

A 17th-CENTURY CITY MERCHANT'S HOUSE AT 7A LAURENCE POUNTNEY HILL AND ITS MEDIEVAL PREDECESSOR

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SUMMARY

This article traces the history of 7a Laurence Pountney Hill, a rare surviving 17th-century merchant's house in the City of London. The house is built on quite extensive medieval remains, including a massive retaining wall for the former churchyard of St Laurence Pountney. The authors describe the evidence for the house of c.1670, and for later alterations of the 18th and 19th centuries. Documentary evidence for the occupiers of the house is integrated into the narrative. We also examine evidence for the churchyard, which became the house's garden in the mid-19th century.

INTRODUCTION

In 2001 Totus Design Group bought No. 7a Laurence Pountney Hill, a 17th-century house and garden in the City of London (Fig 1). As part of a programme of repair and renovation, the company asked the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) to monitor groundworks in the basement of the house. These groundworks were relatively small-scale and had little archaeological impact but Andrea Cenci of Totus also asked MoLAS to carry out architectural recording during some of the room conversions. One of the present authors (NH) was delighted to have the chance to explore the building and, happily, was able to record some of the 17th- and 18th-century fabric along with earlier remains. The observations were made in three areas: the basement (where three walls

were stripped of modern render, and some service trenches were dug), the lower ground floor (part of whose north wall was stripped), and a small bricked up room on the lower ground floor. This article is based on these relatively limited observations made in 2002 (it is not intended to be a full architectural history of the building), and is supplemented by documentary research carried out by the other author (CP), generously funded by the City of London Archaeological Trust.

The archaeological and architectural records (and a full documentary report) can be found at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the Museum of London site code LPH02. Limited observations carried out in 1989–90 (several test pits in the basement, carried out under the site code REC89) have been integrated into the present account.

The names of the streets and the numbering of this house can be a little confusing. We refer to the building by its current postal address, 7a Laurence Pountney Hill (a road which lies to the west). In fact, the building fronts onto the street now called Laurence Pountney Lane, which lies to the east, and this is reflected in its historic address of 9 Laurence Pountney Lane (the address which was still used in the 20th century for the ground-floor shop on the lane). Both lanes were called St Laurence Lane in the medieval period and this name was applied to the eastern one as early as 1248 (Harben 1918,

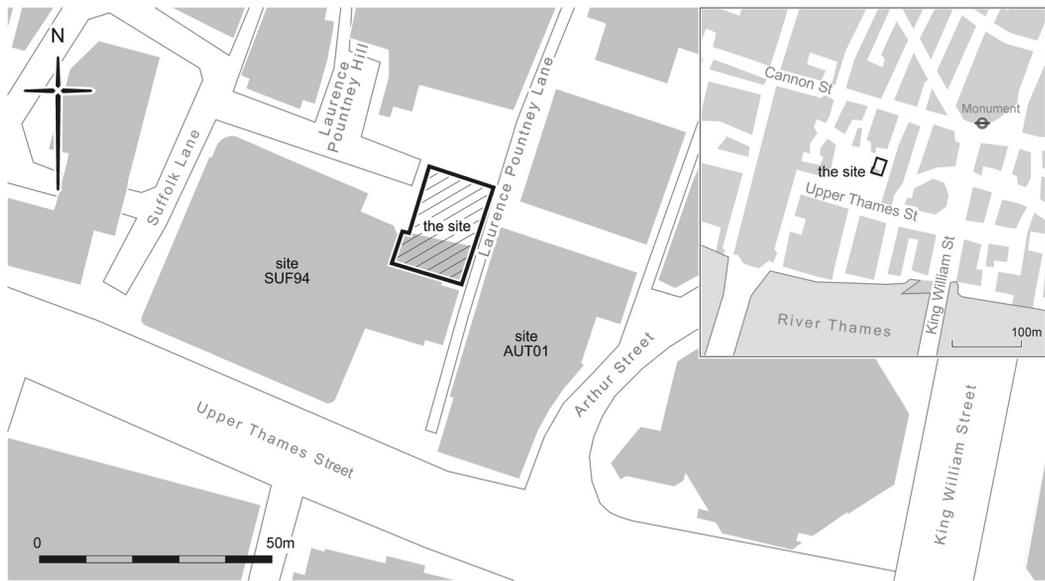


Fig 1. Site location map

343; Lobel 1989, 93). By the 17th century, the differentiation between Laurence Pountney *Hill* on the west and *Lane* on the east seems to have been established, as can be seen in Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676 (Fig 9). Both the house and its garden are situated in the parish of St Laurence Pountney. The City wards do not generally follow the same boundaries as parishes and so the house lay in Dowgate Ward while its garden (a churchyard until the 1850s) lay in Candlewick Ward (Wilson 1831, 2; Harben 1918, 342).

ROMAN REMAINS

The lower part of the (largely medieval) north wall of the present building appears to be resting on a Roman wall: like its medieval successor, the Roman wall was principally built from ragstone blocks but (unlike the medieval wall) it was bonded with a characteristically Roman pink-hued mortar. The wall is clearly a terrace wall, retaining the higher ground up the hill to the north. Recent excavations at 12 Arthur Street (to the east, on the other side of Laurence Pountney Lane; site code AUT01) found the same Roman terrace wall, whose timber foundation piles were dated by dendrochronology to the winter

of AD 54/5 (Swift 2008, 16–17). The house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill is therefore founded on one of the earliest examples of Roman construction in London. Several other fragments of Roman walls, an *opus signinum* concrete floor and a gravel yard surface were recorded in the basement in 1989–90 and 2002. These isolated fragments are harder to understand but may well be part of the 2nd-century 'Building 4' identified by Brigham and Woodger on the adjacent site of Suffolk House (site code SUF94; Brigham & Woodger 2001, 41 and fig 35). The Roman evidence from 7a Laurence Pountney Lane is therefore a small but significant detail that adds to our understanding both of the major urban groundworks taking place in the AD 50s and of the layout of the 2nd-century domestic buildings that were built on the east side of what was probably the Roman procurator's palace.

THE MEDIEVAL HOUSE

The archaeological works of 1989–90 and 2002 uncovered some fragments of medieval chalk and ragstone foundation that appear to represent a building on a slightly different alignment to the current Laurence Pountney Lane. There is no dating evidence for these



Fig 2. View of the medieval walls preserved in the east and south walls of the basement of the 17th-century house (with 17th- and 20th-century brick alterations) (1.0m scale)

walls but a relatively early date — the 12th century or earlier — seems likely. A medieval building on a similar alignment, discovered a short distance to the south at the Suffolk House site, is dated to the 12th century (SUF94; Brigham & Woodger 2001, 58–9, Building 13).

A later group of medieval walls had been reused in the basement of the 17th-century house and survived up to 1.8m in elevation (Fig 2; note that the north wall — the medieval churchyard boundary — survived even higher and will be discussed separately). These walls were built from squared ragstone blocks and had been built to courses (rather than being ‘poured’ as foundations). Looking at these walls in conjunction with similar walls discovered immediately to the south at Suffolk House, we seem to have two or three medieval buildings on the south side of the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney. Using the evidence of medieval property transaction records — principally Tony Dyson’s analysis of Court of Husting and

other records — we can begin to reconstruct the layout of this part of Laurence Pountney Lane (Fig 3; LAARC, Dyson archive). Our group of buildings was probably a series of sturdy stone houses grouped around a yard and which were all part of the same property (‘SLP L2’ in the Dyson archive). The dating evidence from the Suffolk House site would suggest a date in the 13th century (Brigham & Woodger 2001, 65, Building 16).

We can also use the records of the various property transactions to chart some of the owners and tenants. The house — perhaps our poorly understood first medieval building — may have been the stone house (*domo mea lapidea* and *domo mea petrina*) which lay between the cemetery of St Laurence and the land of Joice the Weigher, from which Alexander Langhals granted a five shilling rent to the nuns of St Mary Clerkenwell Priory in c.1196–8. Joice held the house from Alexander. Shortly afterwards he pledged an annual ‘quit rent’ of ten shillings from the same house to the Priory, at the request of his

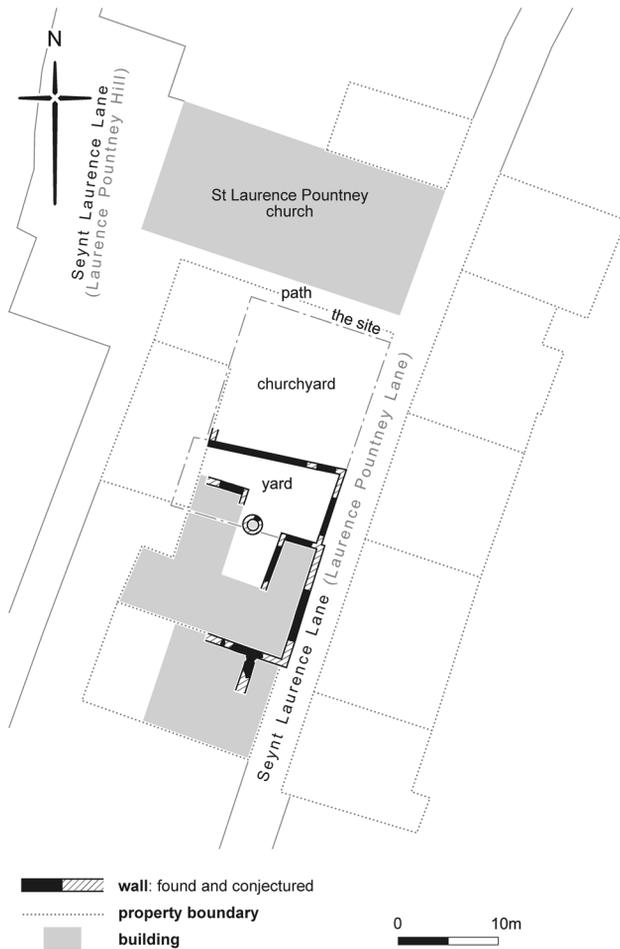


Fig 3. Medieval buildings along Laurence Pountney Lane and the church and churchyard of St Laurence Pountney: archaeological evidence from this site (LPH02) and Governor's House (SUF94); reconstructed medieval mapping based on the Tony Dyson archive. Scale 1:750

wife Cecilia (Hassall 1949, 146–7). The first certain owner of the property — probably that illustrated in Fig 3 — was Richard de Wynton (Winchester), who sold a plot of land with a stone house built on it to Walter Box before 1264, when the transaction was confirmed by James, son of Peter Dareis (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/3/10). Wynton and his descendants also owned the plot to the south. The Box family sold the house to the draper William de Paris and his wife Matilda in 1301 (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/30/81), who sold it on in 1310 to Peter de Hatfeld, a burler (specialist cloth finisher), as a tenement with houses built on it (LMA, CLA/023/

DW/01/41/25). Hatfeld's executors then sold the property to another burler called Thomas de Kent in 1323 (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/51/19 and 83). The implication of the abutments in the descriptions of the principal house is that it opened to the east onto Laurence Pountney Lane, not northwards onto the churchyard, a situation also suggested by the 'copperplate' map of the 1550s, which seems to show one or two houses to the south of the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney, and separated from it by an open space (Fig 4).

By 1348 the property had been acquired from Thomas de Kent by Thomas de Holden, a brewer, who dwelt in the house. He died in July 1349, quite probably in the Black Death, and in August his widow Alice conveyed the house to Edmund de Hingham, the rector of All Hallows Staining, and a Robert, probably as trustees and apparently ignoring the claims of her husband's former apprentice William Brewere under the terms of his will (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/77/139). By 1369 it was in the hands of Joan, widow of William de Hanampstede, a grocer, whose will of this year left other property to her daughters Christine and Margaret, but specified that the tenement in the parish of St Laurence was to be sold for pious and charitable uses. She wished to be buried in the church of St

Laurence de Pultneye, by now an endowed collegiate establishment with several priests (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/97/64). Margaret may have been the wife of Robert or John Chircheman, a stockfishmonger; she and her husband secured their London properties in 1386 by placing them in trust in the hands of feoffees (trustees), including this house (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/114/154; TNA: PRO, C 146/257). In 1395 Robert and Margaret mortgaged the property to Laurence Bacon and Peter Plente (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/124/33 and 34; TNA: PRO, C 146/3588); Robert and Margaret presumably did not redeem the mortgage, as Bacon later

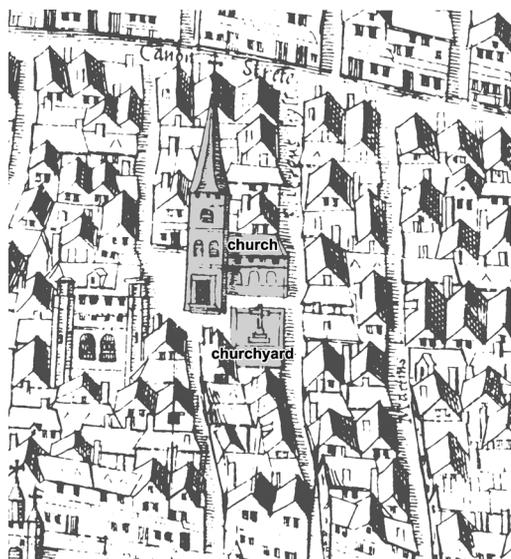


Fig 4. Detail of the 'copperplate' map-view of the 1550s

passed on the house in 1401 (TNA: PRO, C 148/14). The later ownership of the medieval house is, unfortunately, difficult to trace. In the late 15th century it was conveyed as a *great messuage* to feoffees by Thomas Randyll and his wife Alice, and 'quitclaimed' (released) to them in 1496 by Robert and Anne Wotton, the owners of adjacent property to the south and west (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/223/18).

In common with many City properties, it becomes even harder to trace the property after the Reformation, in no small part due to the decline of the Court of Husting as a court of record. References to John Swayne's mansion house and tenements at the north end of *St Laurence Pountney Lane* in 1557, and to three houses and a warehouse near the north end of *St Laurence Lane* at the end of the century, probably refer to other houses further north since the properties were described as lying in St Mary Abchurch parish (Sharpe 1889–90, ii, 679; GL, MS 8708).

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCHYARD OF ST LAURENCE POUNTNEY

The house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill has long had a close relationship with the church of St Laurence Pountney, whose churchyard lay to the north of the house. In the 1850s the

churchyard was converted into the house's garden. The church of St Laurence and its churchyard were established by the mid-12th century, when a charter was forged in which William the Conqueror ostensibly confirmed his predecessors' grants to Westminster Abbey in the year 1067, including *ecclesiam Sancti Laurentii cum cimiterio*. The church and other property in the City of London had been given to the Abbey by the clerk Livingus (CChR 1347–41, 333). In the early medieval period it was called by various names including *St Laurence next the Thames* in 1275, *St Laurence in Candlewigstrate* from 1277/8 to 1349, and *Sancti Laurenc' de Lundenestane* in 1285 (Sharpe 1889–90, i, 19 and 553; Harben 1918, 341; Lobel 1989, 88). In about 1332 the mayor Sir John de Pultney founded and endowed the Chapel of Corpus Christi and St John the Baptist, adjoining the north side of the parish church, as a college for a master and seven chaplains (Norman 1901, 259; Lobel 1989, 83; Barron & Davies 2007, 218–20). The church and college became known as St Laurence Pulteneye or Pountney by the 1360s, and in turn gave its name to the parish.

The churchyard lay on the south side of the church. It was mentioned in deeds of c.1187–98 (Hassall 1949, 146–7), and in a will of 1280/1 (Sharpe 1889–90, i, 51; LMA, CLA/23/DW/01/12/22). The churchyard was specified as a northern abutment of the medieval property of 7a Laurence Pountney Hill in numerous property transaction records between 1301 and 1496 (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/30/81, 41/25, 51/83, 77/147, 114/154, 124/33, 223/18; TNA: PRO, C 146/257). The churchyard was also used as a meeting place by Flemish weavers living in London in 1370/1 (Stow 1908, i, 218).

During works to the house in 2002, it became clear that much of the north wall of the 17th-century house is in fact a huge medieval terrace wall for the churchyard, which lies up the hill to the north. The wall retained the churchyard, which lay at least 4m higher than the external yard level of the medieval property below. It was built from roughly squared ragstone blocks, with some chalk and Reigate stone, and appeared to be built to rough courses; it was covered by an off-white lime render. The retaining wall of the churchyard can also be seen in the

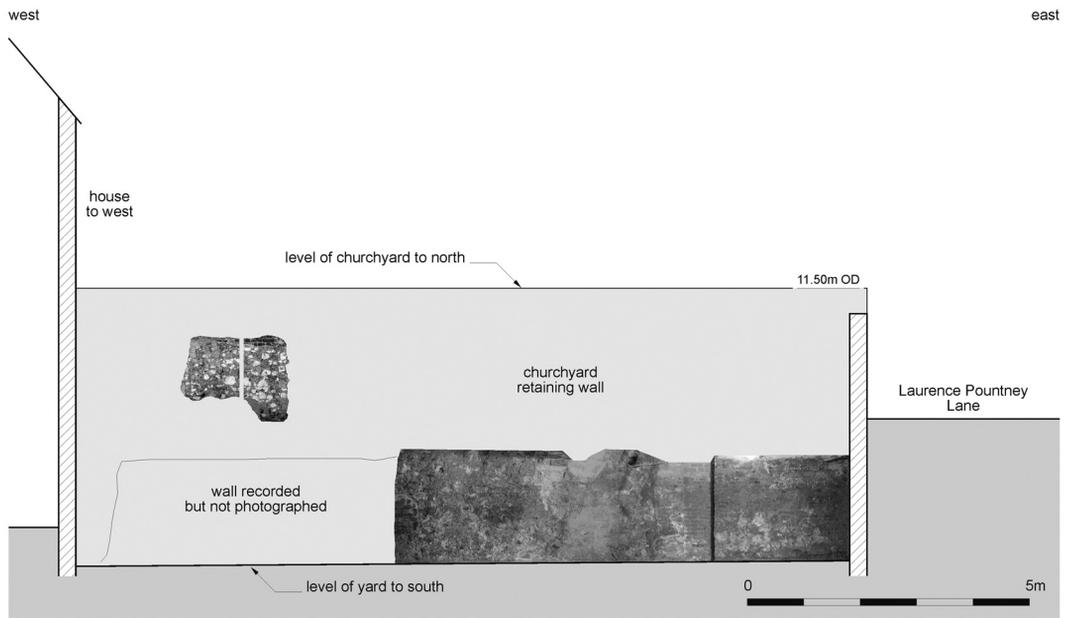


Fig 5. Reconstructed elevation looking north at the retaining wall of the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney; photographs of the medieval wall taken in the lower ground floor and basement of the 17th-century house have been superimposed. Scale 1:150

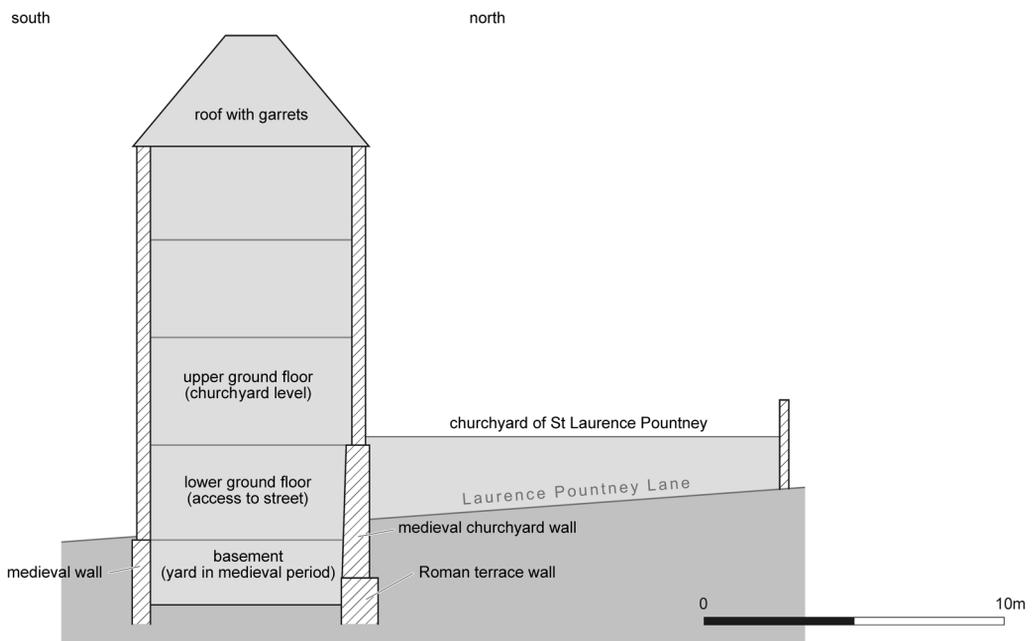


Fig 6. Simplified cross-section through the 17th-century house showing the Roman and medieval walls on which it is built, and showing the relationship of the house to street level and churchyard level. Scale 1:250

'copperplate' map-view of the 1550s (Fig 4). A reconstructed elevation and photographic montage of the wall (as it was recorded in the basement and lower ground floor of the standing building) is shown in Fig 5, in which the viewer is, as it were, standing in the medieval yard to the south of the churchyard and looking north at the churchyard wall.

THE HOUSE OF c.1670

The property was severely damaged in the Great Fire that destroyed much of the City in the terrible month of September 1666. As part of the City-backed scheme to encourage private landlords to rebuild their properties (while also keeping an eye on the process), landlords generally had to pay one of the City surveyors to stake out the site of their destroyed property before they were allowed to rebuild. Many of these surveys survive and they are a vital documentary link between the pre-Fire and post-Fire City (Mills & Oliver 1962–7). Unfortunately, the records of the City surveyor responsible for this area — Robert Hooke — do not survive and it is not, therefore, certain how soon after the Great Fire the current house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill was built. The churchwardens' accounts of the adjacent church of St Laurence Pountney show that from 1672 the parish vestry was in dispute with a Mr Robert de Luna about a house he was building adjacent to the 'church ground' with two doorways and windows opening into it, although this probably refers to a house further up the lane (adjacent to the old church) rather than the house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill (GL, MS 3907/1). The house must have been finished by about 1675 because it appears on Ogilby and Morgan's map published in 1676 (Fig 9).

The house of c.1670 was built of purple-red brick and had two frontages, east onto Laurence Pountney Lane and north onto St Laurence Pountney churchyard, which was still functioning even though the church itself was not rebuilt after the Fire. The east frontage was four windows wide (with the southern windows on each floor blank) and had four storeys with a basement below the street and, we can assume, garrets in the roof (Fig 7). The surviving shop-front is broadly 18th-century in date but it seems likely that



Fig 7. View of the east façade of the house, fronting onto Laurence Pountney Lane (the view no longer exists: the photograph was taken in 2003 in a brief window of opportunity between the demolition of one large building on Arthur Street and the construction of its successor)

the original street-level frontage was along similar lines, with the door at the south end. The tall window openings had flat arches and surrounds in high-quality red 'rubbed' bricks and they would originally have had casement windows. Two brick 'plat-bands' or string-courses (again using red 'rubbed' bricks) mark the divisions between the upper storeys. The whole roof was replaced in the 19th century but its eaves cornice appears to be a replacement for the original 17th-century cornice.

The northern façade onto the churchyard is much broader and originally had four slightly unevenly spaced windows (Fig 8). Because of the churchyard to the north with its built-up level and large retaining wall, this façade only had three storeys plus garrets (with access to the lower ground floor via the main staircase). According to a dispute recorded in the churchwardens' accounts, this front also had a doorway into the churchyard (Wilson 1831, 140). The house is shown on Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676 with a small yard in its south-west corner (Fig 9). The line on the map to the north of the yard may indicate a covered passage giving access to the yard (rather than indicating a separately owned property), which would have housed the privy and would have allowed a little light into this corner of the house. The door



Fig 8. View of the north façade of the house, looking over the former churchyard of St Laurence Pountney, now the garden of the house; the six tall and narrow window openings and the string courses are original features of the house of c.1670

referred to in the churchwardens' accounts would therefore be at the end of this passage on the north façade, giving access from the passage to Laurence Pountney Hill (Fig 10; a large 19th-century window is now in this position). The interior of the house was extensively remodelled in the 18th century and there are therefore few, if any, surviving 17th-century features. The 18th-century staircase is probably in the same location as the original, situated in the middle of the south party wall. The form of the original staircase has been reconstructed in Fig 10 as a dog-leg stair with a half-landing, by analogy with the 1680s house at 27 Charles Square in Hoxton (Burton & Guillery 2006, 36–7). The plan of the house would thus have been divided into two large rooms at either end — probably a dining room or parlour at the east and a drawing room at the west — with

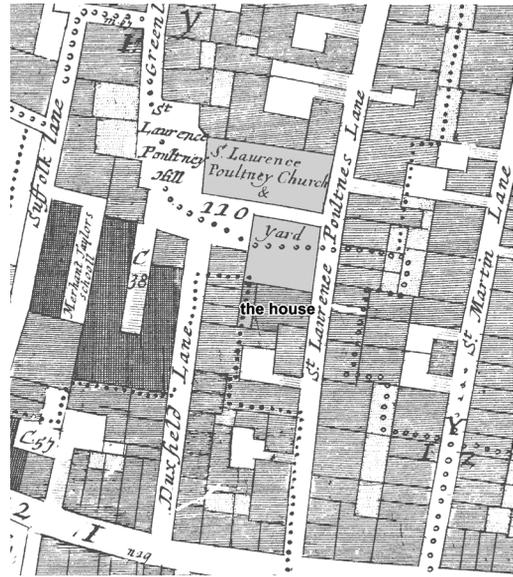


Fig 9. Detail of Ogilby and Morgan's map of 1676 showing the house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill, on the south side of the old churchyard

smaller rooms situated to the west and north of the stairs (Fig 10). A chimney stack that survives in the lobby of the remodelled house may be one half of an original 17th-century paired stack heating two adjacent rooms. The chimney stack of the eastern room is probably also part of the original 17th-century layout.

A few of the early occupants of the house of c.1670 can be traced and the Clay family were early lessees, quite possibly the original ones. We know that the house was leased to Samuel Clay by 1688 because in April that year the churchwardens were ordered to negotiate with his landlord about a doorway and windows opening into the Church Yard (the earlier dispute had clearly not been completely resolved). In May 1689 a payment of 40 shillings was accepted from Clay for the use of the windows for the remainder of the term of his lease. Further agreements about the door and windows were made with his widow in 1697, 1700 and 1702. Mr Sinclear and Mr Shrewsbridge also paid sums for their windows facing into the Church Yard (Wilson 1831, 140). The earliest occupant listed in the land tax returns was Widow Clay in 1693/4; she remained there until 1716

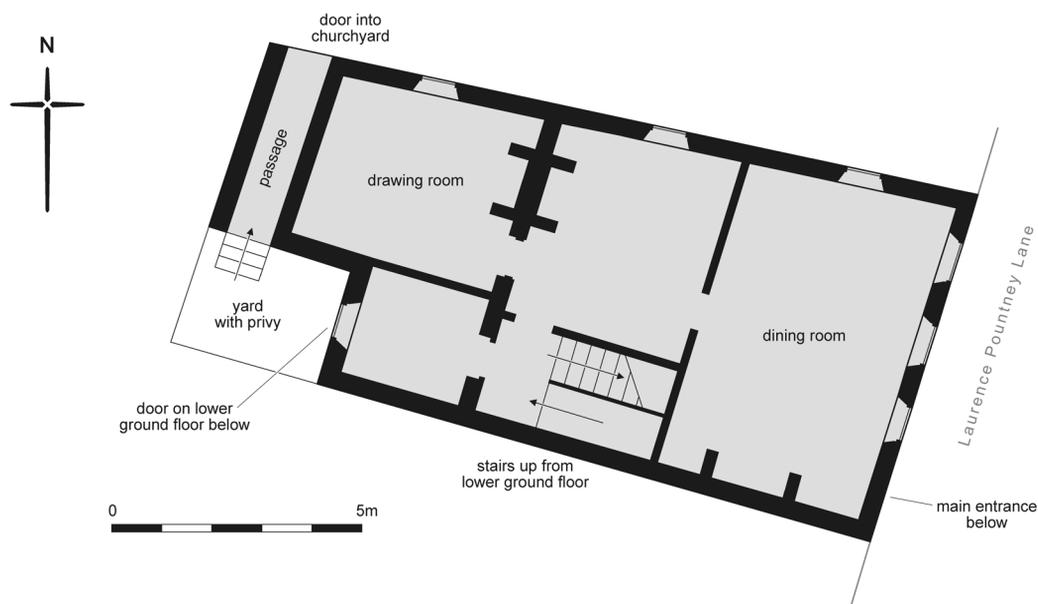


Fig 10. Reconstructed plan of the 17th-century house, at upper ground floor level. Scale 1:150

(GL, MSS 11316/8, 13–52). Samuel Clay was a gentleman merchant according to the 1687 ‘Visitation’ of London which lists him under this part of the ward (Wales & Hartley 2004, ii, 613). Unfortunately no further information about the Clays has been found but they seem to have been a reasonably prosperous family of City merchants; a later relative, Mary Eyre, purchased the extensive St John’s Wood estate in 1732 (pers comm Mireille Galinou).

THE HOUSE IN THE 18th CENTURY

The interior of the house was extensively modified in the first half of the 18th century, almost certainly under the ownership of Sir Henry Blunt. In 1717, Jacob Harvey esquire took over the property from Widow Clay, and he in turn was succeeded in 1726 by Henry Blunt (GL, MSS 11316/55–82). Henry was the son of Sir John Blount, baronet, and had married Dorothy Nutt of Walthamstow in 1724. His father was summoned before the Court of Chivalry in 1732 and fined for adopting the arms of Blount of Sodington without permission; he died in January 1733 before his appeal could be heard. The house

was noted as empty at this time. Henry then became Sir Henry Blunt, baronet, and he and Dorothy raised three sons (Burke 1851, 106). In 1737 Sir Henry was one of the trustees of the parish lands and advowson of St Laurence Pountney, along with several of his neighbours (Wilson 1831, 141). He was noted as the occupant of the house until 1760, although he died in October 1759; Henry Blunt esquire in 1761 may have been his second son (GL, MSS 11316/82–187).

Sir Henry Blunt carried out extensive alterations to the house to bring it up to date with contemporary fashion. He replaced the stairs with a grander staircase winding round an open well (Fig 11). The oak staircase has a combination of twisted balusters over a cut string (where the rising edge or string of the stairs is cut to a step profile rather than left straight), with the string decorated with flower scrolls (Fig 12). Similar staircases have been recorded in Sussex, dated to 1731, and High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, dated to 1740–3 (Hall 2005, 105–6, 114). Blunt also fitted new panels and doorcases to several rooms (many of which, especially the former, survive on the upper ground and first floors and on the staircase) and he replaced the



Fig 11. View of the staircase of c.1730 after restoration

old windows with ‘six over six’ pairs of sash windows (Fig 7). He also extended the house slightly, building over the former light well in the south-west corner, thus gaining a series of



Fig 12. Detail of the staircase of c.1730: the flower scrolls on the string

small square closet rooms. The yard privy was presumably converted to an internal privy in the basement. One aspect of this 18th-century alteration was the subject of more detailed investigation in 2002 when one of the 18th-century closets — probably bricked up in the 19th century — was rediscovered. This room on the lower ground floor was a small wine cellar, whose north wall had a range of brick wine bins with York stone shelves (Fig 13).

Further alterations to the house were carried out slightly later in the 18th century, probably by the hop merchant Benjamin Winthorp in the 1760s. Stephen Winthorp took over the house in 1765 (following Daniel Mackay who had it from the Blunts in 1762) and from 1766 to 1775 the house was occupied by Benjamin Winthorp; he appears in various trade directories as a hop merchant at this address (GL, MSS 11316/190–229; the trade directories include editions of Kent’s *Directory* dating from 1765 to 1776 and of Baldwin’s *New and Complete Guide* from 1768 to 1775). From 1776 to 1785 the house was noted as empty ‘late Benjamin Winthorp and Company’, although one directory lists George Dealtry, merchant, at this address in 1778 (GL, MSS 11316/232–259). The arrangement of the lower ground floor seems to date to Winthorp’s occupancy of the house. The shop front was on Laurence Pountney Lane, with a domestic door on the left (south), a larger shop door next to it and a shop window with three bands of six small

windows to the right (Fig 14). A trapdoor in the pavement allowed wholesale deliveries of bales of hops to be lowered from the street to the basement (the corresponding chute in the east wall of the basement can be seen on Fig 2). The 18th-century arrangement of the shop survives more or less intact today: the shop itself was at the front (east), with a counting room and a small storage room to the rear (Fig 15). Part of a pulley system also

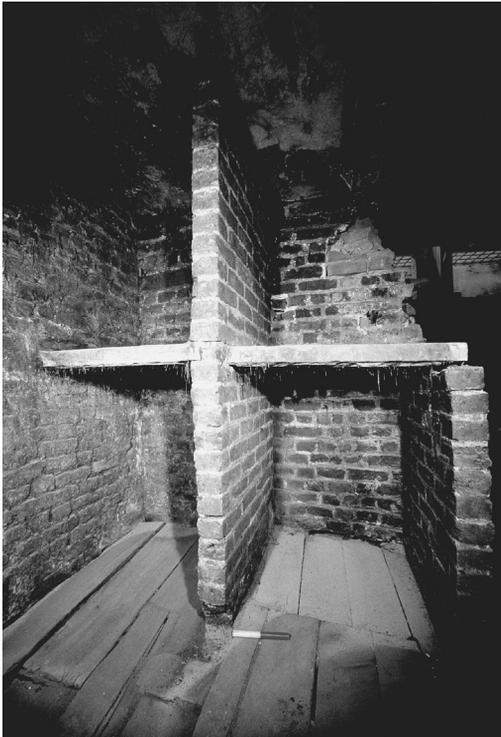


Fig 13. View of the wine bins in the 18th-century wine cellar on the lower ground floor; the room had been bricked up in the 19th century and was rediscovered in 2002 (0.2m scale)



Fig 14. Photograph of the 1860s or 1870s looking south-west down Laurence Pountney Lane, showing the 18th-century shopfront, originally of the hop merchant Benjamin Winthorpe ('Dixon and Jones'; NMR, DD75/15)

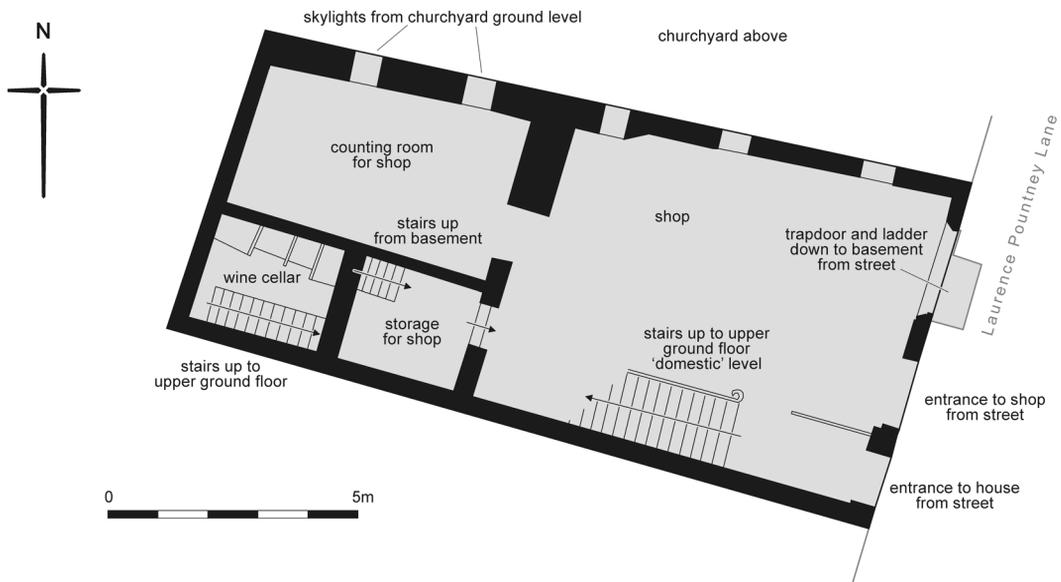


Fig 15. Reconstruction of the shop of Benjamin Winthorpe, hop dealer, in the 1760s. Scale 1:150

survives near the shop door. The storage room had stairs down to the main stock area in the basement and more prestigious customers could have been escorted up to the domestic upper ground floor by means of the elegant staircase. The wine cellar was physically on this floor but was only accessible from the upper ground floor.

Benjamin Hall took over the house in 1786, followed by James Hall in 1787–91, Thomas Mower in 1791–3, and Ann Huxley in 1794–5, when it passed to Elizabeth Grant (GL, MSS 11316/262–292).

THE HOUSE IN THE 19th CENTURY

Elizabeth Grant occupied the house from 1796 to 1821 (GL, MSS 11316/292–367). In 1803 David Duval, merchant, was listed at No. 9 Laurence Pountney Lane, and in 1817 both Duval and E H Brandt (*Boyle's City Guide* 1803; *London Commercial Directory* 1817). Presumably these were Elizabeth Grant's tenants in the shop downstairs. The house was empty in 1822, and in 1823 it was taken over by the surveyor and architect Edward I'Anson, who also held the next house to the south (10 Laurence Pountney Lane; GL, MSS 11316/370–385). The I'Anson connection with the house was to last over a century, although it was not until 1850 that I'Anson occupied the whole house and practised here professionally. In the 1820s and 1830s the house was the dwelling of John Henderson, then John Curtis, with several merchants occupying the lower shop including, in 1835, the druggist and merchant R A Coward (*Robson's London Directory* 1830 and 1835; *Robson's Commercial Directory* 1840–1; GL, MSS 11316/388–397). At this time the houses of Laurence Pountney Hill and Laurence Pountney Lane were described as 'well-built and inhabited by merchants and other respectable persons' (Wilson 1831, 4). In 1850 Edward I'Anson and Son, architects, moved into No. 9 and began to use it as their office (*Post Office London Directory* 1850).

Edward I'Anson senior (1775–1853) was primarily a surveyor, supervising large property estates in the City and Southwark, as well as working for the Commissioners of Sewers supervising sewerage and drainage works in south London (RIBA, biographical file). His son Edward I'Anson junior (1812–

1888) worked in a joint practice with his father and went on to become a celebrated London architect, pioneering purpose-built office blocks for the expanding business and financial sector. Having spent two years on a grand tour of Europe, he frequently employed Italian Renaissance motifs in his London buildings, such as his library and museum at St Bartholomew's Hospital (RIBA, biographical file; Bradley & Pevsner 2002, 335). I'Anson added a number of features to the north façade of his Laurence Pountney office-house after he purchased the old churchyard to form his garden in the 1850s. Several of his additions can be seen on Fig 8 including the '18th-century' doorcase of 1860, a rather out of context, triple-arched Veneto-Byzantine window of 1870 (probably based on his grand tour sketches of Venetian palazzi in the 1830s), and a French slated mansard roof with circular dormer windows (Bradley & Pevsner 2002, 529; NMR, RCHME field notes; RIBA, drawings, VOS/140). These additions should probably be regarded as I'Anson's window display of some of his products. I'Anson also carried out some major structural repairs in the basement, underpinning the middle of the house with substantial brick arches. His son Edward Blakeway I'Anson (1842–1912) continued the family business at the Laurence Pountney Hill property, as did the latter's business partner Arthur Knight Stephens. The architectural use of the house ended with Stephens' death in 1945 (RIBA, biographical file).

Trade journals show that the I'Ansons leased the shop, while census returns demonstrate that they also rented out parts of the house: for example, in 1871 and 1881 a messenger called Mark Elms and his family lived here, his son was an architect's clerk (TNA: PRO, RG10/431; RG11/379).

THE HOUSE TODAY

The house had a narrow escape in the Second World War when enemy bombing damaged the buildings on the other side of Laurence Pountney Lane. By the late 20th century the house was called Rectory House and it was bought and refurbished by AC Holdings of Harrogate in the late 1980s; in 1990 it was on the market for £3.75 million



Fig 16. View of the house and garden in 2009

(*City Post*, 17 May 1990; City of London online planning register). A decade later in 2001 it was bought by Totus Design Group and a more extensive restoration campaign transformed the dilapidated offices back into a period house — the Square Mile's only self-contained house and garden (Fig 16). The house was on and off the market from 2003 until it was sold in 2007. It is now enjoyed as a spectacular private residence, with the owner's City office just a short walk away.

THE GARDEN: THE FORMER CHURCHYARD

The churchyard of St Laurence Pountney remained in use for parish burials during the upheavals of the Reformation and the dissolution of St Laurence Pountney College

in the 1530s and 1540s. In 1535/6 the churchwardens' accounts record a payment to a yeoman of the Lord Mayor for cleaning the churchyard and carrying away the rubbish (Norman 1901, 276).

The church was destroyed in the Great Fire and the flames must have been drawn up the interior of the church tower, as eyewitnesses described how the fire burst from its tall steeple, as though it was lit independently. The church was not rebuilt and the parish was united with that of St Mary Abchurch, whose church was rebuilt for the use of both parishes (Harben 1918, 341; Strype 1720, I, ii, 190; Wilson 1831, 3; Norman 1901, 278). The site of the former church of St Laurence Pountney was cleared and left as an open space. On its south side an alley, later called Church Passage, connected Laurence Pountney Hill and Laurence Pountney Lane, and separated the open space of the old churchyard ('Church Yard') from the new open space to the north ('Church Ground', the former church; Strype 1720, I, ii, 189; Wilson 1831, 174; Harben 1918, 342–3). Burials seem to have resumed in the old churchyard soon after the Fire: in the churchwardens' accounts for April 1666 to April 1667 there are two payments for burials in the ground on Church Hill, presumably Laurence Pountney Hill (although these could have taken place before the Fire) and further receipts for burials from 1672. In January 1674 the vestry ordered the churchwardens to level up the Church Ground and the Church Yard, and the pathway running between them, and to repair the steps at its east end. All this was done by the following January (Wilson 1831, 139; GL, MS 3907/1). Both Church Ground and Church Yard continued to be used for burials from at least 1681 onwards, as is clear from the first burial register of the parish (GL, MS 7670).

In 1728 the old trees in both the churchyard and the open space to the north were to be taken down and replaced with *sickemore and arbelle trees*, half of each sort, and the grounds were put into good order. In 1739 the churchwardens were ordered to have new gates made for both spaces from Laurence Pountney Hill, with similar gates ordered the following year into Laurence Pountney Lane. In 1768 the gates of the Church Yard

were again repaired. In 1779 and 1784 it was resolved to lower the walls of both burial grounds, and top them with coping stones and railings: it is these railings and coping stones that survive today (Wilson 1831, 140–1, 174–5; Norman 1901, 277).

Burials continued in both Church Ground and Church Yard throughout the 18th century, and in the first half of the 19th century (GL MSS 7670, 7667). In 1761 it was ordered by the vestry that the sexton should dig all the graves four feet (1.2m) deep from the ground surface to the top of the coffin (Wilson 1831, 172). A number of gravestones are known to have been in the Church Yard and were still legible in the early 19th century (Table 1; Wilson 1831, 178). Some of the burials in the Church Yard in the second and third decades of the 19th century are specifically described as marked by flat gravestones, with others specified as interred in brick-built graves (Wilson 1831, 178–9). Three tomb monuments can be seen in the north of the Church Yard in a photograph of 1879 (GL, COLLAGE 25744) and two of those monuments survive in the garden today, one a raised stone tomb (18th-century?) and the other a flat slab resting on a low brick base (probably 19th-century). Neither has any legible inscription.

Table 1. Gravestones recorded in the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney in the 19th century (after Wilson 1831)

Name	Age	Date of death
Josias Chitty		before 1750
Thomas Ashburner	47	14 October 1747
Dorothy Ashburner	57	8 September 1765
John Butterworth	3	5 November 1772
Mary Ashburner	67	29 December 1777
Elizabeth Butterworth	49	21 July 1779
Joseph Butterworth	69	9 June 1782

There were only a few burials in the 1840s and they ceased completely in 1850, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament of that year (GL, MS 24742). A plan was drawn of the two burial grounds in about 1853, probably when they went out of use (LMA, COL/PL/01/103/A/050). It seems very likely that Edward I'Anson bought the churchyard to make a garden for his house at this time,

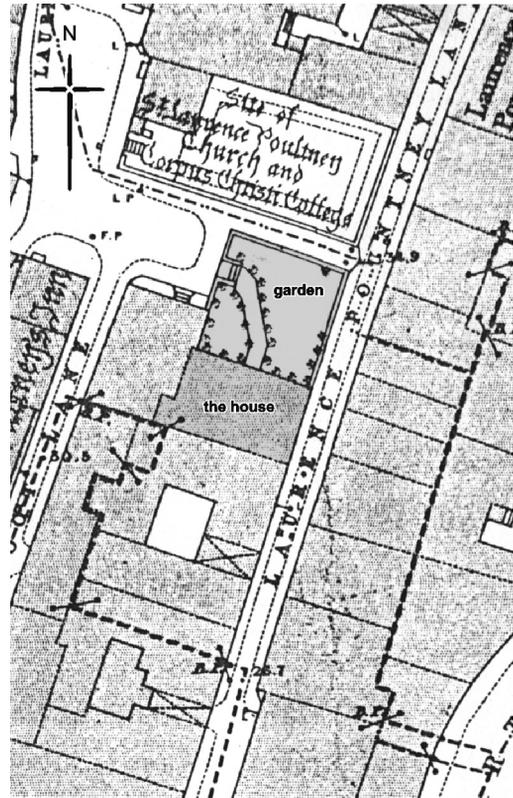


Fig 17. Detail of the 1875 Ordnance Survey map showing the house and its new garden (the old churchyard)

probably removing most of the tomb slabs and gravestones. He also relaid the path: whereas in the 1853 plan the path is a straight line from the western gate towards the east, in the 1875 Ordnance Survey map the new path sweeps round to the south to approach the new front door of the house, positioned in the middle of what was by then the principal façade (Fig 17).

CONCLUSIONS

The house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill is clearly of quite some importance, as a rare survival of a once-common type of City building built soon after the Great Fire of 1666. The combination of the Great Fire, centuries of prosperity and a few years of wartime bombing means that relatively few historic buildings now survive in the City. The architectural interest of the house is

certainly enhanced by the discovery that it was built on a 4m-high medieval stone wall (retaining the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney), which itself was a rebuild of one of the earliest walls of Roman London, probably built in AD 55 as part of the initial urban landscaping of the city.

The house falls in between the 'second sort' and 'third sort' of fire-resistant brick houses that were defined in the Rebuilding Act of 1667: the second sort was limited to four storeys (and was a type intended for principal roads rather than lanes) with the third sort of three storeys permitted along the smaller streets (Bradley & Pevsner 2002, 68–71). In addition to the architectural division into four types, the Act also implied a class-based division in that the four types of house were intended for differing social categories: our house at 7a Laurence Pountney Hill was therefore aimed at the fairly prosperous City merchant, although not a member of the City's mercantile élite. The house is therefore an interesting comparator to (and one level down the social scale from) the Dutch merchant's house at 32 Botolph Lane, a more spacious courtyard house of the 'first sort' according to the definitions of the 1667 Act (Alcock & Galinou 2006). Alcock and Galinou's study of 32 Botolph Lane is particularly important as they were able to write a combined architectural and documentary history of the house, with further details gleaned from surviving inventories. In our smaller study of 7a Laurence Pountney Hill we narrow down its construction date to *c.*1670 and show that the gentleman merchant Samuel Clay was one of the first occupants; we could not, unfortunately, prove that he was the original lessee nor could a surviving inventory be found to add some colour to our description of his house.

The original elevation of the house was fairly typical of the regular appearance of the City's post-Fire houses, although it should be noted that in some respects the 1667 Act codified earlier best practice, in effect giving an official seal of approval to a particular type of restrained brick-built house that had developed in the early to mid-17th century (Bradley & Pevsner 2002, 68; McKellar 1999, 157). The plan-form of the house is basically of a type known as the central staircase plan,

with the stairs sandwiched between the front and rear rooms (Burton & Guillery 2006, 15–18). However, the particular location of the house, fronting onto both the lane and the churchyard, allowed the builders to come up with a more spacious plan giving three reasonably sized and well lit rooms on each floor. The house is thus an unusual combination of narrow townhouse (viewed from the east) and a broader small mansion typical of suburban locations (when viewed from the north).

On the inside the house is a relatively grand 18th-century (rather than 17th-century) dwelling, the result of, it is argued, alterations carried out by Sir Henry Blunt in the 1730s. Again, the combination of rebuilding and wartime damage mean that there are few houses with surviving 18th-century interiors in the City itself, although the numbers increase dramatically if one includes the western and eastern suburbs (Bradley & Pevsner 2002, 90–1; Bradley & Pevsner 2003, 32; Cherry *et al* 2005, 404–6). The most notable surviving features are the staircase and panelling installed for Sir Henry Blunt, much of which survives on the upper ground floor in particular. On the floor below there is the rare shop façade on Laurence Pountney Lane and a good part of the original shop layout, adapted, we suggest, by Benjamin Winthorp, a hop merchant in the 1760s.

The house today has a number of — let us say — unusual features added by the architect Edward I'Anson in the mid-19th century, including a French roof and a rather lost-looking Venetian *palazzo* window on the north façade, and an interesting selection of fireplaces on the inside. On the positive side, I'Anson bought the old churchyard of St Laurence Pountney, thus giving the house a large garden that has undoubtedly enhanced its appearance: today the house is probably the only City house with its own private garden. The house has recently entered a new phase in its history, triumphantly restored to a single domestic dwelling after years of neglect as offices. For this we must thank the strenuous efforts both of its recent developer, Andrea Cenci of Totus Design Group, and its current owner, Edmund Truell.

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Figs 4 and 9 are reproduced by kind permission of the Guildhall Library, City of London. Fig 14 is reproduced by permission of English Heritage NMR. The architectural photographs were taken by Maggie Cox. Drawings are by Nick Holder, Carlos Lemos and Sophie Lamb. We would like to acknowledge the help and advice given by several Museum of London colleagues: David Bowsher, Sophie Jackson, Sylvia Kennedy and Andrew Westman.

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MS 7667	baptisms, marriages and burials (St Mary Abchurch)
MS 7670	baptisms, marriages and burials (St Laurence Pountney)
MS 8708	title deeds of Pewterers' Company
MS 11316	Land Tax assessment books
MS 24742	baptisms, marriages and burials (St Mary Abchurch)

LAARC	London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre
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LPH02 and REC89 site files

The Tony Dyson Archive: this archive of medieval property transactions is a card-index summary of thousands of Court of Husting enrolments of property transactions (and other

sources), ordered by property. The archive thus functions as a property-based index to the Hustling rolls in the LMA.

LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
CLA/023/DW/01/Husting rolls	
COL/PL/01/103/A/050	plan of the churchyard of St Laurence Pountney c.1853
69.0 LAU	photographs of Laurence Pountney Hill

NMR	National Monuments Record, Swindon
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RCHME field notes	1928 notes for the 1929 <i>Inventory</i> volume (Dowgate Ward, monument 8)
Photograph DD75/15	view of c.1870s

RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects, London
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Biographical files (in Portland Place library)	
Drawings and archives (in Victoria and Albert Museum RIBA study room)	

TNA: PRO	The National Archives (Public Record Office), London
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C146 and C148	'Ancient Deeds' series C and CS
RG 9-13	census returns 1861-1901

Totus Design Group, London

Architect's plans and elevations (copies in LAARC, LPH02 site file)
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