the Fire of 1666, and a Plan for Rebuilding the City as Designed by Christopher Wren (London, Society of Antiquaries, 1748). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

followed Evelyn’s manuscripts, rendering extramural streets with irregular dots, and adding no explanatory key when the original had none. However, Vertue wittily added acanthus leaves, architectural pediments, flames, and billows of smoke to

provide elegant frames for these sketches. The Georgian gentleman could now hold a facsimile of these precious relics and reflect on what might have been. For the first time a wider (moneyed) public could compare the various proposals.

Not long after this, the antiquary Richard Rawlinson extended the possibilities for such antiquarian and architectural comparison. He had found the “design of Knight” among Samuel Pepys’s papers, and in 1749 he oversaw its engraving by Vertue.¹³¹ That November, he showed the Society of Antiquaries “a proff Print”; the following March he presented them with “a Print of Dr. Knights Proposals.”¹³² Although starker and less decorated, this is the same size as the Society’s prints of Wren’s and Evelyn’s designs and renders lines in a similar fashion. Vertue included (and presumably did) the “*Sketch*” reconstruction of how London would have looked if Knight’s scheme had been followed. Whereas, as we have seen, in the late seventeenth century Lodwick bound the *Proposals* with financial works, the format and the illustration of this new edition of Knight’s work were, as its caption explained, designed to facilitate an easy comparison “*with other Designs printed.*” Its original grubbily fiscal dimension was silently passed over in favor of visual and aesthetic assessment.¹³³

The kind of a sustained and attentive inspection, alert to details and to differences between engraved designs, that this caption evoked and invited depended on visual and connoisseurial skills fostered by developments within the graphic culture of Augustan England. By the 1700s there was a healthy demand for engravings of metropolitan street scenes and city churches; views of significant buildings had become an important part of the newly expanded English print market.¹³⁴ But prints also enabled travel into the realm of unrealized architecture. By looking at them one could examine the image of a possibility, and contemplate an edifice before its completion, or after its potential form had been altered irrevocably by the appointment of a different architect. Such visualizations could be practical: schemes for public buildings in Oxford, Cambridge, and London were engraved in order to assist discussion of their proposed appearance by interested parties.¹³⁵ They could also be used to

¹³¹ John Nichols, *Illustrations of Literature of the Eighteenth Century*, 6 vols. (1817–31), 4:206; Brian J. Enright, “Richard Rawlinson: Collector, Antiquary, and Topographer,” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1956), Appendix D, v; *GJSJ*, 280 (8 May 1735).

¹³² SoA Minute Book 6, 11, 34.

¹³³ Knight, *Proposals*. The Society’s minutes wrote of “a proff Print from a drawing of Valintine Knight’s, intended for a Scheem for the rebuilding of London after the fire Sept^r 1666,” raising the possibility that Vertue had copied from a manuscript of Knight’s proposals, SoA Minute Book 6, 11. However, the Society’s clerk was probably mistaken. First, he erroneously described Knight as “Dr.” Secondly, whereas Vertue’s engravings of Wren’s and Evelyn’s plans faithfully followed how they had drawn St. Paul’s, presenting floor plans which were nothing like Wren’s final cathedral, the rendition of Knight’s design was clearly based on London’s post-fire fabric. If he had been engraving a drawing of Knight’s for Rawlinson, it is most unlikely that Vertue would have redrawn it so freely and anachronistically or have described it as a “sketch.” I conclude, therefore, that the design was engraved from a sketch drawn in 1749.

¹³⁴ Timothy Clayton, *The English Print 1688–1802* (New Haven, 1997), esp. 62–63, 75–76, 161–64; Mark Hallett, “The View across the City: William Hogarth and the Visual Culture of Eighteenth-Century London,” in *Hogarth: Representing Nature’s Machines*, ed. Frédéric Ogée, Peter Wagner, and David Bindman (Manchester, 2001); Ralph Hyde, “Images of St Paul’s,” in *St Paul’s: The Cathedral Church of London, 604–2004*, ed. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint (New Haven, 2004), 317–34.

¹³⁵ Clayton, *English Print*, 62–63; *The Oxford Almanack* (Oxford, 1716); Kerry Downes, *Hawksmoor* (London, 1959), 87, 141; Frank Salmon, “Public Commissions,” in *William Kent: Designing Georgian*

solicit favor or to gain political support for a project. Between 1701 and 1703 the commissioners for St. Paul's produced reams of engravings of the designs and prospects of the cathedral and sent them to members of Parliament.¹³⁶ But engravings could also facilitate purely imaginary journeys. Prints of Wren's 1666 plan, for instance, permitted those who could afford them to explore, admire, and evaluate the cityscape that might have been.¹³⁷ Demand for such images overlapped with the growing interest in, and market for, engravings of the drawings and designs of important artists and architects. This market depended in part upon the value attributed to the expressions of the designer's mind and pencil even if the designs were unrealized or unrealizable. Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* reproduced "*original Designs of... Architects*" as well as engravings of actual houses; 1727 saw William Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones*; three years later Foudrinier, Vertue, and Isaac Ware were involved in producing *Fabbriche Antiche*, the sumptuous engraved facsimile of Palladio drawings owned by Burlington.¹³⁸

Boosted by the status of their names, Evelyn's and Wren's plans went on to have a wide circulation as book illustrations and separate prints.¹³⁹ Wren's, in particular, was frequently used in order to lambast the shortcomings of contemporary metropolitan architecture and the poor taste of the mercantile interest.¹⁴⁰ In 1749 the strongly monarchist John Gwynn brought out a version with a lengthy "Explanation" celebrating Wren's "Union of Beauty with Conveniency" and lamenting (like Hawksmoor) how this visionary scheme had been frustrated. Even though it was full of "Advantages that must at the first Glance strike every curious Eye," the proposal had been "defeated by narrow spirited Contests" and by the "absolute Defect of Judgement and Taste, which prevail'd in the Reign of Charles II."¹⁴¹ In 1750 *Parentalia*, the volume of texts collected by Wren's son, and published by his grandson, Stephen, told how the architect's design, offering "the Opportunity ... of making the new City the most magnificent, as well as commodious for Health and Trade of any upon Earth," was thwarted by the "obstinate Averseness of great Part of the Citizens [*sic*]."¹⁴²

Evidently targeted at antiquarians, the 1750 version of Knight's *Proposals* sparked no such pungent commentary.¹⁴³ However, the history of the broadsheet's successive

Britain, ed. Susan Weber (New Haven, 2013), 314–63, at 321; Charles Suarez Smith, *The Rise of Design* (London, 2000), esp. 1–14, 33–41, 59–64.

¹³⁶ Wren Society *Publications*, 14: ix–xii; Nicholas Hawksmoor to Dean of Westminster, London, Westminster Abbey Muniments, 34573.

¹³⁷ Foudrinier, *Plan of the city of London*, <http://purl.pt/3475>.

¹³⁸ Colen Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus* (London, 1715–25; facsimile ed., New York, 2002), sig. Bv; William Kent, *Designs of Inigo Jones* (London, 1727); Andrea Palladio, *Fabbriche Antiche* (London, 1730).

¹³⁹ William Maitland, *The History of London from its Foundation to the Present Time*, 2 vols. (London, 1756), 1: facing 446; *Public Advertiser*, 9 March 1753. In 1749–50, engravings of Wren's designs prepared in the 1720s were published, *London Evening Post*, 11–14 November 1749.

¹⁴⁰ Bonehill, "Centre of Pleasure," 367–75.

¹⁴¹ *A PLAN of the City of London after the great FIRE* (London, 1749). See also the plan advertised in *Public Advertiser*, 9 March 1753, as for the consideration of the mayor and aldermen.

¹⁴² Wren, *Parentalia*, 269. On the genesis of this text, Bennett, "*Parentalia*"; Jardine, *Grandeur Scale*, 477–79. Historians of the Great Fire have been rebutting this argument for over a century. Ogborn, "Designs on the City," 25–30.

¹⁴³ It was never advertised in the press. Several copies survive in eighteenth-century antiquarian collections: <http://catalog.huntington.org/>; MS Rawlinson B 388 at front, Bodl; Rawlinson Prints a 2; Gough Maps 41f.

editions is a useful index of the changing ground rules governing the publication of propositions for London's built environment in this period. Although John Evelyn wrote polemical pamphlets linking architectural irregularity and political disorder in 1659 and 1662, such themes were generally not debated in the Restoration press.¹⁴⁴ Knight's punishment underlines the limits placed upon discussions about the reconstruction of London in 1666. However, by going to the trouble to announce the captain's imprisonment in the *London Gazette*, Charles II's regime also revealed an acute sensitivity to wider perceptions of its policies and a striking willingness to exploit and intervene in the world of public print which had expanded so dramatically during the 1640s and 1650s. The history of Knight's and others' proposals in mid-Georgian England, by contrast, underlines how far Grub Street and the periodical press transformed the communities which adjudicated architectural questions. It suggests that a "critical public sphere" emerged *after* a political one—the exact opposite of Habermas's model. When early modern British historians debate the timing of the emergence of a public sphere, they are therefore addressing a *question mal posée*. A focus on the imagined, actual and—in Knight's case—inadvertent audiences of particular debates, particular texts, and particular cultural practices will ultimately be more productive.

¹⁴⁴ Jenner, "Politics of London Air"; Peter Denton, "'Puffs of Smoke, Puffs of Praise': Reconsidering John Evelyn's *Fumifugium*," *Canadian Journal of History* 35, no. 3 (December 2000): 441–51; William M. Cavert, *The Smoke of London: Energy and Environment in the Early Modern City* (Cambridge, 2016), 183–85.