



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(The Valentine Knight Plan of London] Several Propositions and Schemes were offer'd to rebuild the City of London after the great Fire in 1666. This was the one propos'd by Val. Knigh, printed 20th of September 1666, without any Draught or Delineation by this Sketch now done, it may be easily compared with other Designs printed.

Stock#: 80972
Map Maker: Knight
Date: 1740 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size: 13.5 x 10.5 inches (including text)
Price: \$ 1,200.00



Description:

A Plan So Bad Its Architect Was Thrown in Jail.

Separately issued engraved plan for the rebuilding of London in the wake of the Great Fire of 1666.

The plan was one of several proposed for rebuilding the City of London, which was totally destroyed during the infamous fire of 1666. The most famous of these plans was by Christopher Wren, who would go on to design many of the most important churches and landmarks still standing in the City to this day. But other proposals were made as well, including the present one by the architect Valentine Knight.

The design calls for a loose grid of streets to cover the City of London, which was to have a new canal cut around it running from "Belins-Gate" to the River Fleet. What the plan lacked in artifice, it lacked still more politics, for the purpose of Knight's canal was to add additional docks near the Thames, the profits from which would go to the crown. Knight no doubt thought this "clever" idea would resonate with King Charles II, however, that was far from the case. Incensed by the prospect of being seen to profit from one of Britain's all-time worst calamities, Charles II had Knight briefly thrown in jail.

The map itself seems to express derision of Knight's plan; the note below the image reads:

Hereby it may be observ'd that towards London Wall, and towards the East beyond Bishops-gate



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Street, he has not express'd any Small Cross Streets or Ways. Also the New Canal from Belins-gate, is only consider'd to be erected or made out of Rubbish and the Ruins &c. He has only left standing five Churches, and none mention'd in the eastward part of the City.

Most institutions seem to date the map to 1666 or 1666-1700. This is probably incorrect, based on our experience, it is more likely that the map was produced in the mid-18th century by a body such as the Society of Antiquaries.

Rarity

Several variants of the map seem to exist. Sometimes it is seen with broadside letterpress text affixed below the image (i.e., on another sheet). There are versions with and without the mention of 5 churches seen in ours.

Detailed Condition:

Engraving on laid paper. Chipped at the bottom edge, seemingly without loss of image, most notably in the lower left and right corners.