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[Christopher Wren's London] Ichnographia Urbis Londinii post Magnum et fatale Incenium Ano. Dni. MDCLXVI. cum Idea Novae Urbis . . . Christophorus Wren . . . | 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 Kt Yc. for Rebuilding thereof; Approv'd by ye King.

Stock#: 61129
Map Maker: Wren / Standidge & Co.
Date: 1666 (1855)
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 27.5 x 18.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare mid-19th Century facsimile / lithographed edition of Christopher Wren's 1666 plan for the rebuilding of London, after the Great Fire of 1666.

Wren's ambitious plan would have converted London toward a grid system, following the catastrophic fire. The present map is a later edition of Henry Hulsbergh's 1724 engraved copy of Wren's original plan of London. As noted on the Harvard blogsite:

Looking back on the Fire, Hulsbergh's map shows Christopher Wren's proposed improvements, which focused on wide boulevards and public spaces that would surpass Paris, the other major European city. Although few of Wren's improvements actually occurred, you can see here, at least, slightly wider streets such as Queen Street and better traffic access for mercantile places such as the Royal Exchange. Indeed, the government needed to entice merchants and residents back into the city to re-establish tax income as they struggled to pay for even these more modest improvements.

The original Wren plan of 1666 no longer survives. Today Wren's original 1666 plan is lost. This version was drawn in 1744 by the engraver P. Fourdrinier, who claims to have replicated exactly a scarce 1724



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original owned by the Earl of Pembroke.

This edition has a textual explanation beneath the map. Wren was a Professor of Astronomy at Oxford with interest in the science of architecture, he was among the first to submit a proposal after the catastrophe. The narrow streets that had helped spread the fires have been replaced by monumental avenues radiating from piazzas. The classical buildings and formal street plans that Wren had studied in Paris and Rome are a clear influence. He also proposed constructing a Thameside quay from Bridewell to the Tower, replacing the ramshackle wooden wharf-side buildings with warehouses. A vignette of Tamesis (a river god), with London burning in the background has been added to the border. The upper left quadrant bears the image of a phoenix, suggesting that, like the mythical bird, London too would rise from its own ashes and be reborn in fire. The lower quadrants of this plate include the map's title in both English and Latin as well as a detailed 'Explanation of the Plan.'

The map was prepared for use by the House of Commons Select Committee on Metropolitan Communications.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen. Left side trimmed into the neat line at lower left. Minor soiling.