CURATING THE GLOBAL CITY

Curating the Global City

A Thesis

Presented by

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Ellie Miles, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

City museums collect, conserve and exhibit objects relating to urban history. Despite city museums existing for more than a century, relatively few conventions have developed within the genre, and each major project undertaken at city museums assumes a different approach to representing the city. This thesis examines the process of representing the city through museum work.

In May 2010 the Galleries of Modern London opened at the Museum of London, after six years of preparation. The museum work that took place in the production of these galleries provides a case study for this research. A position embedded within the museum provides the perspective for a close study of how city museums build narrative into space. Using participatory methods this thesis examines how the work of making city museums affects and influences the outcome.

The thesis begins with an explanation of its methodological approach, then moves on to discuss common dichotomies that city museums have addressed differently over time. The next chapter turns to the main case study, and focuses on the Museum of London's planning process and early ideas for the Galleries of Modern London. The following chapter shows how the symbolic meanings of individual objects are manipulated during the physical stage of museum work. After this the thesis discusses how the Museum of London engaged with communities and included multiple voices; how specific parts of the Galleries of Modern London were developed and how city museums address technological change.

This thesis advocates an understanding of the city museum as more than textual, encompassing ideas about process and materiality. Exploring the context of the Galleries of Modern London shows the contingencies and agency enacted in the city museum. Finally, this thesis shows the ways museum that work itself shapes how the museum represents the city.

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Prologue

I started writing this PhD a long time ago. When my Mum moved house she found the guidebook my Dad bought the day he first took my sister and I to the Museum of London. She gave it to me with the diary I kept in 1996 (figure 0.1).

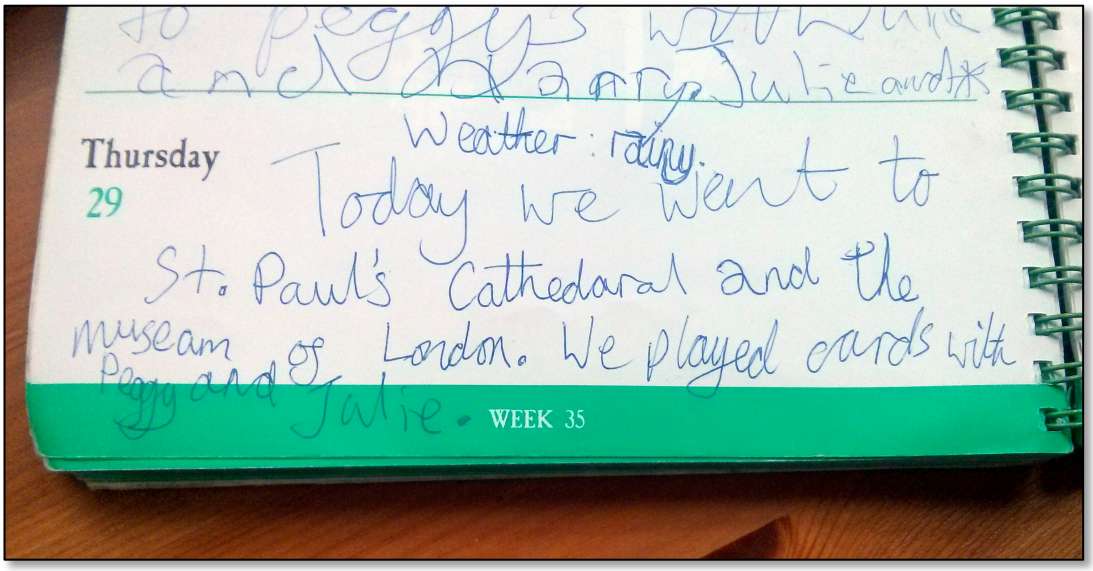

Figure 0.1 - Diary entry, 29th August 1996

Since I began this PhD I often try and remember the day that I first went to the Museum of London with my Dad and my sister. I remember the fire model, which transfixed my sister and me. I remember the Lord Mayor's coach, which I muddled in with the big gold barge at the Maritime Museum. I remember a glass wall and a curved space and I remember confidently, excitedly walking ahead of Dad, thrilled by the mysterious promise of the paths ahead of me. I remember a Victorian street - how dark it seemed - where my sister and I wandered round the shops, going into the doorways and around the corners as my Dad tried to keep track of us.

In 2010 I'm here again with my family. On the steps I first took up to the museum the stale-smelling walls are still decorated with the museum's old motif. Fourteen years seems a long time to me, but to London it is only a little. We are here to see the Galleries of Modern London. Today is the family preview, a month before the grand opening. I have been researching the museum by working on the new

galleries. We are here to see what the new galleries are like with visitors in them. Dad's here again, I know he's dressed smartly on purpose.

I want to lead my family around the museum, so I walk quickly past the older galleries to take them to the Galleries of Modern London. My family's attention is drawn by older displays as we walk past, but I do not let them stop and explore until we go down the stairs to the galleries I boast that I have helped work on.

I lead them to the part of the museum entitled 'Expanding City'. There we are confronted with a printing press. Its wooden frame is embellished by dozens of sheets flying out of it, each of which is projected with images of ephemera and key words from the time. We turn to our left, passing a tool chest and I show them an elaborate dress. Facing this case are three or four low, flat cases. These contain groups of fine objects made in London like fans and guns. At the far end of the cases an interactive screen is projected, it's a game in which we are quizzed about our knowledge of the making of these objects. We continue walking, along to underfloor cases with shoes in. We stand on the glass cases, comparing the size of our feet to those beneath.

When we come down the two or three steps at the end, my family disperses. My Dad and my stepmother have found replica hats to try on, my brother and boyfriend look at a case with a 'game of life' in it and I show my Mum the huge dolls' house. My boyfriend is partial to Hogarth's work, so I show him where parts of his prints are projected around a nearby part of the gallery. Then my stepmother's young grandson finds the reconstructed prison cell. He isn't sure of it at first, although it's clear he'd like to explore it. We follow him in to reassure him, though we also point out the eerie noises of dropping water and ratty snuffle sounds playing in the background. The grown ups look at the carvings on the walls and try to read the words. The little boy is further in the cell, standing under a bright light. 'Look!' he suddenly says, proudly pointing at another doorway he has spotted in the cell's corner. He doesn't realise the doorway is behind protective glass until he has run toward the door and bashed his head. We bundle out of the cell and I show my Mum a case with a Judge's chair. I explain how the chair was re-upholstered and point out some of the objects around it. Dad and my stepmother show the surprised

little boy the hats they found and take photos of one another wearing them. I find my brother and my boyfriend looking at an amputation kit and a set of false teeth.

We go back up a couple of steps and pass two oil paintings of a ship: one loading and one unloading soldiers. I tell my family that if we stop and look we can spot the same characters in each, that the two paintings tell a story. They have to trust me, because I'm hurrying them along. I point out the Singh twins' miniature response to the paintings, and let them spot a couple of references before I point out a case with Nelson's sword in it, and then I lead them along to the Rhinebeck Panorama. They can't stop there for long because I point out another underfloor case beneath where we are standing. I tell them how I helped to put the objects into this one, and I point out the remains of a dead cat and tell them it will be in my thesis. Once I'm satisfied that they have seen it we're walking over to a wall behind the printing press we saw when we started down here. The wall is adorned with reproduction bills and posters, but we hurry past to the doorway and into a room made to look like a garden. Two corners of the room have costume displays, and two walls have film projected with actors in similar costumes. We look and watch for a little while and then I bustle them off to look around *Victorian Walk*. Once again I lose track of my Dad around the shops and dark streets.

When we leave *Victorian Walk* and walk down the corridor to a new section called 'People's City' I see Dad is ahead of me. He has climbed up the stepped plinth under a taxi, and has lifted his wife's grandson up to see inside. I know the plinth isn't meant to be climbed on, but I leave it for someone else to say and show my Mum and brother the miniature cinema. We sit in old seats for five minutes and watch films projected of the old city. When we've seen it begin to repeat we leave the little cinema. We've tried a couple of interactive tables before, but in this section of the museum there is a circular one, arranged a around tall Victorian water pump. It catches the eyes of my brother and partner. One of them shouts "multiplayer", and they enthusiastically gallivant over to it and begin trying to touch icons 'floating' in the virtual water, discovering what diseases they could have caught from London's filthy water.

Whilst they play I point out the costumes in the surrounding cases, material from

Queen Victoria's coronation, jars of dyes and spices and the penny toys to my Mum. I hurry my Mum past the Booth poverty map booth where people are queuing, and along briefly to the case about the suffragettes. I show Mum the case about the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, and along the corridor to the evacuees and the wars. I want to watch the film in the room at the end and I turn around and realise my Mum is standing very still in the war corridor, and she's looking very carefully at one of the cases. I remember Peggy, my grandma, who I'd played cards with the day I first came to the museum. I wonder if that is what Mum is thinking about. I realise how quickly I'm hurrying around.

Whist we're watching the war video my phone starts to vibrate. I walk out of the film section and answer the call whilst standing next to the window display of a Lloyd's tea house and a red telephone box made into a case. Dad's on the phone. I ask where he is. He replies: "the 1960s".

Mum and I turn the corner round the courtyard and into a parade of cases and a sign that says 'World City.' I'm keen to show her the Biba objects, but I try to remember not to rush her as she looks at the material from the Festival of Britain and the coronation. Moving along the sequence of cases we come to the case with the punk costumes, and further along next to that there is a case with material about protests. The last case in the parade is about the most recent past. "They thought about getting Pete Doherty's hat," I tell my brother, whose excitement wanes when I tell him they didn't. Behind the cases we come to a display about the Brixton riots, with a notice saying it isn't finished yet. I know we're getting towards the end now and we're moving round even quicker. I show my boyfriend another touch-table interactive with photographs from all the different boroughs. There are lots of other visitors around, so we move on. I point out a model of two streets, made from photographs. We peer in the houses' windows. Then we look at the Bill and Ben puppets, a painting of the poll tax riots, and a huge touchscreen table made to represent the Thames. I point out the gold coach, and then we get a cup of tea.

When I began this project in 2008 I sought to participate in the Museum of London's work of curating a global city. I studied the museum work that went into representing London's history, and by time of the the family and friends preview

day, eighteen months into my PhD, I had already lost the visitor's perspective I had enjoyed in 1996.

Chapter 1: Introduction

City museums are distinct from other kinds of museums, because their subject matter is the city itself. The city museum's challenge is to represent something as extensive and dynamic as their cities. As Jones argues:

> 'It is a museum about the city in all its aspects, not a museum that happens to be in the city. Its subject is the city: This is its only artifact. The artifact is, however alive, all around the museum, and relentlessly changing. You cannot put it in a glass case'
> (Jones, 2008: 6).

The impossibility of encasing the city has prompted a variety of creative approaches to curating it. With the complete city absent from museum collections, city museums' keepers, curators and other staff have collected a wide range of material to represent and record it. As museums of place, city museums represent cities through their collections of material culture and the inherent paradox of showing something beyond their boundaries has led city museums to be called 'repositories of good intention' (Lohman, 2008: 61). City museums often have extensive collections, which have been, and are, presented in many different ways.

Curators at city museums have to interpret the collections in creative ways, and depending how they do this they can perform a variety of functions. Cathy Ross, now honorary research fellow at the Museum of London, expresses the range of possibilities facing the city museum curator: 'city museums can reflect on change, inform debates, celebrate experiences, challenge misconceptions, present new histories, provide new evidence, involve citizens, [and] preserve icons' (Ross, 1998: 131). This thesis engages with the museum work that goes into representing the city at the Museum of London, to explore the kinds of decisions that city museums make in order to represent the living, changing city around them. Focusing on one particular city museum, the Museum of London, this thesis looks in detail at one project carried out there, analyzing the making of the galleries to explore how museums curate the global city.

Between 2004 and 2010 the Museum of London undertook a major project, spending £20.5 million to re-interpret its collection and re-display its account of the

history of modern London from 1666 to the present day. The museum's six-year project was the largest piece of work it had undertaken since it opened, and involved a comprehensive revision of one of the museum's two floors of public galleries. The work of producing the Galleries of Modern London involved re-designing half of the museum; developing new narratives that linked the museum's displays to contemporary London; removing, selecting and replacing museum objects; and writing new interpretive text. Researching the work of remaking museum galleries is used in this thesis as a way to examine exactly how museums represent cities, given as Jones argues, they will never be able to put the artifact in a glass case.

Critics have described museums' work as being concerned with 'controlling and ordering processes', following Foucault's description of the museum as 'beyond time' and bound up in modernist concerns (Hetherington, 2004: 52; Foucault, 1984). By looking in detail at how the Museum of London constructed its account of London's history, this thesis interrogates these assumptions, and argues that the controlling and ordering processes of museums are complex and contingent. By focussing on the work of producing the Galleries of Modern London this thesis explores how museums represent city history in galleries. Looking at city museums as work enables this thesis to explore the aspects of museums that are more than textual. This includes exploring the ways that city museums operate as material spaces within the cities they represent. The discussion of museum work also enables an examination of the creative processes that take place in the production of city museums, and provides a means to access how city museums' structures and narratives are influenced.

There are three central questions that concern this thesis. The first question is about the variety of ways that the compelling connections between cities and museums have been expressed. One strand that runs through this thesis asks: to what extent and how is creativity expressed at the Museum of London when curating the global city, given the absence of city museum conventions? The second key question in this thesis asks: is it helpful or important to understand museums as more than textual? This question is concerned with finding out how the museum's material qualities inform and influence the way that the Museum of London was able to

represent the city and its history. The third question at the heart of this thesis concerns how the nature of museum work affects the public face of the Museum of London. How is authority enacted and expressed in gallery redevelopment? Is it useful to explore museum work as a broad range of processes of producing galleries? The thesis argues that such an approach provides a rich and meaningful approach to researching the cultural geographies of museums.

This introduction will now give more contextual information about the Museum of London, before giving an outline of the different chapters that make up the thesis.

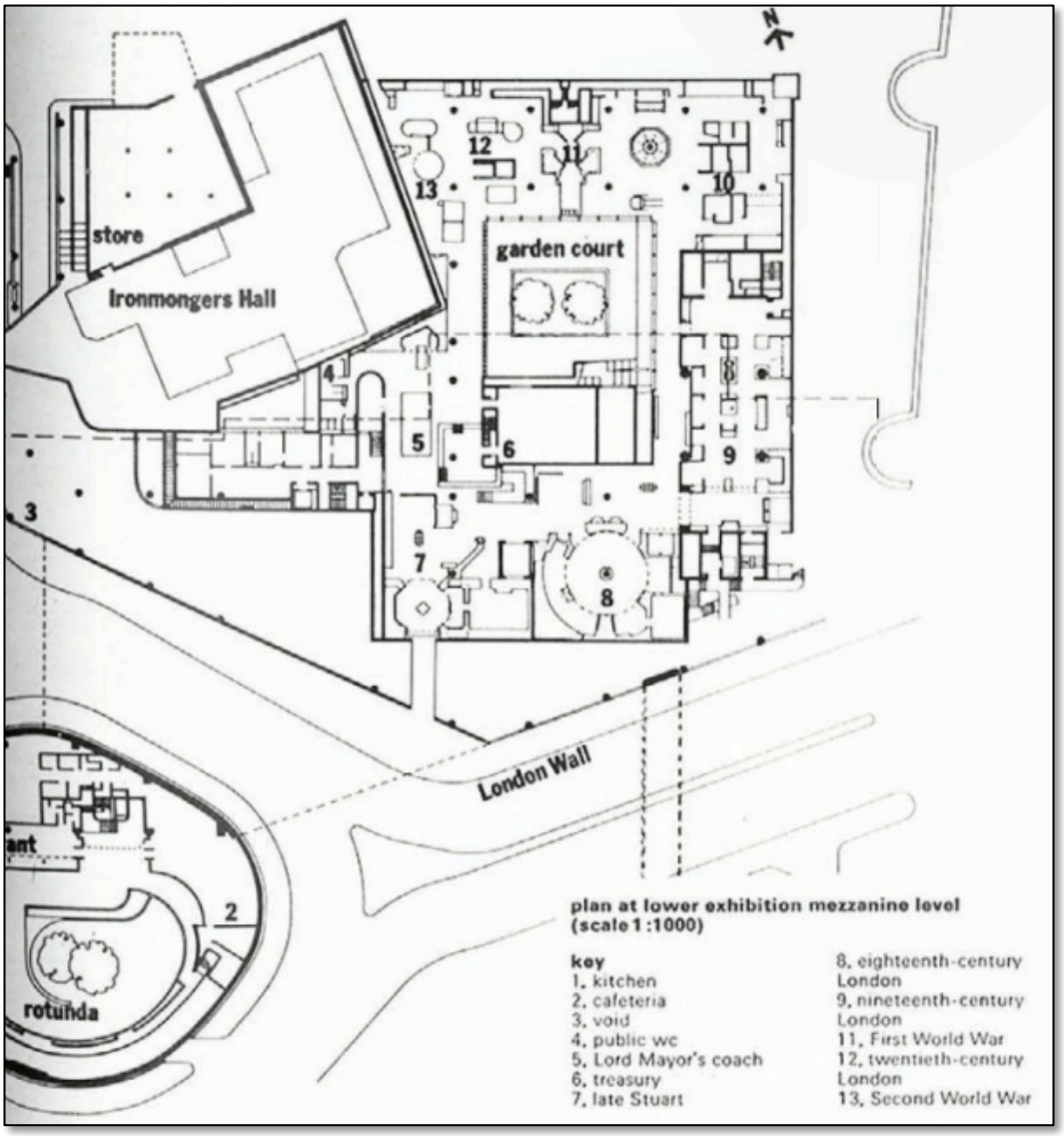

Figure 1.1 - Plan of exhibitions at lower level, Museum of London, 1976 © Museum of London

The Museum of London opened in 1976 in the City of London. The museum was built in the south west corner of the Barbican development, and at the west end of 'route 11', a new dual-carriageway built as part of the Ambercrombie plan for redevelopment of London after the second world war, now known as London Wall. The museum was the world's largest city museum, and in 1978 it was the joint winner of the United Kingdom Museum of the Year Award (Sheppard, 1991: 175). In its first ten years the museum welcomed more than six million visitors (Sheppard, 1991: 175). In 1976 the Museum of London presented London's history through a chronological sequence of galleries, beginning with the prehistoric city and breaking London's past down into a series of eras, all of which were presented in their own gallery space (figure 1.1). The building and galleries were designed by different firms: the building, the exhibition layout of the Lord Mayor's coach and the final room in the visit sequence were designed by the architects Powell, Moya & Partners; the other exhibition areas were designed by Higgins, Ney & Partners (Brawne, 1977: 28).

The Museum of London was formed by the merger of two previous institutions, each of which had been left without premises at the end of the Second World War. One was the Guildhall Museum, which had been attached to the Guildhall Library in the City of London. The Guildhall Museum's collections were dominated by archaeological material, much of which was gleaned from major sewage and road building projects in London in the 1830s and 40s by the City of London. The Guildhall Museum had a focussed geographical remit, prioritising material collected from the City of London itself. Sheppard suggests its tight focus followed the City's seventeenth-century refusal to govern the suburbs (Sheppard, 1991: 4).

The other institution that formed the Museum of London was the London Museum. The London Museum had opened in 1912, and had a broader scope of collecting than the Guildhall Museum, as it had a larger geographical focus. The London Museum was prepared to collect material from a 25-mile radius of Charing Cross. As well as a large collection of royal material, like clothing and costume, the museum collected more everyday objects, such as a horse-drawn hansom cab, penny toys, and a set of women's work uniforms from the First World War. The London Museum was a popular visitor attraction, and as Ross points out in her

discussion of its collecting practices, the museum caught the attention of cartoonists at Punch and the Westminster Gazette (Ross, 1998: 123). Cartoonists highlighted the absurdity of the city museum's aim, suggesting exhibits like 'a real London "pea-souper" fog' and a 'genuine London restaurant egg' (Westminster Gazette, in Ross, 1998: 120). These cartoons reflected contemporary uncertainty about what a city museum ought to collect, and what objects could represent the city.

Although the London Museum caught the public's imagination and was popular with visitors from the outset, it made a less positive early impression on the Guildhall Museum. In 1915 the Guildhall Museum considered legal action against the newer London Museum, which the Guildhall Museum felt intruded on its subject area (Sheppard, 1991: 3). For many years the two museums remained distant from one another and had a frosty, and at times fractious, relationship. In 1965, fifty years after the prospect of legal action was raised, the Museum of London Act officially united the two museums (Museum of London Act, 1965 c.17). The Act transferred the collections and funds of the London Museum and Guildhall Museum to the new Museum of London.

Neither the London Museum nor the Guildhall Museum had ever been accommodated in purpose-built museum buildings, and both had made the best of the accommodation they had at their disposal. The Museum of London Act had stipulated that the board of the new Museum of London should secure premises for the new museum. A South Bank site was briefly considered, as Chapter 3 discusses, but the City of London provided a site for the museum, as it was being extensively redeveloped following damage during the Second World War. When the Museum of London opened eleven years later it benefited from a new building, which was 'not only an architectural event of considerable importance, but also a tremendous challenge in the whole field of museum design both as regards the appropriateness of enclosure and the presentation of material' (Brawne, 1977: 27). The new 1976 premises were designed with the visitor's path in mind, and the building's physical structure reflected the projected visit. The chronological galleries were arranged sequentially around a central courtyard and over two floors. When the museum first opened there was one set route around the museum, and visitors had to walk

through each gallery in strict chronological order. The visitor map in figure 1.2 shows how the building, and visit, were structured:

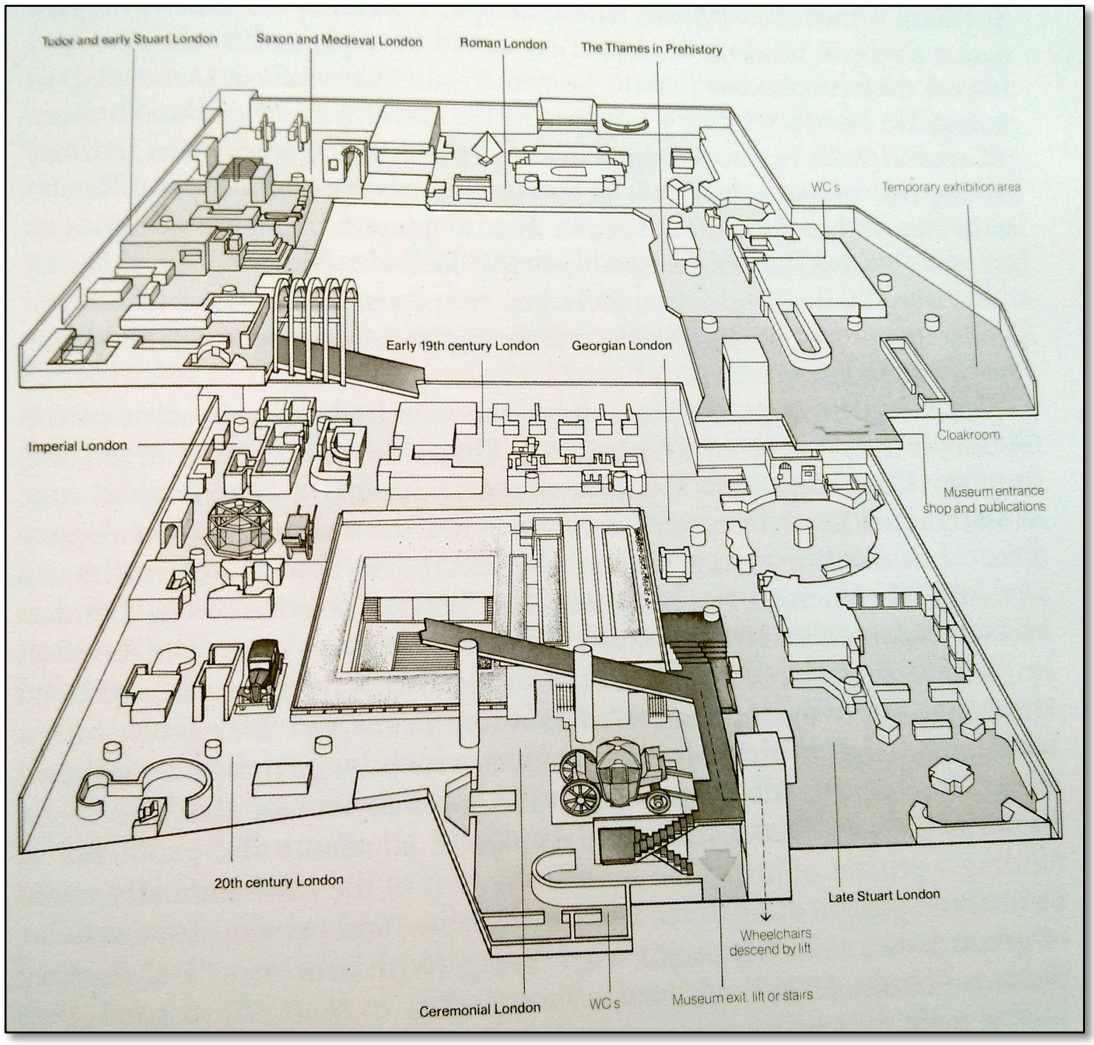

Figure 1.2 – Gallery Plan, Museum of London, 1990. © Museum of London (This plan is at a 90° anticlockwise rotation compared with figures 1.1. and 1.4)

The building and galleries were structured so that visitors would walk clockwise from the Thames in Prehistory, through Roman London, along to Saxon and Medieval London, round to Tudor and Early Stuart London before descending to the lower floor of the Museum, where they would walk through Late Stuart London, Georgian London, Early 19th century London, Imperial London and 20th century London.

Unlike its peripatetic parent institutions, the Museum of London remained at London Wall. The galleries were updated from time to time, including a major redisplay of the Roman Gallery in 1996, but the museum focussed its attention on developing a programme of temporary exhibitions (Ross and Swain, 2001: 7; Sheppard, 1991: 182). The museum continued to develop from its London Wall building: in the 1990s the Museum of London acquired premises in Hackney and opened a new off-site store. In 2002 the Museum in Docklands (now the Museum of London Docklands) opened, having been in development since the 1980s. The museum's appetite for development was drawn back to the London Wall at the turn of the millennium, when the galleries on the museum's lower floor were replaced. The World City Galleries opened at the Museum of London in 2001, and they represented the city in a different way to how the museum had done before. The World City Galleries were intended to be the first phase of a major change to the museum, which would include the London Wall 'building's entire redevelopment' (Ross and Swain, 2001: 5). When the Galleries of Modern London opened in 2010 they followed a period of physical redevelopment of the museum space, which included renovations to the foyer and temporary exhibition areas.

The Galleries of Modern London re-used the museum building, and re-directed visitor flow around the lower floor of the museum (figure 1.3). The new project reversed visitor flow around the lower floor, meaning visitors would move around it clockwise. The new galleries re-used the museum space, and many of the museum's existing cases were repurposed. Remaking the galleries within the building's footprint involved specialist skills from departments across the whole museum. Museum work at city museums includes the preservation of historic objects, the design of exhibitions, front-of-house work with visitors, education programmes, the production of temporary exhibitions, the press and marketing of the museum, the cataloguing and research of objects amongst many more areas of specialism. The production of the Galleries of Modern London involved a diverse range of work. This thesis uses parts of this process to examine how museums represent cities.

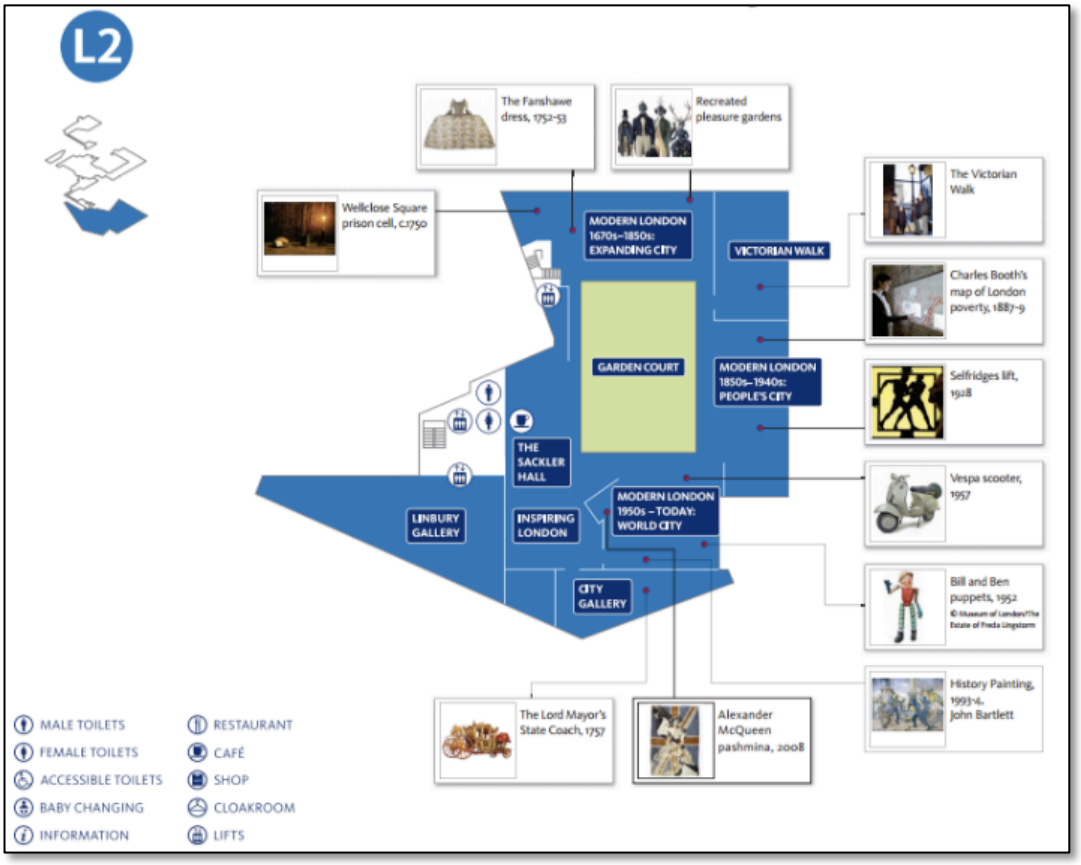

Figure 1.3 – Plan of lower galleries © Museum of London 2010

The Galleries of Modern London divide London into three chronological zones, the first of which is 'Expanding City' (figure 1.4). Expanding City, at the top of the plan in figure 1.3, covers London from the Great Fire of 1666 to the 1850s.

Visitors enter the gallery having come downstairs from a gallery called 'War Plague and Fire' which looks at London in the seventeenth century. Entering down a sloping ramp (to the right of figure 1.4), visitors are presented with a printing press, out of which appear to flow a stream of screens showing key publications printed in London after the press arrived. Behind the press, and out of shot, is a display about London's pleasure gardens, which is discussed in Chapter 7, and a display called 'New City' which presents the Rhinebeck Panorama of London, and reflects on changes to London's buildings after the war. These are presented alongside some underfloor cases, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Moving along the back wall of the gallery there is an area which discusses London's role in trade and Empire, and a video showing how a series of buildings in London trace

their history back to the slave trade. In the foreground of figure 1.4, and continuing along that section on a white plinth, is a display about the importance of manufacturing in London, showing tools and the elaborate goods that were produced in the city. Facing the long white plinth is a case that contains the Fanshawe dress, a mantua gown produced for the Lord Mayor's daughter, Ann Fanshawe. Made of elaborate woven silk that was almost certainly woven in Spitalfields, the motif of the fabric refers to Fanshawe's father's trade. The dress's prominent presence in the galleries reflects themes of wealth, governance and ostentation, but its placement also reflects the manufacturing skills in London. This section of the galleries leads to another section, called 'Life Chances', where a grand dolls' house and a debtor's cell are displayed. There's a display about medical care, and another large case with a judge's chair and a sedan chair. There isn't one linear route around Expanding City, so the visitor must double back to move on, passing next to the Pleasure Garden, and onto Victorian Walk, which sits between Expanding City and the next zone: People's city.

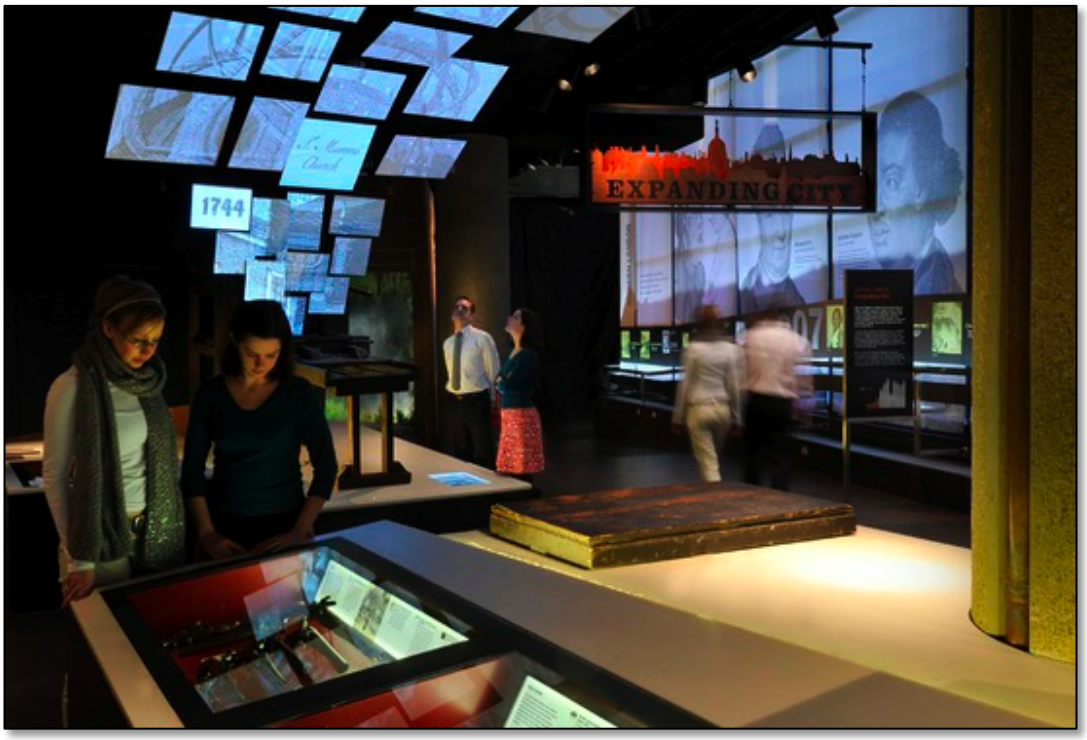

Figure 1.4 - Expanding City, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

Figure 1.5 – People's City, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

'People's City' represents London from the 1850s until the 1950s, and follows on from the Victorian Walk galleries, to the right of the courtyard in the plan in figure 1.3. The gallery's main entrance is about halfway along its longest side, facing the courtyard. Visitors pass the motor cab seen to the left of figure 1.5, and face a reconstruction of part of a cinema, playing black and white films of London. The ornate panels from the Selfridges lift is to the left of the cinema, and to the left of that, at the centre of image 1.5 is a decorative panel from the Savoy. The displays behind the cab show materials imported into London, displayed with ornate costumes from the museum's collection. This image of London's opulence is contrasted when the visitor moves past this section of the gallery.

The next case shows photographs, printed ephemera and social and working history objects related to the lives of London's poor, with two digital interactives: a booth showing Charles' Booth's poverty map with a digitized version; and a water pump with an interactive table that demonstrates how water-borne disease spread in London. In the same area are a number of cases focusing on the experience of London's immigrant groups. The corridor just visible to the left of the Savoy panel in figure 1.5 shows how London's population challenged this divisive environment.

Key items from the Museum of London's substantial suffragette collection are displayed in a corridor that runs along behind the Selfridge's lift and cinema. The tone of the corridor changes abruptly from social protest to the effect of international conflict on London, with a sequence of cases that deal thematically with the impact of the First and Second World Wars on London. At the end of the corridor is a room that is focused on London during the Blitz, which draws on oral history interviews from the collection. Emerging from the corridor the visitor encounters objects that show the rising use of mass-produced goods in London. A large case shows modern appliances that became popular after the war, a telephone box is used as a case to show how communication changed; a Lyon's tearoom is reconstructed from its window. The museum's C.R.W. Nevinson paintings are displayed in this section. A manual interactive at child-height with trolley buses, trams and the underground represents changes to London's transport infrastructure, as well as another car and a Belisha Beacon.

Figure 1.6 – World City, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

Turning the corner shown at the bottom right of figure 1.3, visitors arrive in World City, the third zone of the Galleries of Modern London, and the one that links London in the 1950s to London in the present day (figure 1.6). The zone opens with

a model of the Festival of Britain's Skylon, which was designed by the same architects who produced the Museum of London itself. The zone presents a parade of costume cases, in historic sequence from the Festival of Britain and the coronation of Elizabeth II along the later part of the twentieth century to the 2000s.

Film is projected on to the back of each of these costume cases, and at the end of the sequence is a copper sculpture of a phoenix rising from a ball of flame, which can be made out underneath the World City signage in figure 1.6. Again, as the visitor walks behind the cases they find out more about the protests Londoners undertook to change the city over the period. Cases focus on the pursuit of equality for women, gay and lesbian people and people of ethnic minorities. The next display focuses on how work has changed in London from 1950-2000s. Material from London's old manufacturing industries is displayed, like factory gates and baking machinery. Whitefriars glass is displayed, alongside material that reflects London's growth in the financial and service sectors. The next display is of a large model of two streets in Hackney, in the 1990s. The model is made of photographs of the streets and recreates the buildings, shops and graffiti. To one side of the model is an area that references mid century living rooms, with armchairs, more child-height manual interactives, screens showing 'Watch with Mother' and cases in which Andy Pandy and the Flowerpot men sit. To the other side of the model is a large interactive table, representing the river Thames. Icons are projected 'floating' along the river, which visitors may select and vote on issues facing the capital. Around the walls of this section are a series of large paintings of London at the turn of the century.

Through the different chapters of this thesis I will examine how the Museum of London came to represent London's history in this way, using key aspects of museum work to show it affects how cities are represented at city museums. Each chapter is used to discuss a different phase of city museum work on the Galleries of Modern London. Rather than a comprehensive account of the galleries' production, these chapters are structured to highlight different kinds of work and draw out broader conclusions about how museums represent the city.

The methods chapter describes this thesis' approach to finding out about museum work, by discussing the methods used to gain access and generate data about the making of the galleries. I used a mixed methodology to research a range of different aspects of museum work. I was able to undertake participant observation in the role of one of the museum's Project Assistants, working on research for interactives, co-ordinating object photography and supporting the installation teams when it came to putting objects into their new cases. To find out about key phases of the planning of the museum's new galleries I consulted the museum's archive, using key texts in depth for textual analysis. For my access to directorate level members of staff I relied on interviews, and I used observation in meetings and discussion for senior management level material. I conducted a series of focused, targeted interviews with the curators who were responsible for different parts of the new galleries. By employing different methodological approaches I was able to reach people at different parts of the museum's management structure carrying out different parts of museum work.

The next chapter is focussed on the history and development of the genre of the city museum. The chapter refers to city museums in New York, Paris and London, and explores the museological context for the Galleries of Modern London. The chapter follows a chronological structure both to provide an overview of city museums and to highlight six different moments when significant issues came to the forefront of city museum work. Firstly the chapter discusses whether to evoke or explain the city around them. The subject matter of city museums had already been shown in other visitor attractions by the time museums sought to address it, giving early city museums a sensational and populist context. Drawing on the origins of European city museums this part of the chapter argues that city museums have a different tradition than other, more taxonomic Victorian museums about decorative art or natural history. Early city museums had to choose how to explain the phenomenon of the city and whether to evoke it in order to represent it, a theme which remained significant for city museums for years to come.

Secondly the chapter discusses the agency of the individual within the institution, discussing how key figures, like patrons, directors and curators, have been able to influence the city museum through their work. This section of the chapter uses the

first half of the twentieth century as an example of how key figures have shaped the way that museums represent the city.

The third part of the chapter looks at the boundary between the city and the museum: the museum building. This section of the chapter uses a mid-century speculative design for a new London Museum to explore the significance of the museum building, discussing how designs for city museums reflect ideas about the city museum's relationship to the city, as well as what city museums are able to represent inside them.

The fourth section of the chapter explores collecting work that took place in city museums in New York in the 1930s and London in the 1970s. This section explores how museums manage the relationship between historic narratives and material objects, and how museums have responded to revisions to historic narratives, and reconciled these with their collections and collecting practices.

The fifth section of the chapter looks at the resurgence of city museums in the UK in the 1980s. The fifth section of the chapter explores 'what sort of city it is that [city museum] wish to celebrate', discussing how city museums have championed different models of urban life (Lohman, 1998: 61).

The final section of Chapter 3 discusses how city museums have addressed the city's global and local significance, using examples from the Museum of London in the 1990s and 2000s. Using initiatives from the UK, this part of the chapter discusses attempts that city museums have made to represent the city's global connections and adopted a more expansive understanding of place. City museums have addressed these six ideas throughout their history, but city museums continue to be 'diverse institutions' and this chapter shows both the breadth of approaches, and how few conventions have developed across the genre (Ross, 1998: 131).

Looking in more detail at how the Galleries of Modern London were planned, the next chapter of the thesis focuses on how the museum prepared for and planned the galleries. The chapter describes the work the museum was carrying out immediately before the Galleries of Modern London, and uses the museum's bid to

the Heritage Lottery Fund to examine how the museum chose to represent London. The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was a key moment in the making of the Galleries, as the museum engaged with the formal bidding process and structured its approach. This chapter discusses how members of staff from different departments at the museum shaped the galleries through a process of 'interpretive master planning' and looks in detail at how the museum expressed its argument. Looking in depth at key documents from the museum's bid, the chapter examines how decisions were made about what museums should display and represent. By comparing the Galleries of Modern London to the World City galleries that were installed in the space beforehand, this chapter exposes the contingencies of the city museum, and explores how the process of work affects the way the museum is able to represent London.

Chapter 5 draws directly from participatory research methods during the installation of the galleries. Moving the chronology of the previous chapters forward to another significant part of the process of museum work, this chapter discusses the physical installation of museum objects into their arrangements in the Galleries of Modern London. The chapter explores how the work was structured and organised, shedding light on how the materiality of the museum and its collection affects representations of the city. The chapter discusses the ways that plans changed during the physical phase of museum work, including how and when objects were rejected, replaced and added to the Galleries of Modern London. This chapter highlights the significance of the museum as a place, drawing on the work of object installation to discuss the material significance of the museum, and the effects of its collection. Using photographs from the process, notes from my research diary and interviews with members of staff who worked most closely on this phase of the project, this chapter examines what the work of installation reveals about the city museum as a place, and how the physical work of making a city museum affects the outcome.

Taking a more thematic approach, the next chapter of the thesis explores how the Museum of London was able to represent and consult the city's diverse population in the Galleries of Modern London. In the past city museums have made it seem as though the city is 'dead' (New York Times, 1917). The chapter looks at how

community voices were represented in each of the historical zones to explore how city museums address the living diversity of the cities they represent. Museums have made great progress in recent years in areas of work concerned with community representation, and the Museum of London has often produced innovative and celebrated temporary exhibitions from their civic engagement works. This chapter discusses how civic engagement and community representation was embedded in the Galleries of Modern London, how it was conducted and where it is now visible. The chapter argues that the way this phase of museum work is carried out is crucial to representations of urban life, and that sharing the museum's authority shapes how the city is shown in museums.

The next chapter discusses the processes of producing a part of the Galleries of Modern London, providing a synoptic perspective of those processes. The chapter focuses on the Pleasure Garden display in the galleries, and discusses the making and inspiration of the galleries. Arguing that the city museum is contingent on its contemporary context, I show how the museum has combined different sensory representations into its display. The Pleasure Gardens at the Museum of London were informed by new academic histories of London, and this chapter discusses how the museum uses research to inform its representations. The display technology available to city museums have developed over time, and this chapter introduces some of the display techniques that are now at the museum's disposal. Like the chapter that examined the planning of the galleries, this part of the thesis argues that city museum work is dependent on its contemporary context, and shows how this is so in one area of the galleries in particular.

Chapter 8 also takes a thematic approach to the Galleries of Modern London, focusing on the galleries' use of new digital technology as a dimension of museum work. The Galleries of Modern London embody a new Museum of London approach to the use of digital interpretation, which relies on integrating digital and physical material in displays. Three strands of digital museum work in the making of the Galleries of Modern London are discussed. The first is the use of digital gallery interactives, developing the discussion of display techniques that the previous chapter introduced. The second section of the chapter is focused on the digitisation of objects and the museum's collections online project. The third aspect

of digital museum work is the use of an app to promote the Galleries of Modern London. The digital offers distinctive possibilities to the city museum, allowing the museum to permeate the city, extending its interpretation beyond its walls. Digital technology is another contingency the museum faces, and this kind of city museum work is studied as a means to explore how it affects the museum's representation of the dynamic city beyond its walls.

In his 1977 review of the Museum of London, an architectural critic noted that 'the building will remain the relatively unchanged long after the exhibition layout has been drastically amended' (Brawne, 1977: 28). This prescient comment reflects the content of this thesis. Whilst the museum's walls have been altered, the building itself remained relatively unchanged at the conclusion of the Galleries of Modern London project. By engaging with the process of museum work, this thesis explores how the Museum of London has changed its representation of London, within certain constraints. Museums are more than textual, and by studying city museums at work, the negotiation, creativity and agency of museum representation can be explored.

In her 2006 book about London, 'World City', Massey argued that 'There is a ritual, well established, which occupies every conference about this city... The question in such conferences is always and only: where do we draw the line around this city?' (Massey, 2006: 13). The question of where to draw the line around the city has been addressed in different ways around the Museum of London. Two thousand years ago the Romans built a wall around the city. The Roman city wall defined, and defended, London's boundaries, which the city subsequently outgrew. London's city wall later gave its name to the dual carriageway to the north of the City known as route 11 of the Abercrombie plan, itself another attempt to redefine and make sense of the city. In 1976 the Museum of London opened at 150 London Wall, with a window in its Roman galleries that overlooked the Roman Wall's remains. Since it opened, the museum's walls have been repeatedly repurposed to provide new accounts of London's history. Like the city, the museum is a palimpsest, its spaces re-written and re-coded through time. In 2010 the Museum of London opened up a new window onto London Wall. Seen from inside the museum the window frames the street, encasing the city behind glass. Seen from London

Wall the window provides a new way to see into the museum. This thesis explores the Museum of London's attempt to represent London, as one of a series of attempts to represent and define London and curate the global city.

Chapter 2: Methods

> "Quite often decisions were made in the tea room, passing in the corridor when you remember to mention to someone ‘oh, do you actually want that?’ and they'd be like ‘yes’ or ‘no'. That wasn't ever written down, that won't ever be recorded, but that was how it had to happen and how it had to evolve, and that’s where the project comes alive. If you're just reading project reports it seems quite statistical, quite regimented and it was never like that even at meetings, there would always be tense moments, conflict, laughs a lot of the time"
> (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010)

This chapter reflects on the project’s methodologies, discussing how the chosen methods met the research’s needs. This chapter establishes the importance of reflexivity in my research. Such an immersive project risks becoming haphazard, so whilst this chapter should account for my methods, when I wrote this chapter it served a secondary purpose, encouraging me to ‘think, plan and act in systematic and rigorous ways’ (Mason, 1996: 6).

As Devine and Heath have shown, methodology is a textual process, with narrative implications (Devine and Heath, 1999: 206). Methods are not neutral, especially qualitative methods, whose analysis is pre-mediated not only by the researcher, but also by the context that research is carried out. It is important to consider, as Devine and Heath argue, what kinds of stories are more easily depicted in specific approaches, and which are rendered quieter, or ‘un-tellable’ (Devine and Heath, 1999: 206).

This chapter follows David Silverman’s agenda for the methodology: it acknowledges my own theoretical assumptions and how I came to work with the topic, as well as an account of why certain methods were chosen, with a full discussion of the advantages and limitations of these methods (Silverman, 2003). Beginning with an outline of the project’s structure and research questions, the methodology then discuss the benefits of a mixed methodology. Follwing on from these general points about the project, the methodology analyses my key research

methods in a series of more in-depth discussions: using the archive; interviews and transcription; research diary and field notes; participant and direct observation. My approach was broadly ethnographical, as befitted my funding as part of the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) scheme. This funding structure has shaped my research in several ways and this chapter will begin by reflecting on some of these processes.

Research Structure

One of the biggest influences on my work has been the fact that I began my research towards the end of the development of the Galleries of Modern London. When I began some of the museum's staff have been consciously working towards the 2010 opening for five years, and by using mixed methods I have sought to capture as much data about the project's earlier years as possible. When I began this felt like an urgent priority, and I used some of the distinctive aspects of the CDA structure to begin recording the project quickly. When they put together the project proposal for the CDA my supervisors at the museum and the university had negotiated and authored an outline of the research project, suggesting a timetable for the work and exploring its scope. This proposal was instrumental in allowing me to begin my fieldwork almost instantaneously, because it provided a working draft of the scope of my research. The ideas in the proposal have since been revisited and revised, but the existence of a written project outline gave me confidence to carry out primary research form soon after beginning the PhD.

As Silverman surmises, methods are often mixed because the researcher has not narrowed down their topic enough (Silverman, 2003: 50). Working from the research outline approved by the AHRC allowed me to work around a focussed topic from the outset. Nonetheless, the first two months of the project necessitated a mixture of methods, from the reading of corporate documents such as funding bids, to interviews, attendance at meetings and some participant observation.

Although it is important to acknowledge that very few research projects operate in ideal conditions and that most research projects are a compromise, this should not occur as a frantic scramble for information (Devine and Heath, 1999: 199). Devine

and Heath argue that research should be flexible (Devine and Heath, 1999: 212). Mason echoes this flexible approach, and describes how research must adapt to a potentially changing research context (Mason, 1996). This ability to adapt was crucial for this research, especially because the opening date for the new galleries shifted by several months during the course of my research, disrupting the timeline my supervisors' speculative research outline proposed.

Qualitative research is not always led by hypotheses and questions developed from existing literature (Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner, 1995: 880). Silverman quotes Psathas in his advice, suggesting that it is more useful to begin research with 'unmediated looking' (Silverman, 2005: 32). Peshkin extends this position, arguing that not only should research originate from a general enquiry, but that there is value in concluding research without ever answering a specific query (Peshkin, 1993). Peshkin's perspective could lead to the argument that the traditional question and answer structure of research is prohibitive in its binary definition of the discovery of intermediary data. Peshkin privileges the act of understanding in the claim that 'when we understand the processes by which a life or small town or classroom takes on its particular character, we understand something of value' (Peshkin, 1993: 24).

Although some researchers report working from a hypothesis was comforting Silverman argues that it is better to establish a series of discussions than work to one hypothesis (Perry, 2000: 100). Mason highlights how whilst qualitative research should be flexible and react to its context, this should not be carried out on an *ad hoc* basis (Mason, 1996: 165). Not only must the theoretical outcomes of the research be analysed as the project progresses, but the processes that generate these outcomes should also be evaluated. Whilst some methods are able to split research into phases of generation and verification, in this example no such distinction can easily be made (Devine and Heath, 1995: 206). The continual analysis means that this methodology is a research tool as well as a document: this methodology has been revisited and updated as my research situation has progressed, as a way to ensure that what I was doing is as clear and as suitable as possible.

The researcher is a large part of the research: an intrinsic part of the generation of data and the production of knowledge (Devine and Heath, 1995: 206). Consequently it is important that the researcher considers their own role in the research process (Valentine, 1997: 113; Silverman, 2003). Qualitative research positions the researcher between the data and the subjects. This research project involved participant observation, so alongside data mediated by the researcher is data based on my own experience within the museum. The immediacy of the researcher in the text leads Delamont to suggest that reflexivity is the 'most important characteristic of fieldwork, and of analysis' (Delamont, 2004: 226).

One way to reflect on the process is to keep a research diary (Silverman, 2003: 193). Research diaries are a conventional method in participant observation and ethnographies, with established methodological precedent (Malinowski, 1922). Research diaries should not only cover observations and experience but should reflect on the role of the researcher, and will be discussed in more detail later (Cook, 1997: 141). Silverman describes how the research diary should not only be used to detail observations, but to provide a transcript of the ways in which the researcher's thinking has changed; to help improve the researcher's time management; help reflection and methodology writing; and to give clues about how the work may progress (Silverman, 2003: 193).

In this project, I subjected my own actions and role in the process 'to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of [my] data' (Mason, 1996: 6). It is important that some discussion is given to the possible advantages and limitations prompted by my own identity where they are relevant to the research process (Ambert et al, 1995: 886). I completed a Masters degree in Museum Studies immediately before embarking on this research, which was supplemented with internships and volunteering, so I began the project with knowledge of the ways in which some other museums work. My familiarity with museums risked me failing to 'make anthropologically strange' what I discovered (Delamont, 2004: 224). Being aware of this I sought to counteract it in my work, and mitigated the effect by discussing my work with others in and out of the museum sector.

The creation of museum galleries has been studied before using qualitative methods. In 2002 Sharon MacDonald published her account of ethnographic research at the Science Museum, and the creation of the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert museum was also written about, though this time by practioners rather than by external researchers (Wilk and Humphrey, 2004). In some ways museum and qualitative research are established ground, in accordance with Silverman's advice to researchers to begin in familiar territory (Silverman, 2000: 39).

Mixed Methods

For this research I used different methods to gain access to different kinds of work at the museum. This research used a variety of approaches to access different aspects of what Mason has called the 'intellectual puzzles' of my subject (Mason, 1996). Figure 2.1 outlines when I used each of my research methods:

Time	Research methods
September 2008 – November 2009	Library and archive research; observation of meetings; participation in the development of interactives (picture research and text preparation); interviews with museum staff; maintaining research diary
November 2009 – May 2010	Work placement on the installation phase of the Galleries of Modern London; observation of meetings; interviews with museum staff; maintaing research diary; photography of process
June 2010 – June 2011	Follow up interviews with museum staff; library and archive research; analysis; maintaining research diary.
July 2011 – July 2012	Interruption
July 2012 – September 2013	final interviews and archive research; writing up.

Figure 2.1 - Table of research methods

Participant observation within the Capital City project gave me an insight into the important day-to-day work of the Project Assistants, and the practical ways in which the project took shape. Interviews with curators allowed me to get in-depth understanding of how decisions about objects and stories took place. Observation of higher-level meetings in the organisation gave me access to the ways in which the museum's different departments shaped the projects. Finally, interviews with department heads and directorate-level staff granted me access to their narratives of the project. This collection of techniques enabled me to research the project from different structures within the museum. Research within institutions is often approached with a mixture of these general ethnographic principles of personal experience, interviews and participant-observation (Marvasti, 2004: 60).

Mason advises that when carrying out research with multiple methods, just as with other areas of research, it is crucial to question what you are doing. Mason suggests questioning exactly what you are trying to find out; making sure you're aware of using approaches which may have different underpinning logics and which may suggest different kinds of analysis (Mason, 1996: 5). This methodology will now turn to discuss this variety of approaches in more detail.

Mason stresses that qualitative methods cannot be automatically combined (Mason, 1996: 6). Interviews and participant observation formed the bulk of my research, so Mason's concerns about the 'technical consistence' of different methods were not such an issue here (Mason, 1996: 168). The observation of activities has often been combined with discussion of the activities. One approach is to observe how events arise, before carrying out and analysing interviews with participants, to explore how people reconstruct their perspective on an occurrence (Ritchie, 2003: 38). This technique was very useful in my research, and is why the interviews are such a prominent part of the written thesis.

Spontaneous discussions occured during my participation in the project, and during these informal chats members of the museum's staff conveyed interesting information to me. Coffey and Atkinson have identified this 'natural' story collection as different from narratives gleaned more formal interview scenarios

(Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 56). These conversations about the project were essential in informing me about the project, and when carrying out interviews I reassured interviewees that they must not be concerned about repeating content from previous discussions. On several occasions during interviews I prompted interviewees to discuss similar topics to those that had occurred naturally in the course of my participation.

Interviews and Transcription

I began conducting interviews with key staff early in the research: the first interview I did was carried out two weeks after I began working at the museum. This was urgent because as the interviewee was leaving the museum to work in another country, and I wanted to record his perspective on the progress of the Galleries of Modern London. Qualitative interviews enable the researcher to thoroughly investigate issues, which was crucial in so short a time frame (Valentine, 1997: 111). The first interview was fairly structured, but as I gained confidence and learned more about the museum I began to follow Punch's description of the ethnographic interview: a non-standardized discussion, which is both in-depth and open-ended (Punch, 2005: 172).

The first group of interviews took place in the last quarter of 2008, and these had a specifically retrospective focus. Rather than commenting on current work, I sought the interviewees' accounts of the Galleries of Modern London project (or 'Capital City', as it was known at the time) to 2008. This retrospective approach meant gathering information about several years: some interviewees began their stories of the Capital City project in the early 2000s. Roseneil defends retrospective interviews, suggesting that information is remembered 'probably little worse than it would have been had I been interviewing a day or two after the event in question' (Roseneil, 1993: 193). Another influence on the way I have sought to interview is from Silverman, who suggests that 'narrative analysis' may be a useful way to reflect on retrospective interviews, as it looks at the ways in which people make stories, making sense of what has happened (Silverman, 2003: 32). This narrative understanding of accounts have been described as Coffey and Atkinson as 'storied qualities' and Coffey and Atkinson suggest that the ways that

accounts are structured should be analysed along with the content of the discussions (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 57).

Jovchelovitch and Bauer suggest that the 'difference in perspectives may establish a different configuration in the selection of events' (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 67). This is a clear feature of my experience carrying out this research, as most people working on the project structured their narratives about the Galleries of Modern London in terms of their own work. Interviewees with different roles in the project configured their selection of events around their individual experience. One example concerns the appointment of the project assistants, which was a prominent narrative feature for a curator, who began her narrative of the project by discussing it, but I found it did not feature prominently in the timeline that a directorate-level interviewee provided (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008). In their narratives of the new galleries, the head of department and head of public programming made slight mention of this aspect of the project, which was so crucial from the curator's and the project assistant's perspectives (Darryl McIntyre, 29th October 2008; Cathy Ross, 4th December 2008). This poly-vocality is one of the reasons that interviews are such a good resource for studying specific events (Jovchelovitch and Bauber, 2000: 67).

There is a lot of material in the literature about specific interview skills, which I will now discuss, as they have contributed to the progression of my research. Some of the first discussions I encountered whilst reading about carrying out qualitative interviews regarded the researcher's involvement. This is part of qualitative research's ongoing concern with reflexivity. As Punch highlights, interviews can be at the most general level affected by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, such as race, class, ethnicity and gender (Punch, 2005: 176). Research undertaken by the Museums Association in 2007 identified a lack of diversity amongst museums' entry-level staff, who all tended to be a similar age, and the report also cited too few men and too few people of ethnic minorities (Davies, 2007: 5). I am demographically typical of people working in entry-level roles in the museum sector, so my personal characteristics were in line with the museum's conventions.

I read different perspectives on how useful this commonality would be. Valentine suggests that commonality can be used as the basis for generating a rapport in an interview (Valentine, 1997: 113). Voicing the opposite perspective, some writers dispute this, arguing that bringing in the element of commonality causes the risk of introducing the notion of judgement (Legard et al, 2003: 158). Interviewees within the department I was based in were familiar with my presence by the time I interviewed them, and I sought to build friendly relationships with them, so a sense of rapport occurred naturally.

The interview is peculiar in the way it allocates power. Although it can be assumed that it is the interviewer that is the powerful presence, this is not always automatically the case. Interviewees may be of a status that exudes power (Valentine, 1997: 114). In this project the interviewees were in a range of positions, including the museum's Director. Furthermore, many of the interviews took place in the interviewee's offices, which has also been noted as something that affects the power relation of the interview (Valentine and Clifford, 2003: 125). Explaining my research and what I hoped to find out from the interview at the outset was a useful way of reflecting on the specific social condition of an interview without dwelling on it, clearly establishing the position of interviewee and interviewer. This approach clarified the interviewee as a source of authority on their experience, shifting the notion of authority beyond the question of seniority for the duration of the interview.

Much methodological literature cautions against allowing interviewees to monopolize discussion for too long (Valentine, 1997: 114; Perry, 2000: 103 and also Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 56). However in this project there were some instances when allowing interviewees to drift from my area of focus was helpful. An interview I conducted on the day the Galleries of Modern London opened is a useful example of this. During the interview I allowed the interviewee to discuss technical issues at some length. The whole interview was around an hour long, of which around ten minutes was spent discussing case lighting levels. Although this part of the interview did not contribute to my research directly, the discussion helped to set the interviewee at ease, whilst giving me a more thorough

comprehension of the interviewee's expertise, responsibilities and perspective (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010).

The use of a variety of narrow and broad questions is a good way to achieve both breadth and detail in an interview. Although not all topics mentioned can be explored in depth, a process of 'content mapping and content mining' can be achieved (Legard et al, 2003: 154). Flick advises beginning with a 'generative narrative question' (Flick, 1998: 99). I followed this advice, and often used a broad narrative question as my first question in interviews: "so, when did you first start working on the Capital City Project/ Galleries of Modern London?". Framing my enquiry as about the interviewee's experience of the project confirmed what I had established at the outset of the interview about what I hoped to find out, and set the tone for the rest of the interview. I found this approach very useful, and generated some thoughtful and illustrative responses. Longhurst has also argued that open questions occur more easily in less formal conversational exchanges and beginning an interview in this way forms a gentle conversational leeway within the discursive conventions of a taped dialogue (Longhurst, 2003: 119). Following the initial content-mapping question at the interviews' outset, I could then pick up on parts of the interviewee's response when asking questions from my own thematic agenda. This is crucial because an interviewee must know that you are listening to what they are saying: Legard, Keegan and Ward suggest that it is better to convey the act of listening through asking questions like 'can I take you back to something you said earlier…' rather than by making extraneous remarks, such as 'yes', 'I see' et cetera. (Legard et al, 2003: 156; 159). Inviting an overview of the project at the outset of the interview provided an insight into the interviewee's narrative structure of the project and gave me a useful set of references to refer to during the interview itself. This helped to build rapport throughtout the interview by demonstrating that I had been paying close attention to the interviewee, whilst obtaining useful information.

I intended to make sound recordings of all of the interviews I carried out during this project, as recording data means that much more of the detail, and voice of the interviewee, can be preserved. Recording interviews meant that I was freed from the need to make detailed notes during the conversation, helping the interview to

flow. Following the interviews, Mason advises interviewers to note their observations, interpretations, experiences and reflections (Mason, 1996: 54; Longhurst, 2003: 125; Valentine, 1997: 124). Following the taped interviews I was surprised at how vague my impressions were and at the brevity of information I could recall. Silverman shows that there is lots of data that could get lost without being recorded, for example the length of pauses (Silverman, 2003: 149).

Although I had hoped all interviewees would be happy to be recorded, two interviewees were not comfortable being recorded, and so I did not make sound recordings of two of the interviews. Whilst my detailed notes from the interviews provided relevant information it was not possible to use the material in the same way as the recorded interviews, as the level of detail was not present. However even the non-recorded interviews were a useful resource, offering me more perspectives on the museum's work and processes. Eventually I carried out over thirty interviews, each enriching the research with depth and breadth, challenging me to develop my ideas.

Delamont argues that once an interview has been recorded the data is 'safe', but an interview is only 'safe' once the information has been carefully named, recorded and backed up, as digital files are vulnerable (Delamont, 2004: 225). I used a range of recorders for my research: a zen vision mp3 player, two different iterations of iPhone and a professional-grade sound recorder borrowed from the museum. Each recording device had its own default system for file-naming conventions and file types. Backing these up and keeping track of them and all their versions required some thought and attention before I felt that the material was safe.

Although recording interviews meant that more information is retained, transcribing interviews is not a straightforward process. Mason describes the process of transcription as not being objective and articulates the decisions that are made when transcribing recorded interviews. Mason reminds researchers that they are continually making judgements, and must be aware of that fact if they seek to make these judgements responsibly (Mason, 1996: 52). Seale highlights how some accounts can hide the researcher's voice in this way, failing to acknowledge that the accounts are selective and carefully edited (Seale, 1991: 151). Delamont takes

this idea further, suggesting that the context of the interview, including issues regarding access, need to be recorded for the transcript to be complete (Delamont, 2004: 225). Transcription is not a simple process of translating a spoken encounter to a written record, and as such 'transcription is always partial' (Mason, 1996: 53).

Ideally transcription should take place as soon as possible following the interview (Valentine, 1997; Longhurst, 2003: 153). There is less critical agreement regarding the proportion of interviews that should be transcribed. Transcribing an interview is a time-consuming task (Strauss, 1990: 38; Perry, 2000; Mason, 1996: 55). Unsurprisingly Mason again advocates a considered approach, advising researchers that they must have a very clear idea about why they are undertaking a transcription (Mason, 1996: 55). Similarly Strauss suggests that researchers should be selective about what they transcribe (Strauss, 1990: 38). Arguing that the first interviews should be transcribed in full, Strauss's argument doesn't agree with Delamont's more comprehensive perspective: that 'if interviews are recorded there is no point leaving them untranscribed' (Delamont, 2004: 226). I began transcribing all interviews from start to finish, but found the slowness of transcription frustrating, as I lost a sense of the interview's actual pace. To make the process quicker I began listening to the recordings several times in quick succession, transcribing key sentences and time-stamping an informal transcription of the interview to give me more of an idea of the interview's pace and make it easy to identify and revisit parts of the recording.

Using the Archive

The period of research coincided with a programme of work that took place at the museum to improve its business archive. At a Later department meeting on the 26th November 2008, this work was introduced by an archivist from the museum's Information Resources department. Sarah Demb, the museum's archivist, reported that she was beginning work to formally archive the documentation of the Capital City (Galleries of Modern London) project (research diary, 26th November 2008). Because the business archive project was taking place in parallel with my own research project I used my position as embedded researcher and volunteer project

participant to access live material about the Galleries of Modern London, rather than consulting the archive as it was constructed.

Much of the archive material I read to learn about the Galleries of Modern London was born-digital material stored on the museum's computer network. The museum's business archive has now gathered, structured and begun preservation of many of these electronic documents. Finding this material whilst it was being produced meant that using the museum's network sometimes felt like a 'bewildering array' of documentary data (Punch, 2005: 184). I also faced issues about the extent of my access to the network. The computer network had a separate set of gatekeepers to other parts of the project, from whom I had to negotiate access to different drives and project folders. Once I had access to folders I was able to follow the project's evolution. By reading materials such as the minutes of previous meetings and the descriptions of the project included in funding applications, I was able to get some insight into the ways in which the project developed. However I found many of the corporate documents were of limited use. One of the problematic issues was the vagueness of some meeting minutes. I noted an especially clear example in my field diary of 10th November, 2008. Commenting on the minutes from a meeting that took place in February 2007, my notes were in response to minutes that noted an issue was resolved: "the minutes didn't articulate the process of resolution… neither stating what the issue was, how it was discussed nor how it was resolved" (research diary, 10th November, 2008).

Whilst some documents lacked detail but could easily fit into a timeline of the project, other material I found on the network had the opposite problem. Detailed proposals of interpretive plans of the new galleries have been stored without any information about the date they were written. The computer network I consulted during the making of the Galleries of Modern London stored some metadata about files. Initially I hoped this would allow me to put documents in chronological sequence, however files had been moved and re-saved, so the date for file creation does not necessarily equate to the date when the document was written. I sought to bypass this problem entirely by using the documents as interview prompts and

asking potential authors whether they remembered when they were written. This was one of the many ways that a mixed methodology worked to my advantage.

In 1996 MacDonald and Tipton posited a four-way division of documentary evidence: public records; the media; private papers and visual documents (Punch, 2005: 185). Although it first looks fairly comprehensive, whilst I carried out the body of my research the 'live' material I read as a participant in the project did not fit into this taxonomy, although by the later stages, when material had been taken in by the business archive, this had changed. Scott uses a two-way typology of documents, concerned with origins and reception: authorship and access (Punch, 2005: 185). Even this broad definition was challenged by the issues I encountered gaining access to the computer network whilst the project unfolded. Different departments have specific profiles of access settings, with some departments, such as Design, having requirements for entirely discrete storage. Furthermore, as well as the specific and common areas of electronic storage and access, there is the absence of drafts of documents and intermediary data. Much of this was stored by curators on an individual basis: the curator of zone 2 for example may choose to store her drafts of the object lists as printouts in her office for example, or on her own personal digital storage space. Many of these documents have since been transferred to the business archive.

Although I read and consulted a lot of material about the project, I have focussed on two or three key documents in this thesis. The museum's decription of the project from the second round of their bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund forms the basis of chapter 4, as it provides a comprehensive expression of the museum's aims for the galleries at the time. These documents provided a rich source of information for this research (Museum of London 2004b; Museum of London 2004c).

Research Diary

My research diary served a dual role, forming a record of both my field notes and my ideas. It has included records of the day's activities and discussions, and has also included the ideas that the day has prompted my feelings about the project

and reflections on the research process. Although I did read some literature about research diaries before beginning my own, this method has been influenced more by practice than by theory. In the first few weeks there were times when I struggled to produce anything more solid than notes and reflections jotted down throughout the day. These go some way towards covering what other qualitative researchers recommend recording: reflections on observations and actions; 'impressions, irritations, feelings and so on' (Flick, 1998: 6). The ideal approach to recording this data is disputed. I pursued the informal train of thought approach that Laurier recommends (Laurier, 2003: 139).

Although some researchers warn against bias occurring from familiarity with subjects, I feel that this is only manifest in a desire to portray the people I have encountered as honestly as possible, something the head of department has also mentioned (LeCompte, 1987; Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). One way to do this is to complete notes in a way that divides observation from interpretation. Doing so allows the readers to see how I have come to my conclusions and creates a space for recording data that might otherwise seem too commonplace to include without combining with intrinsic commentary. The research diary proved more valuable as I carried out the research rather than whilst writing up. It provided a space to keep track of my work, noting material to use in interviews and key documents to revisit.

Direct and Participant observation

The final methods I will turn to at this point are observational. This research project used direct and participant observation methods and these will both be explored. The use of participant observation as a method enriches the data, giving the researcher a stake in the processes provides them with additional insights (Ritchie, 2003: 35). This has been interesting to watch emerge in my own research. Early on in the project I was working on one of the exhibits in the new galleries, with the head of department and a project assistant to produce material for inclusion on an interactive electronic display. Subsequently there were meetings to ascertain whether money can be saved in the new project. Although the interactive I was working on was not directly threatened by these funding

restrictions, other aspects of the project were. My research notes from one of the key meetings recalls:

> "It's strange – I anticipated feeling excited about seeing this discussion and the project changing, but I actually feel apprehensive. Initially I thought about it in terms of something to happen. But now I feel as though it's something the museum had which is getting lost… I'm feeling more involved with the project than I realised"
>
> (Research diary, 27th November 2008 [Project Delivery Team Meeting 21])

My presence at the Project Delivery Team Meeting was different from my experiences at weekly Department meetings, for example. As Project Assistants had no access to the Project Delivery Team Meetings, my research took the form of direct observation in these instances. Introducing myself as a student researching city museums, I attended these meetings with Cathy Ross. Although research advice cautions that direct observation risks inviting subjects to perform self-consciously as subject of research, I found this effect limited (Russel Bernard, 2002; McNeill and Chapman 2005). On the whole such meetings were so project-focussed, there was so much to get through, that I believe there was little time for any performance towards a researcher. My direct-observation role extended beyond the one crucial series of meetings. Sporadically other occasions would occur which I attended, such as a meeting between Cathy Ross, Rob Payton and Kate Starling, the director of Major Projects, towards the end of installation. In this instance Ross and Payton's exchange became tense but in contrast the director was relaxed enough to joke with me about my role as researcher ("5 years of higher education to hold that curtain open", she remarked to me at one point [research diary, 14th April 2010]). Ross and Payton's exchanges occasionally became slightly emotional, as they were both so keen to discuss the project. In instances like this and the Project Delivery Team meetings, where individuals need to discuss their work, I believe that the strength of feeling curtails any latent desire to affect what the researcher observes.

Figure 3.2 – Signage on the doors to the Galleries of Modern London in 2009

As Delamont has shown, it is not always possible for a researcher to 'push into all the possible settings' (Delamont, 2004: 223). Discussions taking place in the Project Delivery Team Meetings pointed to a series of meetings I could not attend. The discussion of the removal of some elements of the Capital City project was structured around the outcome of a previous discussion, which had taken place at a meeting between the museum's directorate level staff (research diary, 27th November 2008). I was not able to negotiate access to Executive Board or directorate meetings and I concentrated my efforts on using observation to record decisions made at executive board, and interviews to find out more about what had happened at them.

In 2008 when I began this project, the Galleries of Modern London were a closed site, and access was restricted (figure 2.1). For the first year of my research I was not able to go into the galleries, and I relied on glimpses of them, gleaned from photographs from other people's visits, which I tried to reconcile with the artists' impressions of the galleries I had seen. In autumn 2009 I was able to go into the galleries and take my own photographs on some occasions. This limited early access was tantalizing and established to me the significance of the physical attributions of space, the immersive environment that textual or purely visual iterations of history do not provide. The lack of access to the gallery space made me sensitive to the sensations of the place when I did gain access.

In October 2009, just prior to the pre-installation phase of Capital City, Elpie, one of the project assistants, got a new job within the museum. Elpie had worked on zone 2 since the start of the project, and would be switching jobs and roles a week into November. There was discussion about whether to put a member of staff from elsewhere in the organization on secondment, and my name was also put forward as someone already familiar with the project. Speaking with Cathy in the middle of October 2009, following a number of informal conversations around the offices, we discussed the type of work and the level of commitment I would need to make. My research diary from the meeting is brief "I'd kind of love to do it, but I'm worried about the time it'll take and how inflexible it will be", a comment nestled in amongst a day of staff photographs, AV signoff, notes about a potential collaborative project with other students and caption work with design (research diary, 15th October 2009). Looking back I am surprised that this note is so brief. Working on installation was an exciting, interesting and engaging way to study the museum. Like the rest of my research, participant observation needed to be adopted strategically.

I worked on the installation project from November 2009 to May 2010. Having already been at the museum for a year, my familiarity with the organisation could be compared to ethnographic research where 'you already speak the native language and have already picked up the nuances of etiquette from previous experience. Participant observation would help you intellectualise what you already know' (Russell Bernard, 2002: 350). In this instance I could equate this to the language of Mimsy, the museums collections database software, the various systems of object and case codes, the 'crystal reports', location data and 'core records' and so on; the ettiqutte of using trollies, arranging for photographs, asking favours and borrowing equipment. This language had its limits, and in the months they had already spent on the project the project assistants had each developed a significant amount of specialised knowledge of their section of the galleries. It seemed to me that they not only knew the best way to get things done with other departments, but that they knew a great deal about their objects: "Liz and Hollie have so much knowledge about their zones and eras. Hopefully I am picking this up too, bit by bit" (research diary, 15th January 2010). At times I was worried that I would falter without this knowledge, and I found myself often clutching bundles of

print-outs of case layouts, carrying them with me on trains, buses, Christmas holidays and weekends, trying to learn what went where. I got to know the objects through paper and place rather than through the whole production process, unlike Elpie, who had worked on zone 2 for years, and had worked on producing case layouts. Although I knew about the development of the galleries I had to work fast to learn the practical information about specific objects and cases.

My three days a week role was not enough to be responsible for a particular zone, and sometimes this was frustrating, as I often found myself beginning my day by asking Hollie where we were up to. The two days I kept aside for university were enough that the galleries seemed to have changed every time I went in on a Monday or Wednesday. Having had a day or weekend away from the museum I had a vantage point from which to reflect on the changes. Russel Bernard advises that part of the skill of observation is being able to "remove yourself every day from that immersion, so you can intellectualise what you have seen and heard" and having this rhythm to my work meant that I had a little longer to accommodate these demands, which would have been a struggle had I been working and commuting full-time (Russell Bernard, 2002: 344). Unfortunately it meant a compromise in my ability to keep up with the day-to-day decision-making and some of the everyday progression of the galleries. Perhaps it also meant that I had a modest role, as frequently I relied on asking Liz and Hollie to e-mail me the latest installation updates, as after the first project co-ordinator left and the second took over, I was no longer on the e-mail list.

My dependency on Hollie, Liz and Beverley felt like a slightly ambivalent position, between regular volunteer, student, researcher and part-time member of staff. It was occasionally troubling to me, and I also realised that it was also difficult for some staff. A research diary entry from early January recalls:

> “there is some pretty deep caution from some quarters regarding both my involvement and the role of the Project Assistants in install from what I can gather... Rob seems to feel quite uneasy, judging from Liz’s recounts of meetings and a brief introduction to Helen who was keen to impress upon me the importance of what I’m doing and how unusual it was to have a student working on install”

(research diary, 4th January 2010).

Occasionally these concerns would be directly addressed to me: "Torla mentioned that she didn't think the museum should be using volunteers for the work I'm doing" (research diary, 15th January 2010). I was not certain about whether these people were uneasy with my background and experience or whether they were frustrated about the museum using a volunteer rather than paying for a member of staff. I had privately questioned whether it was appropriate to step in and take on work that the museum might pay someone else for. Finding time to discuss my unusual position of not-quite-staff-or-volunteer-but-researcher helped staff from other departments understand why I was working on installation, which also helped me to feel at ease. My part-time work wasn't the same as the full-time Project Assistants, and this separation made me more comfortable with my status as participant and observer. Looking back through my field notes, it did not occur to me that the source of unease might be my role as researcher. In this instance it seemed the more pressing concerns were professional; what was my skill level, and would my appointment threaten entry-level paid roles at the museum in future at a time when 'value engineering' and cuts were a priority.

The Project Assistants' access varied throughout installation, but as a researcher I found the restrictions frustrating, as I felt I had to constantly renegotiate my access. At the outset I was worried about being confined to the Linbury, whilst I wanted to be in the galleries all the time, but this did not transpire. As McNeill and Chapman suggest, 'a great deal of time is spent 'hanging around'' in observation (McNeill and Chapman, 2005: 95). Although I didn't always feel I was completely welcome in the galleries I was never turned away or asked to leave, so I took measures to be doing something as well as simply observing work: "Ended up working in the galleries all day - the MDF panels used near a bunch of cases have had the interior sides coated with an untested paint, so they all needed covering with special conservation-grade plastic and tape" (research diary, 17th February 2010). Qualitative research literature describes the degree of patience required for participant observation, something I occasionally found I was lacking: my research diary recalls one unedifying day spent carrying out database work upstairs in the offices – "basically hiding… because I don't want to spend all day sticking bits of plastic to MDF" (McNeill and Chapman, 2005: 95; research diary, 8th March 2010).

Working on installation was, with a few minor exceptions, an immensely gratifying part of my research. I enjoyed the majority of the work, and found the degree of access to the site rewarding. This part of my research experience did much to shape my argument for the study of museum work, as my participation in it revealed so much to me about how the Museum of London represented London's history.

Ethics

The best way, Silverman advises, to carry out participant observation, in terms of both practical and moral concerns, is 'to be as open as possible with the team' (Silverman, 2003: 31). Morally, this is certainly the best method and the idea of informed consent is crucial to its acceptability. This research project was planned with the input of the head of the department, and this institutional framework has been the means by which informed consent from staff has been achieved.

All members of the department and the Project Delivery Team were sent a description of the project and a summary about my research. With more formal meetings, such as the monthly Project Delivery Team meetings, approval for my attendance was requested in advance. For smaller and more short-notice meetings, such as signing off the case layouts, sometimes permission for my attendance was requested in my presence. This is more problematic than if it was sought in my absence, as people may feel uneasy about expressing any discomfort with my presence whilst I am there. Although this is not the most desirable case, it did not pose a substantial threat to staff or my research.

Initially I was anxious that I did not know the full extent of my project, in terms of focus or participants, so could not get informed consent for the full extent of my research. However the methodology literature has reminded me that consent needn't be assured in just one instance; it is important to make sure that the giving of consent is a recurring process as the questions of the project change, an approach that I adopted (Ambert et al, 1995: 870; Marvasti, 2004: 141). When I first talked to members of staff, especially members of staff who had joined the

museum since I began my research, I introduced my research and answered their questions about it to the best of my abilities. Sometimes I felt that there were occasions when my honesty about the research's changing focus left members of staff feeling unsatisfied in my response. Although I could not always give comprehensive answers to their questions, it was better to leave their enquiries at this stage than give an artificially rounded answer. As Mason argues, it is not always necessary for everybody to know everything about my research, which was especially pertinent for the times when I did not have a full sense of it myself (Mason, 1996: 166).

The methodological literature suggests that my research would beenfit from forming meaningful relationships with the people I encounter during my work (Mason, 1996: 166; Ambert et al, 1995: 887). I felt this was crucial to help me feel at ease with the process. Although there was some unease around my research, there was also lots of curiosity and support, with members of staff making suggestions and sharing their contacts with me. Although I am personally very grateful for their friendship and support, methods texts are quick to remind me that I should not let this blind me to less pleasant facts (Ambert et al, 1995: 887). Furthermore, there were times when I was treated more like a friend than a researcher, and I had to be sensitive about including information that has been disclosed to me in 'unanticipated self-disclosure' (Mason, 1996: 166; Amber et al, 1995: 887).

There are limits to how qualitative data can be depersonalized whilst remaining meaningful, and for this reason I made no assurances to my interviewees about anonymity (Mason, 1996: 166). My interviewees spanned a range of roles within the museum, and if I were to exclude their names from my writing, their jobs would still be relevant to the research. If the thesis identified the jobs, then the individuals would be identifiable. As such, my interviewees, and other key staff, have been named in the thesis. For many of the interviewees this has the added benefit of setting their interview comments in this thesis in the context of their own research and publications.

Analysis and writing

When analysing my data to write it up I was careful to maintain clarity of the voices in the interviews. Some writers suggest that it is important not to begin looking for themes in the data too soon (Perry, 2000: 103). Perry cautions against introducing too much focus early on, in a bid to avoid imposing too many ideas on the material (Perry, 2000: 103). However, elsewhere others suggest that as part of the cyclical nature of qualitative research, ideas should be formed and tested, and then refined (Ambert et al, 1995: 884). As Delamont has shown, considering your own role in the research is one of the most important aspects of both fieldwork and analysis, and I found that returning to my methodology gave me a structured approach to reflexivity (Delamont, 2004: 226). Researching and writing this methodology, and revisiting it at different times throughout the research, has helped me to consider the project as a whole, and often provided me with a space to test and refine my methods and approaches.

When writing I found myself drawing heavily on the interviews I had carried out. The participatory and observational research I had done had already informed the interviews, and my interviewees provided succinct and evocative comments on the making of the galleries. I had taken photographs during my work on the Galleries of Modern London, showing the galleries and stores whilst they were used and developed. These images, collected as part of my research diaries, proved more useful during writing up than I had aniticapted when taking them. I found smartphones a convenient research tool, as it was easy to have one with me at all times. I was able to record interviews, notes and photographs very quickly on it, and although not to the highest quality, I was able to draw on these recordings as work unfolded.

My role in the museum varied between the different methods of research I used. Observation and interviews required me to engage differently with the museum, its staff and the Galleries of Modern London. This methodology has shown that the combination of methods I have used is both an appropriate selection, and a compatible one, considering that as the project continues the ways that the different methods overlap will need to be reconsidered.

Qualitative research should 'vividly colour in the meanings, motivations and details of what quantitative research can convey only in broader aggregates', (Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner, 1995: 884). This research has aimed to explore what one of the Project Assistants described as the decisions "made in the tea room, passing in the corridor… there would always be tense moments, conflict, laughs a lot of the time" to explore the museum work that went into making the Galleries of Modern London (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010).

Chapter 3: The City, the Museum and the City Museum

In 1961 Lewis Mumford argued that the museum and the city were inextricably linked. Writing about the city's historic role, Mumford argued that:

> 'the most typical institution of the metropolis, as characteristic of its ideal life as the gymnasium was of the Hellenic city or the hospital of the medieval city—the Museum. But if the big city is largely responsible for the invention and public extension of the museum, there is a sense in which one of its own principal functions is to serve as a museum: in its own right, the historic city retains, by reason of its amplitude and its long past, a larger and more various collection of cultural specimens than can be found elsewhere.' (Mumford, 1961: 561)

Mumford contended both that the museum was a symbol of urban experience, and that the city itself carried out museum-like functions. In arguing that the museum is symbolic of the city, whilst the city enacts the processes of the museum, Mumford's focus was not city museums themselves. Nevertheless his writing demonstrates some of the connections between the city and museum that this thesis investigates. This chapter explores this connection in the context of the development of city museums, and looks in detail at how they have expressed the relationship between the museum and the city at different times.

As Geoghegan argued in her overview of the emerging field of museum geography, museums themselves are in 'a continuous process of reinvention, with changes relating to approach, message and architectural style' (Geoghegan, 2010: 1463). This chapter uses a series of moments in this process of reinvention occurring within city museums to discuss how city museums have been able to present the city. 'City museums, like all museums, are products of their own histories' and by describing the development of the genre of city museums, this chapter provides historical context to the thesis' main case study (Hebditch, 1993: 1).

Researcher-practitioners such as Sandwiess (2009, 2011, forthcoming), Tisdale (2011a, 2011b, 2012) and Hebditch (1993, 1995, 1998, 2008) have all explored the scope of the city museum, looking at the large stories of city museums through time

and around the globe. Other researchers have written the histories of individual city museums (Sheppard, 1991; Wallace, 1993a, 1993b, 1998; Page 1999, 2001; Leri, 2007). This chapter builds on these narratives of the city museum, and draws out a series of conceptual negotiations city museums have made and discusses the recurring issues facing the city museum. In exploring a series of themes this chapter underpins the rest of the thesis, offering a historical and critical context to the thesis' case study of the Museum of London.

This chapter uses a broadly chronological structure to discuss the ways in which the city museum has presented the city, and urban history, at different moments in its development. A series of six phases are each used to discuss a negotiation that city museums have made to present the city. The first part of the chapter looks at displays of urban history and the foundation of the first city museums, exploring to what extent city museums evoke or explain urban experience. The second section of the chapter focusses on the foundation of city museums in New York and London at the start of the twentieth century, and discusses the relationship between the individual and the institution in the making of city history museums. The third section looks at city museum as part of the city, and how the museum's location in the city has affected the planning of museum space. The fourth moment in the development of the city museum this chapter discusses looks to city museums in the 1970s, and concerns the balance that city museums have struck between whether to structure their representations of the city around strengths in their collections, or whether they are led by a narrative. The fifth section explores how the new museology of the late 1980s and 90s influenced city museums, and the city museum's celebration of different histories of the city. The final section raises the question of the extent and scale of the city museum, and looks at the city museum in the 1990s and early 2000s to explore how city museums have addressed the global and local qualities of individual cities.

This chapter discusses the creativity and agency that are part of city museum work, showing how the museum, as a material expression of ideas of the city, has changed throughout its history.

Explanation and Evocation

This section of the chapter looks at the backdrop to the first city museums, exploring some of the links that Mumford argues predate the museum itself: 'Until the eighteenth-century metropolis invented the museum as its special form, the city itself served as a museum' (Mumford, 1961: 236). Mumford's museum-city reflects two qualities of the city itself: the city as a site where people, objects and ideas are gathered, and the city itself as a form of display. City museums were one of a number of attractions within the city that either evoked or explained the urban environment, and this part of the chapter provides the thesis with some context about the origins of this, specific form of museum.

Like the museum, the city is a site of accumulation and display. Mumford felt that the city encompassed everything: 'every variety of human function, every experiment in human association, every technological process, every mode of architecture and planning, can be found within [the city's] crowded area' (Mumford, 1961: 561). Not only did the city provide an array of opportunities, it also presented them in a structure of spectacle and spectator. Research has explored the manner in which streets and buildings were planned and constructed to convey a sense of the city's history, but there were also more overt ways of making the city more historically self-conscious (Sandweiss, 2009).

By the end of the eighteenth century, London had been transformed: 'From the Strand up to Soho, scores of spectacles attracted the strollers... a great archipeligo of shows, galleries, theatres, cockpits and exhibitions, all places to pop into, like a gigantic amusement arcade' (Porter, 1998: 174). The shows, spas, gardens, galleries and theatres that opened in London were more than a sequence of individual attractions, and as Porter argued, they had a transformative effect on their surroundings. The first museums were one example of a growing variety of new urban features that established a paradigm of citizen as audience during the eighteenth century.

As well as affecting the experience of the city, several of these new urban attractions dealt specifically in representations of the city itself. Dana Arnold's

research has explored the significance of the entrepreneur Robert Parker's *Panorama of London.* Parker's Panorama was a commercial enterprise, and offered visitors the chance to ascend to an elevated viewing platform from which to view a panoramic painting, presented all around the inside wall of the cylindrical building. The platform was decorated to represent a scaffold suspended from St Paul's, in order to simulate the experience of standing on the roof. Visitors viewed the panorama of London as if from the roof of St Paul's cathedral (Arnold, 2000).

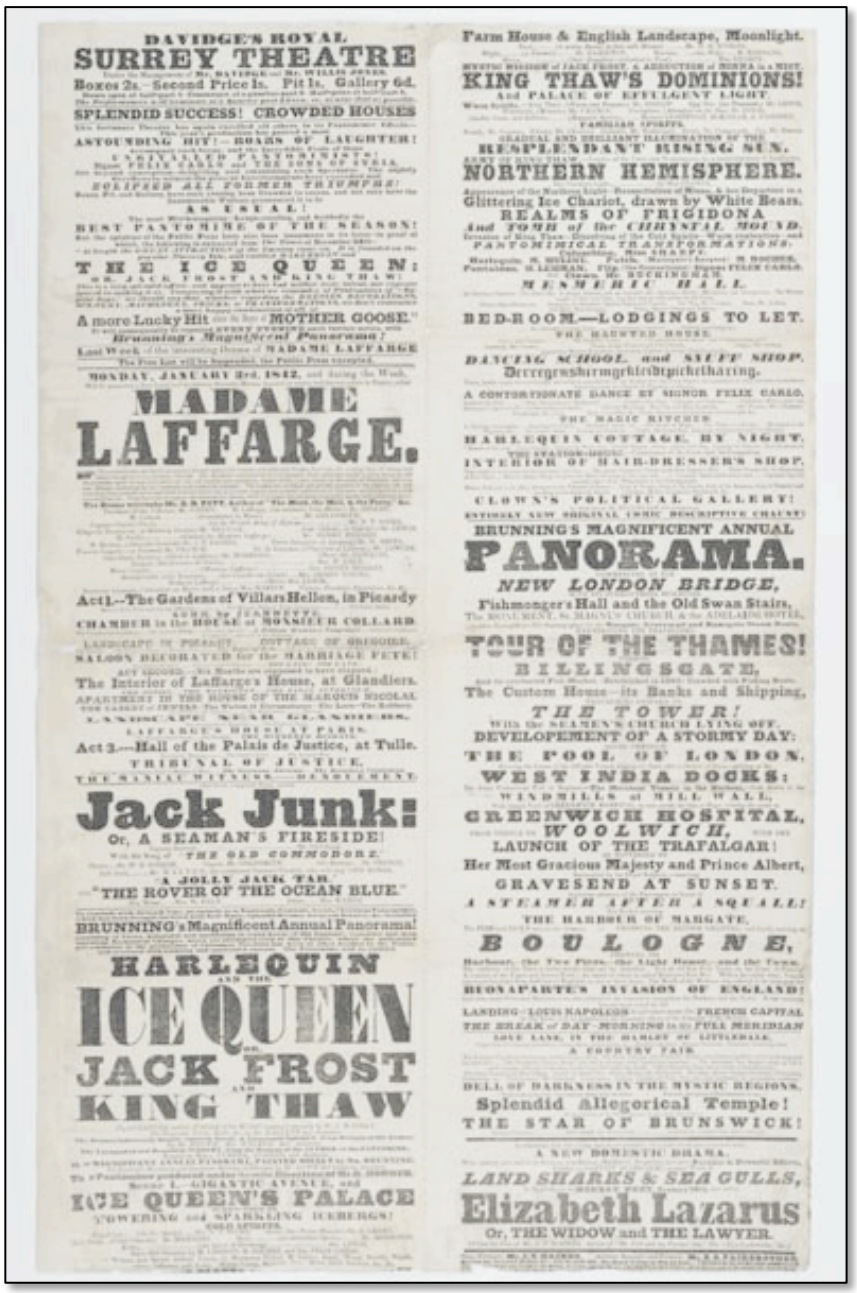

Figure 3.1 - Panorama of London, advertised as one of the attractions at the Royal Surrey Theatre, 1842 © Museum of London

Parker's panorama was an immersive representation of the city, which used its viewing platform and curved walls to evoke the sensation of witnessing the scope of the city firsthand. The evocative representation of the city available at Parker's panorama was complemented by other urban appearances. Panoramas were a popular attraction, and bills for panoramas of London, Edinburgh, Jerusalem, New York and Paris, amongst others, were circulated in London. London's theatres regularly featured London scenery and even advertised their own displays of panoramas (see figure 3.1). Even more dramatically visitors to the Surrey Gardens could view a recreation of the Great Fire of London, complete with fireworks and explosions (Altick, 1978: 325-6). As exhibitions became more established, methods of representing cities became more advanced. A model of Liverpool was installed in the Great Exhibition, and a recreated street scene from 'Old London' was included in an exhibition of city health (Werner, 2009). These representations of urban space not only contributed to the number of attractions amongst the cityscape, but also responded to an audience keen to see the city. Whilst these attractions evoked the city, they did not seek to explain it.

It was this growing audience for urban attractions that engendered the museum. Wealthy figures, such as Queen Caroline (1683 – 1737), had long gathered collections of curiosities in the German tradition of *Wunderkammer*, and Caroline's collection of curiosities was displayed within Kensington Palace (Worsley, 2010: 168-9). Although the concept of the museum had connections to classical ideas about the home of the muses, the British Museum itself did not appear until the middle of the eighteenth century. The museum was formed from the collections of Queen Caroline's doctor, Sir Hans Sloane. Sloane was an affluent physician who collected avidly, and incorporated several other large collections into his own. After his death in 1753, Sloane bequeathed his collection to the nation, and in 1759 the British Museum opened to the public (Wilson, 1989). The British Museum's origins in an individual's collection was typical of early modern museums, which Foucault characterised as 'the expression of an individual choice' (Foucault, 1984). The transition from an individual to a national project demonstrated the role of the individual in influencing national or civic museum projects, which used expansive, if esoteric, collections to enact enlightenment philosophies (Lord, 2006: 4).

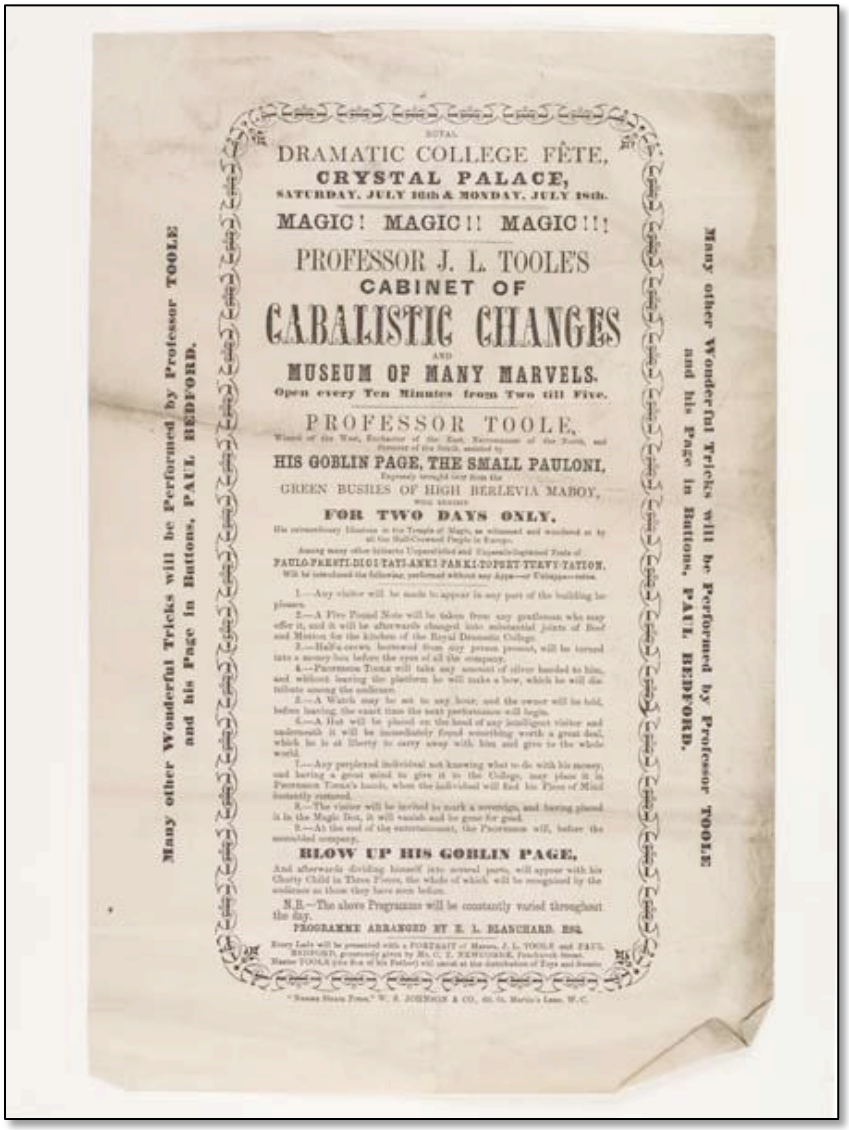

Figure 3.2 – 'Professor J.L. Toole's Cabinet of Cabalistic Curiositites and Museum of Many Marvels' © Museum of London

City museums were a relatively late form of museum, opening long after the British Museum, at a time when museums and exhibitions had been developing alongside commercial urban attractions for more than a century. The first major city museum, the Carnavalet, opened in Paris in 1880, by which point P.T. Barnum had already stretched the definition of a museum to include a theatre, a wax museum, a lecture hall, a freak show and a zoo at Barnum's American Museum in New York (New York Times, 1865). Museums were already being parodied by popular theatrical performers, like J.L. Toole by the time the first city museums opened at the end of the nineteenth century (figure 3.2).

In Paris the first city museum went against the trend and developments of other museums at this time. The Carnavalet museum was housed in a sixteenth-century building in the Marais, which had been the home of Madame de Sévigné, an aristocrat noted for her letter-writing (Leri, 2007). The building was bought by the city in 1866 under the instruction of Baron Haussmann, whose redevelopment of the city had, as one Carnavalet guidebook argues, disembowelled Paris (Le Figaro, 2012). The museum boasted '*des éléments architecturaux particulièrement significatifs provenant du centre historique*' amongst its collection, but also embodied these in its premises, which had been renovated by the seventeenth century architect Jules Hardouin Mansart (Le Figaro, 2012). The Carnavalet was unlike other museum projects at the time, making little use of the new building and display technologies being adopted by other museums (Swinney, 1999). Unlike new museums such as the Kensington Museum, the Carnavalet was not housed in a new building, and similarly had none of the innovative educational aims of Victoria and Albert Museum (Robertson, 2004: 2). The Carnavalet sought to save material from the old Paris that Haussmann's scheme replaced, and it was housed in a building symbolic of the material it sought to conserve (Leri, 2007). Housed in a historic building, the museum's presence evoked the immersive display techniques of theatres, panoramas, recreations and models that had been popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rather than the forms of purpose-built museums that were developed from the late eighteenth century (Bennett, 1995: 181).

In *The Birth of the Museum*, Bennett has explored how early museums were connected with the development of other urban attractions, and stresses that museums 'sought constantly to extricate' themselves from the context of wonders and menageries (Bennett, 1995: 3). Foucault did not research the museum in depth but his claim that 'the museum and the library are heterotopias that are proper to western culture of the nineteenth century' prompted consideration amongst subsequent researchers studying museums (Foucault, 1984). Some analysis of Foucault's work has focussed on placing museums amongst a complex of sites concerned with organisation and control (Hetherington, 2011). This thread has been explored by Bennett, who examines the ways that museums 'formed part of new strategies of governing aimed at producing a citizenry which, rather than needing to be externally and coercively directed, would increasingly monitor and regulate its

own conduct' (Bennett, 1995: 8). Subsequent research has disposed of 'superficial' readings of Foucault, and interprets Foucault's perspective differently, arguing that 'Foucault wants, instead, to perform an archaeology of institutions that moves from the 'document' to the 'monument', examining particular institutions and their practices and discovering how they fit in to discontinuous historical series' (Lord, 2006: 2). Foucault argued that the notions of the library and the museum were historically contingent, and that a shift took place between the first museums, which were esoteric works produced by individuals, to a time when 'the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity' (Foucault, 1984).

The city museums that emerged after a century of museums and advanced urban attractions, do not fit easily into Foucault's taxonomy of museums. Unlike the first 'cabinets of curiosity' that Queen Caroline kept and Foucault described, city museums were civic projects, with labelled displays structured through different rooms, although they were undoubtedly partial and dependent on the individual will of the people who made them, as the following sections of this chapter demonstrate. Neither did the early city museums fit the categories of the later, enlightenment museums that Foucault described. Bennett has suggested Foucault overstated the distinction between the enlightenment museum and the fairground, introducing the example of the static amusement as a space that shared characteristics of the travelling fair and the museum (Bennett, 1995: 3). Like Bennett's amusement park, the early city museums occupied 'a point somewhere between the opposing values Foucault attributes to the museum and the travelling fair' (Bennett, 1995: 4). Unlike enlightenment museums, like the British Museum, that sought to educate and instruct formally, city museums indulged the idea of the flaneur and sought to present narratives about the city on its own terms. Housed in historic city buildings, the early city museums did not provide a place 'outside of time', but a specific and deliberately time-bound place, housed in '*des éléments architecturaux particulièrement*'. The first city museums spoke in the vernacular of urban spectacle and opened in cities where this sense was highly developed. Using the city's terms rather than the museum's taxonomic ones, the first city museums pre-

empted Mumford's argument that the city was a form of museum, combining elements of both in their work.

Individual and institution

This section of the chapter provides historical context for one of the thesis' key themes: the question of how authority and agency is expressed and enacted at the city museum. This section describes the role of individuals in influencing the collection and social purpose of the city museum, using the example of the foundation of the Museum of the City of New York. This section looks at how people were able to build collections and shape museum aims and priorities, to give historic context to the processes taking place in the making of the Galleries of Modern London. Although the field of biographies and museums has been covered elsewhere, this part of the chapter explores the role of individual agency in city museums (see Hill, 2012). Collecting was a selective process, and as Lord argues even the vast collections like Sloane's did not 'generally have the aim to present total history' (Lord, 2006: 4). Foucault and Mumford described the museum's aims in abstract terms, but directors, collectors, curators, keepers, staff and commentators all had their own aims about the kinds of history city museums should present.

When the Museum of the City of New York opened in 1923 it was North America's first city museum (Page, 1999: 50). Its opening marked a swell of interest in the history of the city, as at the time there were numerous individuals, societies and projects that claimed to present the city's past.

As with the Guildhall museum in London, in the nineteenth century collections relating to New York were attached to a library. The New-York Historical Society (N-YHS) followed the North American tradition of local history societies, and its premises housed a library and some collections about New York state (Wallace, 1998: 20). In 1917 the New-York Historical Society was sensationally declared 'dead', 'dull' and 'uninteresting' by Mrs John King Van Rensselaer, in a criticism reported in the *New York Times* (New York Times, 1917; Page, 1999: 51; Browne, 2008: 54; Wallace, 2008: 20).

To Van Rensselaer, New York's history was lively and personal; she was a descendent of Manhattan's early Dutch settlers. By the time of her complaints about the N-YHS Van Rensselaer had already sought to preserve this personable history of the city, with projects dating back to her 1897 book, entitled *New Yorkers of the XIX century*, which used her Grandmother's visiting book as a basis for recording the family charts of 'the chief families of the city of New York' and her 1898 history of Dutch women in Manhattan from 1609-1760 (Van Rensselaer, 1897; Van Rensselaer, 1898). Following her pronouncement on the state of the N-YHS, in 1920 Van Rensselaer founded the Society of Patriotic New Yorkers (SPNY) (Browne, 2008: 59). The stated goal of the SPNY was 'to introduce New Yorkers to our New York heroes – the men of great names who have aided in making New York what it is' (Page, 1999: 51). This goal meant preserving the personal story of the city, and establishing the significance of Van Rensselaer's Knickerbocker heritage in the minds of newer New Yorkers. 'It is our duty' Van Rensselaer argued, 'if we should hope to assimilate these new peoples without danger to our society and civilization, to make them over anew. We must teach them the background of history of our country' (Van Rensselaer, quoted in Browne, 2008: 56).

Van Rensselaer's books about New Yorkers of the nineteenth century were just some of a number of written accounts of the city's history. Henry Collins Brown's works about New York's past were another alternative to the New-York Historical Society's account. Although Brown lacked Van Rensselaer's sensationalism he shared Van Rensselaer's lively cause: 'Brown did not care for what he saw as the stuffy, forbidding character of the New-York Historical Society, established in 1804, and sought a more populist approach to presenting the city's story.' (Gray, 2005). Brown's populist approach saw him resurrecting and editing the *Valentine's Manual of Old New York*, including 1917 ('*The City of New York'*), 1921 ('*Old New York yesterday & today*'), 1927 ('*New York in the elegant eighties*') and 1928 ('*In the Golden Nineties*').

Brown was one of a number of antiquarians and collectors who sought to preserve and present New York's history in a museum, which was granted a charter in 1923

(Page, 1999: 51). The antagonistic pursuit of intellectual authority over New York's history was neatly demonstrated in the competition for property. As Page has argued, the ongoing demolition of New York's older housing would furnish the museum's collection, but the process also meant that historic properties '*des éléments architecturaux particulièrement significatifs*' in New York were hard to come by (Page, 1999). Archibald Gracie, who was one of the first settlers of New York, and Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer's oft-invoked great-grandfather, built Gracie Mansion. When the Museum of the City of New York was founded in 1923, state legislature authorized the city to grant control of Gracie Mansion to a historical society (Browne, 2008: 61). The dispute that then occurred between Van Rensselaer and Brown was reported in the New York Times, as both parties sought the exclusive use of the property for their institutions (New York Times, 12th June, 1923; Browne, 2008: 61).

In 1923 the MCNY had an exhaustive remit 'to collect and preserve all documents, prints, books, photographs, portraits... relating to the culture and history of New York' (Page, 1999: 51). The new museum was quite consciously modelled 'after the great city museums of Europe' like the Carnavalet and the London Museum (Page, 1999: 54, Wallace, 1993: 3). Brown oversaw exhibitions that were less critical of the city's early settlers than his disputes with their descendants would suggest. Brown's exhibitions were concentrated on old New York and celebrated elite culture (New York Times, 9th November 1924; Browne, 2008: 66). By focussing on these families Brown demonstrated his focus on the culture and history of New York's wealthy inhabitants, and excluding other kinds of experience from his definition.

In his detailed examination of the origins of the South Kensington Museum, Bruce Robertson has argued that 'It is possible to read the history of the South Kensington Museum, not as a steady progress toward a museum of decorative arts and design, but as a bazaar or emporium, with new products arriving and departing all the time' (Robertson, 2004: 9). Robertson highlighted a sense of fluidity within the museum, as objects moved in and out of its possession. This was certainly true of the Museum of the City of New York under Brown. The museum took on an 'attic' function, allowing objects from the collection out to adorn the homes of families

that they had come from (Page, 1999: 55). This curiously domestic arrangement is reflected in the nature of the collection itself. Page's detailed exploration of the Museum of the City of New York's collecting demonstrates that although the museum acquired the material goods of men of great names in a way the Society of Patriotic New Yorkers would find satisfactory, it did so by collecting the everyday objects of homes (Page, 1999). Browne's research has highlighted Van Rensselaer's belief that 'History is generally written by men, who dwell on politics, wars, and the exploits of their sex. Household affairs, women's influence, social customs and manners are seldom chronicled' (Browne, 2008: 48). Perhaps Brown's MCNY, with its focus on domestic interiors, would have appealed more to Van Rensselaer's slightly more inclusive model of history (Browne, 2008: 48).

The MCNY gathered domestic materials, and when the collections were displayed reviewers noted the significance of this, recognising that this was not so much a historical museum as an anthropological one (Page, 1999). The domestic interiors and room sets at the MCNY reflected the tradition of representations of colonial villages in international exhibitions, which featured 'detailed reconstructions and re-enactments of other cultures' (Bennett, 1995: 188). The anthropological effect of the collections established the taste of New York's wealthy inhabitants as an exclusive culture. In his 1990s work Wallace is highly critical of the MCNY in the 1920s, suggesting that it the museum was an expression of one group asserting ownership over the city (1993: 9). Elsewhere, Page argues that the intention was to 'shape the new immigrants' reflecting the agenda of Van Rensselaer and the SPNY (Page, 1999: 59).

In her research Kate Hill has shown how close study of collecting and committees can reveal how museums can bolster identity claims for individuals and social classes, and this argument certainly resonates with the the early years of the Museum of the City of New York (Hill, 2005). The MCNY was described by Wallace as 'a prop for the collective memory of a class' in his history of the museum and it certainly seemed as though the domestic histories of the city were intensely personal (Wallace, 1993: 9). Mumford has argued that such control over museums reinforces social structures:

'By the patronage of museums, the ruling metropolitan oligarchy of

> financiers and officeholders establish their own claims to culture: more than that, they fix their own standards of taste, moral, and learning as that of their civilization - thus maintaining and stabilizing the favoured pattern of acquisitive living'
>
> (Mumford 1946 [1938]: 263 in Naylor and Hill, 2011:66).

This attempt, connected with Bourdieu's ideas about *habitus*, demonstrate how individuals sought to use the museum to strengthen established customs and values through everyday life, by reinforcing certain kinds of cultural recognition. Bennett argues that museum collections in the nineteenth century 'buttressed royal or aristocratic power' and this analysis can be extended to cover the Knickerbockers' descendents in the first quarter of a century at the MCNY (Bennett, 2006: 50). It is important not to overstate the extent or ease of this process, which the everyday work of the museum disrupted. Even within the ruling metropolitan classes individuals' intentions clashed with the limitations of the institutions themselves, as well as individuals beyond it. Although there was similarity in Brown and Van Rensselaer's books about New York, and both expressed dissatisfaction with the N-YHS, their convergence of opinion did not continue into museum work. The quarrel for Gracie Mansion demonstrates how Brown and Van Rensselaer each had different - and mutually disruptive - cultural claims. The physical, spatial needs of city museums were a contested terrain, where the work to establish standards of taste was often disrupted.

In 1925 Brown was replaced as the MCNY's director, and suffered serious mental illness, which he later wrote about, in a book entitled '*A Mind Mislaid'* (Brown, 1937). When Van Rensselaer passed away at her home in May 1925, the Museum of the City of New York was housed in Gracie Mansion, where it boasted the domestic interiors of old wealthy New York families (New York Times, 1925). By the time of her death Van Rensselaer was no more kindly disposed to the Museum of the City of New York than she had been to the New-York Historical Society; and in her will Van Rennselaer left her home's entrance hall to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, bypassing the museum formed specifically to represent the city she felt so passionate about. Following Van Rensselaer's death the Society of Patriotic New Yorkers undertook a campaign in her memory, and the Van Rensselaer Memorial Room opened at the MCNY, in Gracie Mansion, in April 1927 (Browne,

2008: 62). The MCNY moved premises in 1936, and Van Rensselaer was not memorialized in the museum's new building (Browne, 2008: 62). The fight for Gracie Mansion demonstrates how personal the institutionalisation of New York's history could be, showing how individuals and institutions navigated the city, in geographical, historical and social terms.

The role of affluent individuals was not always to shore up the establishment, and elsewhere it is possible to identify moments where individuals acted within institutions to disrupt the process. Guy Laking (1875-1919), the first keeper of the London Museum, on several occasions enjoyed challenging contemporary museum conventions. Laking was an enthusiastic collector, and time would show him to be an astute one. In 1912 Laking acquired a Hansom cab for the London Museum, which went on display at the London Museum's first venue at Kensington Palace (Ross, 1998: 120). Laking was keen to experiment with immersive displays, something other urban museums would later do. In 1938 the Castle Museum in York opened *Kirkgate*, a recreated Victorian street scene, which demonstrated that 'the most evocative element of the urban enviroment, the street, could become of interest if 're-created'' (Kavanagh, 1998: 8). As well as conveying the everyday life of the city, urban history display could also borrow from the sensation and showmanship of Barnum's day. In a press interview Laking excitedly promised the London Museum would open a chamber of horrors, and a 1912 review of the museum described it as 'a kind of Mme Tussaud's for London' (Ross, 1998: 117, 118). These deliberate experiments with popular collecting conveyed an adventurous and innovative approach to city museum work.

Although museums have been understood as tools of order, and as 'classifying houses' upholding political enlightenment principles, they do so through the work of individual people, with their own understandings and values (Bennett, 1995: 3). This section of the chapter has shown how the agency of individuals can shape the ways that museums represent cities, by drawing on the conflict around representations of early twentieth century New York. The dispute between Brown and Van Rensselaer was a dispute between two intellectual approaches to the city, played out through the personalities and circumstances of two passionate and committed people. Museums like the MCNY are shaped through the interests of

figures like Brown and Van Rennselaer, who are able to articulate, defend and invest in their work.

Buildings and sites

The museum is part of the city, and as David Fleming argues, museum buildings 'encompass the museum as instrument of urban understanding and urban change' (Fleming, 2005: 55). The discussion of city museums in Paris and New York suggested how the museum's building and its location provide a framework through which the museum's engagement with the city occurs. City museums in New York and London have undergone several moves around the city, and each geographical move has prompted intellectual shift: a reconsideration of the arrangement and purpose of the city museum.

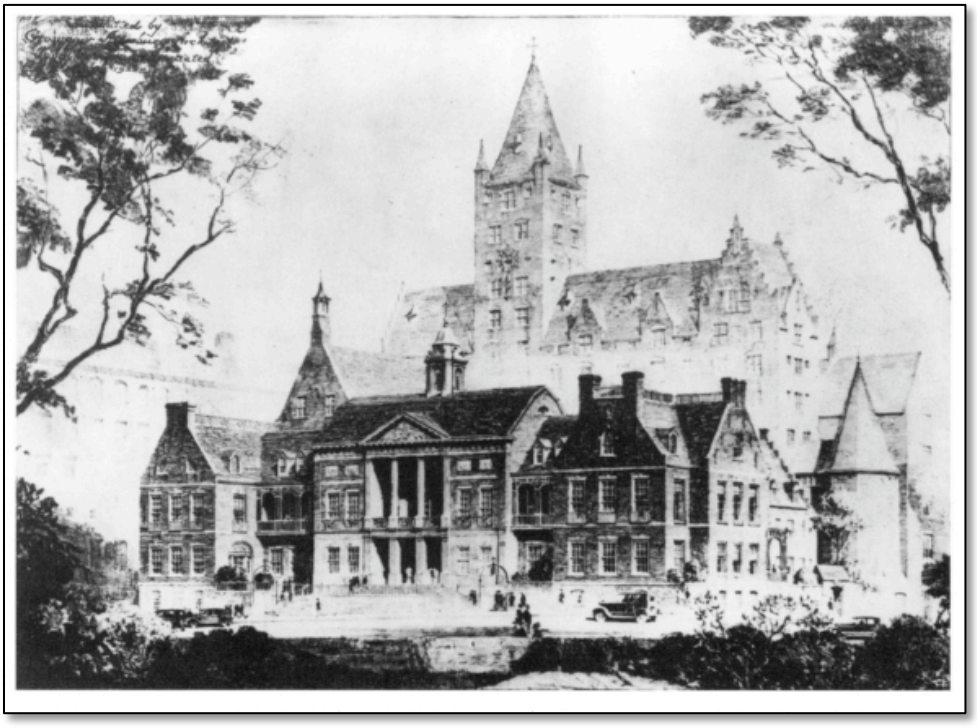

Figure 3.3 – Architect's proposal for the Museum of City of New York, c. 1931
© Museum of the City of New York

In his history of the MCNY Page includes an inter-war design for the MCNY

(figure 3.3) that was produced whilst the MCNY sought a settled address, and it suggests ways that the museum should relate to the city (Page, 1999: 56). The proposed museum's imposing facade is sympathetic to its neighbours, positioned within its own grounds and it recalls the style of home whose contents the museum collected. An early review of the purpose-built MCNY said it was the 'one building on Manhattan' that had 'a reasonable chance of being permanent', but in London museums were both mobile and mutable (Page, 1999: 57).

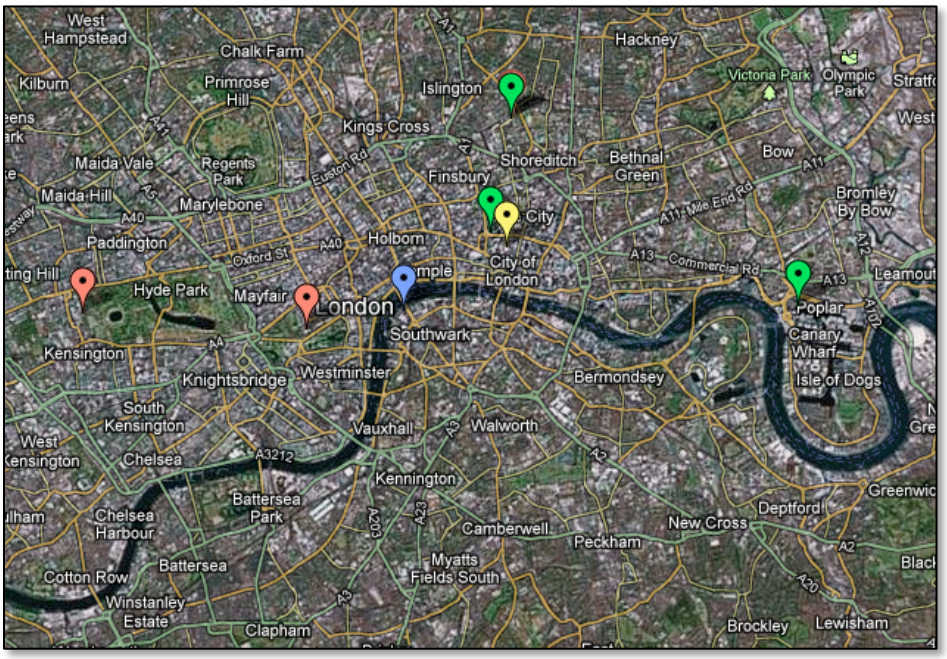

Figure 3.4 – Map showing the locations of museums

The London Museum (red) the Guildhall Museum (yellow) Woodham's proposed location (blue) and the Museum of London's sites (green)

The London Museum opened in 1912 in Kensington Palace, but moved to Lancaster House in 1914. Sheppard recalls that the London Museum had been closed at the outset of war due to fear of raids from suffragettes, as Mary Richardson had recently damaged the National Gallery's *Rokeby Venus* in protest (Sheppard, 1991: 86). Having closed from 22nd May 1914 to 17th August 1914 the London Museum then remained open until 1st Feb 1916 (Sheppard, 1991: 86). The London Museum was then closed until end of war, whilst the Foreign Trade Department and the Shipping Controller used its building and 53 crates of objects were stored in tunnels being dug for the Post Office's underground railway (Sheppard, 1991: 87). By the 16th November 1918 one of the London Museum's

trustees, Viscount Harcourt, was already writing to ask for use of the premises to be restored to the museum (Sheppard, 1991: 87). During the Second World War the London Museum remained in Lancaster House, but as during the First World War, the premises were requisitioned for war use and after the war the museum returned to Kensington Palace. The map in figure 3.4 shows the locations of the various incarnations of the museums about London.

The movement of museums was an ongoing concern and in 1953 an architecture student named K.N. Woodham submitted a thesis entitled 'A New Museum for London' which addressed the rebuilding and reorganisation of the London Museum. Working twenty years after the MCNY's planners, Woodham designed a radically different style of museum for London (figure 3.5).

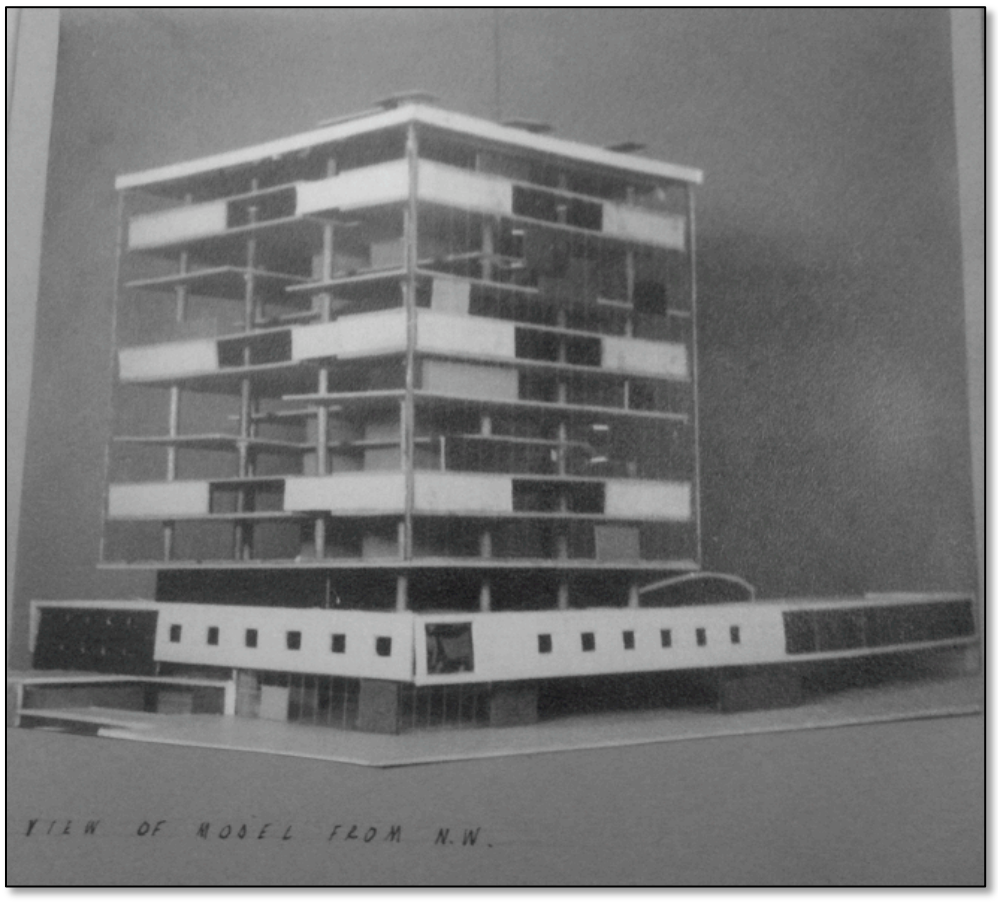

Figure 3.5 – Woodham's model of a new museum for London, 1953 © K.N. Woodham

Without premises during the post war period, the city museum was again

problematized and its relationship with the city was re-examined. Woodham's work provides a glimpse into the city museum's landscape in the middle of the twentieth century: it reflects the critical assumptions about museum space, the scale of urban rebuilding projects and expresses an ambitious, ideal form of a new kind of city museum.

Woodham's idea of a New Museum for London is a remarkable departure from the London Museum's earlier housing. Woodham's approach at first looks like a different approach to that of the redesign for the MCNY in figure 3.3, but in the context of the redevelopment of the South Bank for the 1951 Festival of Britain the building is less startling. Woodham's design was near the Festival Pavilion and includes a pavillion-like low roof; connected with its landscape and surroundings, and part of the redevelopment of the South Bank (figure 3.6).

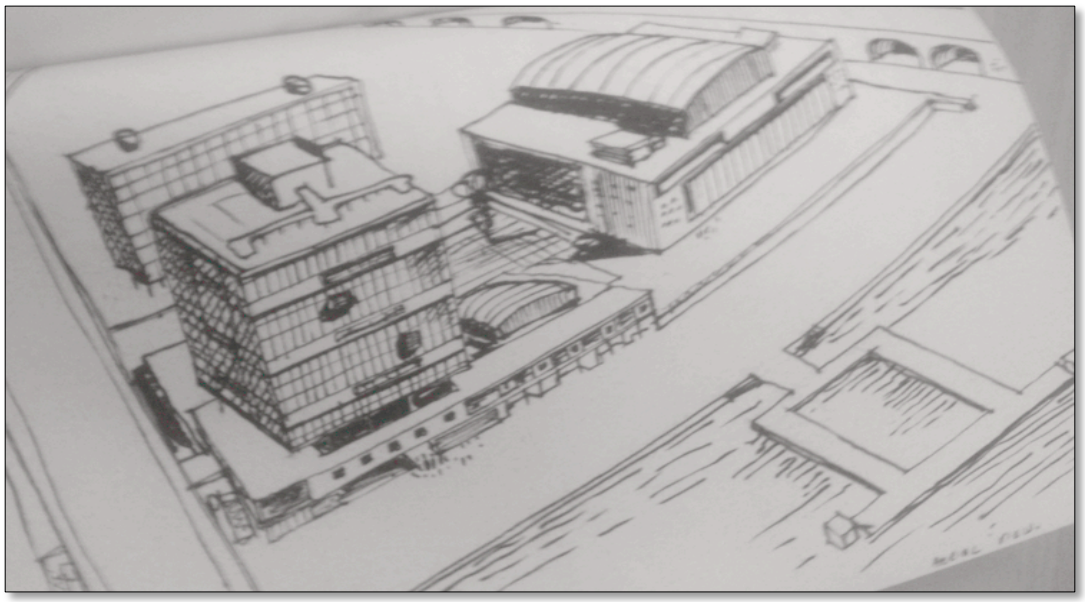

Figure 3.6 - Woodham's design for the London Museum © K.N. Woodham

The London Museum is on the left, situated to the East of the Royal Festival Hall [1951] on the South Bank of the Thames facing the river

Woodham's thesis allowed him the scope to consider the museum as a whole, a scale of thinking not accommodated in the adopted homes of the London Museum's early years as it adapted to its allocated rooms. Woodham's wholesale re-imagination of the museum was a significant undertaking. Many city museums have not been in a position to make such comprehensive approaches: a 2012

Carnavalet guide explains that 'The collections have been divided up as the museum expanded in an old buildings whose architecture had to be preserved' ([sic] Musée Carnavalet, 2010: 10).

The mid twentieth century period saw new understandings of the contextual significance of arrangements of objects. A resurgence of interest in objects' symbolic significance took place, and Jean Baudrillard's thesis, *Le Système des Objets*, (The System of Objects) discussed objects' 'perpetual flight' from their inherent form towards 'secondary meanings' amongst ideologies (Baudrillard, 1968: 6). Museum collections were one example of the process of the object's ideological context and secondary meaning being explored and deliberately disrupted. For Baudrillard it was essential to understand the ideological system and the objects' secondary meanings in order to understand the objects themselves, and Pearce has argued that from around 1960 research into semiotics started to influence the organization of museums (Pearce, 1989: 6). Woodham's research occurred early in the academic study of museums, and in 1966 the UK's first dedicated Museum Studies department opened at the University of Leicester.

In her study of gifted objects from the Wellcome collection in the middle of the century, Jude Hill showed how the arrangement of objects in an American university museum purposely reflected a different academic understanding of an anthropological collection than the ideological context of its collection (Hill, 2006). Woodham anticipated these ideas, and understood that an object's meaning is not fixed and innate, but dependent on context. Woodham accommodated some of these notions into his plans for a new London Museum, which sought to provide scope for a shifting context for the museum's diverse collection of objects. Woodham argued that: 'from the wide range of exhibits, by reason of their relative sizes and types from a pin-cushion to a fire-engine, that a completely flexible arrangement is essential' (Woodham, 1953: 7).

Although Woodham advocated a flexible arrangement of objects, he was keen that such juxtapositions of objects remained structured. 'A haphazard layout is not conducive to clarity' Woodham insisted, arguing that: 'there must be a logical sequence. Thus, for an historical museum, that sense of order is best achieved by

using a chronological sequence, starting from the earliest times and continuing through to the present day' (Woodham, 1953: 7). This approach to museum display has subsequently been criticized; as such a structure is one means by which museums 'create the illusion of a continuous thread and a unified message' despite the fact that often their subject matter is 'neither coherent or complete' (Psarra, 2005: 92). Perhaps because of its pretentions to appear complete, the linear visitor structure had its roots in nineteenth-century museology, where museums, and especially natural history museums, expressed a 'commitment to provide the visitor with a linear route within which an evolutionary itinerary might be accomplished' (Bennett, 1995: 181).

Woodham argued that 'in a museum of the history of London the period from the late 17th century onwards must occupy proportionately the greatest amount of space' (Woodham, 1953: 6). This allocation of space reflected the London Museum's collection, which was spread out over the time of London's inhabitation but weighted towards the later centuries. This kind of consideration and sense of spatial balance is something that Sheppard's research shows would be discussed again, in the 1970s at the Museum of London (Sheppard, 1991). Woodham's thesis shows some clear comprehension of how visitors make meaning as they move around the museum, but nothing as sophisticated as later computer aided modelling and visitor tracking research (Serrell, 1998).

Elsewhere in London the Guildhall Museum had also been disrupted by war. It was closed for over four years during the First World War, and again throughout most of 1921 'on account of the unsettled state caused by the Irish disturbances' (Sheppard, 1991: 135). During the Second World War the Guildhall Museum's objects were moved to storage in Berkshire, protected from the bombing raids in 1940 and 1941 that damaged the Guildhall library (Sheppard, 1991: 142). However, the museum was not protected from the wishes of the Guildhall's librarian, Raymond Smith, who aimed to expand the library into the museum premises. Before the museum's objects were removed from storage after the war ended, Smith began storing books in the museum, and by 1946 this had become the Corporation of London policy (Sheppard, 1991: 142). Despite the Guildhall Museum's lack of accommodation and similar subject matter Woodham argued

‘there is no real case for combining the two museums under one roof’ (Woodham, 1953: 4).

Although Woodham did not appreciate the case for it, the two museums would later be combined into the Museum of London, whose purpose-built building opened in 1976. Despite this oversight, Woodham did give consideration to the future of the city museum: not only did Woodham include scope for helicopter travel, but understood that the museum should be prepared to accommodate exhibitions about years that had not yet happened as space for new galleries. Woodham’s ideas were linked with new approaches to museum architecture. Pitt Rivers had raised the notion of a museum as a ‘continuous spiral’ in 1891, as a way to move smoothly between galleries (see Bennett, 1995: 183). In 1939 Le Corbusier sketched a spiral shaped museum that sought to resolve the issue of an expanding collection by allowing scope to extend the spiral (Storrie, 2007: 167). Le Corbusier’s *Musée à croissance illimitée* (‘unlimited growth museum’) was an idea that would be adapted and adopted at other sites: Sanskar Kendra in Ahmedabbad (1957), the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, Japan (1959) and the Governmental Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh, India (1965).

Powell, Moya & Partners, the architects who had designed the Skylon tower at the Festival of Britain, designed the 1976 Museum of London. The Powell, Moya & Partners museum performs the connection between the museum and the city in its architecture. The museum’s new building is embedded in the cityscape: beneath a tower block, butting up against Ironmonger’s Hall, incorporating a large roundabout and accessible via the Barbican’s network of high walks (Brawne, 1977). Although the Museum of London is not included in lists of Corbusian museums, it was built on the South West corner of the Barbican complex, London’s most prominent Le Corbusier-influenced development. The Museum of London’s spiralling visitor path reflects Pitt Rivers’, if not Le Corbusier’s ideas. The thesis’ introduction briefly discussed how the building structured the visit along a linear path, following a chronology that led the visitor from the Thames in Prehistory to London in the twenty first century. This route reflected earlier attempts at this approach at the Carnavalet and the London Museum’s accommodation in Kensington Palace, both of which had to make do with signage to direct visitors

around their adapted accommodation. Bennett describes this approach: 'the museum thus functioned and was experienced as a form of organized walking through evolutionary time' (Bennett, 1995: 186). This sense of motion reflected an understanding of history as progression, and, unlike at the Carnavalet its purpose built accommodation allowed it to do so unimpeded.

Museum architecture affects the kinds of displays that can occur within it and Fleming has identified examples of 'architecture dominating and overwhelming the museum' (Fleming, 2005: 57). The purpose of this section has been to make a more nuanced argument; that because the city museum is part of its subject matter, its premises are bound up in ideas about its relationship with the city. Robertson argued that a focus on location allows a more fruitful understanding of 'the physical and social/political context offer equally important information as an internal history of a museum's development' (Robertson, 2004: 10). In the example of a museum embedded in its own subject matter, an appreciation of the significance of location is vital. The city museum should be understood as part of the city, and this section of the chapter has discussed the building as an expression of the relationship between the city museum and its subject matter.

Museum buildings shape what can be achieved within them. Museum buildings like those of the Carnavalet present difficulties in the reinterpretation of space, and architectural features interrupt the visitor path at key points (Bennett, 1995: 184). Woodham's forecast for the need to build in flexibility was important, because, as MacLeod argues in the introduction to an edition of museum architecture, for museums 'production is continual and ongoing through occupation and use' (MacLeod, 2005: 21). The 1976 Museum of London appointed architects to develop the building and another firm to fit out the interior gallery space as a way to mitigate this, but early reviewers noted the difficulties of changing the Museum of London's presentation (Brawne, 1977). Museum buildings affect how the city can be represented within them, and displays require updating to keep up with new research and conservation requirements. Museum buildings must be reinterpreted, and the next section of the chapter discusses how the same process of reinterpretation applies to museums' collections.

Reinterpreting the Collection

> ‘The public is at times bemused at what is on display in museums, because they imagine one just sat down one day and chose what one wanted to use to tell the history of the city’
> (Lohman, 2010: 67).

This section of this chapter looks inside the city museum, at another of the key negotiations that city museums make. Lohman’s quotation alludes to the work that the city museum must do to reconcile narratives about the city with the material in the city museum’s collections. Earlier, this chapter touched on how city museums collected objects at the start of the twentieth century. At different times in their history city museums have placed a different emphasis on either the desire to present a comprehensive narrative of the city, or the desire to display the highlights of their own particular, partial, collections. This section of the chapter looks at the implications of this collected material in New York in the 1920s and London in the 1970s, and argues that city museums negotiate between the stories they aim to tell and the inherited collections they use to tell them.

Brown’s successor at the MCNY, Hardinge Scholle, was appointed director in 1925, and with the support of a board member and founder, James Speyer, took a new approach to New York’s history (Page, 1999: 53). Upon his appointment as museum director, Scholle travelled to the European city museums. Like the MCNY, Scholle found the London Museum had acquired much that was not specific to its city, and in Paris Scholle found the Carnavalet in a state of atrophy, which he attributed to a lack of interest in contemporary collecting (Page, 1999: 55). With the prospect of new premises for the MCNY, Scholle and Speyer sought to improve on the work of the London Museum and the Carnavalet.

The MCNY’s collection of furnishings did not extend to those used by New York’s working class, and Scholle sought a new means to present a history that included working people. Sarah Henry, chief curator and deputy director of the MCNY, argues that, in the 1930s the MCNY responded creatively to the absence of material culture:

> "They didn't have real artefacts from the working class but as a museological technique they said we can still have a visual history, we'll just have to make it... They were fixing the same paucity of physical, material culture from the eras that museums now tend to address with multimedia. If you don't have a thing, well you can make a documentary, or you could do a virtual recreation, so [the diorama] is their virtual recreation, this was their web in 1935."
> (Henry, interview, 17th March 2009).

Whilst Brown's priority had been preserving the material evidence of New York's gilded age within the museum's collection, Scholle's priority was for the MCNY to present a synoptic narrative about New York's history. When Scholle replaced Brown the MCNY changed from a museum that emerged from the desire to collect evidence of New York's Golden Age, and became a museum driven by the ambitious aim to represent the story of New York's past.

When the Museum of London opened in 1976 it aimed to present an entire historical sequence, similarly to what Scholle had sought to achieve at the MCNY. The Museum of London faced the same difficulties as Scholle: a chronological approach would mean facing up to the same kinds of gaps and weaknesses in the collection that the MCNY had confronted. Furthermore, the Museum of London's foundation coincided with a critical re-examination of museums, which included the development of the discipline of Museum Studies. In her history of city museums, Kavanagh argues that the 1970s brought change for UK museums, a time 'when Marxist critiques in particular began to reveal the class-based nature of museum provision. The exclusion of the histories of labour (organized or disorganized) was glaringly obvious, as were the histories of women' (Kavanagh, 1998: 9).

As well as museums' new academic critics in the 1970s museums began to face internal critics. 'Angered and impassioned at the now-obvious exclusions' writes Kavanagh, 'the more radical curators began to change exhibits, sometimes using huge texts to cover for the fact that collections relating to the history of the city were inadequate' (Kavanagh, 1998: 9). At the Museum of London this redress was present in the work of Colin Sorensen, the museum's Keeper of the Modern Department. In his history of the museum, Sheppard describes Sorensen's approach

to address the museum's exclusions, and his work to extend the Museum of London's collections:

> 'To Colin Sorensen, however, the then still widely accepted axiom in museums that 'If you haven't got an object, you can't deal with the subject' was anathema. The Sorensian attitude was that: 'If you haven't got an object, you either go and get one, or you find another way of dealing with the subject - you do not just ignore or exclude it.'
> (Sheppard, 1991: 172-3).

Sorensen drew on the London Museum's tradition of contemporary collecting. During the first world war the London Museum had made some astute acquisitions, such as a set of women's work uniforms (Ross, 1998: 122). The London Museum's war acquisitions had 'demonstrated how a detailed effective and long-term record of human experience could be created by astute contemporary collection, an approach highly suited to city history' and it was this line that Sorenson sought to pursue (Kavanagh, 1998: 8).

Sorensen's contribution was remarkable, because when the Museum of London opened in 1976: 'about three quarters of the objects displayed in the nineteenth-century galleries, and virtually everything in the twentieth-century rooms, had been obtained by Colin Sorensen and his able departmental colleagues within the last five years' (Sheppard, 1991: 173). Sorensen's approach to collecting meant the Museum of London could be described as 'object-rich and evocative' and did not rely on the use of extensive texts to fill gaps in the collection (Kavanagh, 1998: 9). Critics praised the visual contents of the Museum of London's galleries: 'Context is here given not so much by verbal description as by actual visual material; the communication has thus the characteristics, which seem most appropriate to a museum rather than using those of the illustrated book' (Brawne, 1977). Sorensen's ambition to deal with subjects about which the museum did not already have an object meant refusing to let the museum's historic narrative be defined by the objects in the museum's existing collections.

As Alpers has argued, 'what the museum registers is visual distinction, not necessarily cultural significance... museums turn cultural materials into art objects' (1990: 30). As a visual medium, the museum has specific requirements for its

material. Sorensen's ability to collect material that made London's twentieth-century history visible was crucial to the Museum of London's success. At the MCNY, and to some extent at the London Museum, 'the middle and upper classes could be celebrated by the evidence of their conspicuous consumption (decorative art collections), but the experiences, beliefs and attitudes of those who made such fine things went unrecorded' (Kavanagh, 1998: 7). As the MCNY's chief curator Sarah Henry describes, city museums are still seeking to balance the stories they wish to tell about urban history, with the collections they have at their disposal to do so:

> "the challenge for the history museum is very much related to the challenge that historians face in looking at the available sources but it's actually magnified for history museums. A historian can go to any one of a very wide variety of sources, whereas a museum is essentially a visual medium... A historian could write a vivid account of what they gleaned from these documents, and what a museum can do with written sources is very, very limited."
>
> (Henry, interview, 17th March 2009).

The crucial visibility of narrative at the city museum brought specific challenges to the project of 'History from Below', and in 1974 the Social History Curators Group formed to discuss how museums could carry out social history work. Social history was often associated with museums of place, as Davies and Whittaker argued in their research into how social history developed in museums (Davies and Whittaker, 1992: 3). Sorensen was a member of the group, and contributed to the group's discussions of how best to collect social history material, with a particular focus on collecting film of the city (Mullins, 1985: 45).

The Museum of London's early years in the 1970s provide an example of a museum's response to the imbalance between collection and narrative. Sorensen's approach to redressing the imbalance between the Guildhall and London Museum collections and the ambitions of the Museum of London represent an overt attempt at the same process of reconciliation attempted at the Museum of the City of New York in the 1930s. Sorensen's work occurred with the historiographical context of the History from Below project, but was the same process of negotiation that has characterized city museums from their outset.

Celebration

The history from below approach that had informed city museums in the 1970s gained momentum in the following years, and shaped museum discourse. The 1980s saw a resurgence of self-conscious novelty in museums, and the decade saw the arrival of the 'new museology' which involved a 'radical re-examination of the rôle of museums' (Vergo, 1989: 3). City museums were, arguably, at the 'vanguard of changes taking place in museums' from the 1980s and began to invest in a more active social role than ever before (Ross, 1998: 125). The development of the Museum of London in the 1970s pre-dated a wave of urban museum developments and redevelopments in the 1980s that matched a presentation of urban history with a social mission. Institutions championed history from below, adopting a celebratory tone to herald the new narratives: *Great City!* in Newcastle; the *The Story of Hull and its People* exhibition; and *The People's Story* in Edinburgh and the redisplay of the People's Palace Museum in Glasgow all used social history for social aims.

New institutions, like the Merseyside Museum of Labour History, were keen to display their 'dedication to the subject' (Kavanagh, 1998: 10). Frostick's exhibition book, *The Story of Hull and its People*, is typical of these new social history approaches (Frostick, 1990). Writing as social history keeper at Hull City Museums and Art Galleries, Frostick aimed to 'retrieve the people from the history of place-names, buildings, famous men (and occasionally women), government, officialdom, exceptional events and inanimate objects. It is more of a 'and what was it like for you?' approach, the celebration of people's lives' (Frostick, quoted in Ross, 1998: 124). This newer form of social history followed academic history's lead and extended its focus beyond class, under influence 'from those who saw greater significance in race and gender as the great organising principles of social relations' (Ross, 2010: 30).

City museums rallied in the face of perceived urban deterioration. Mike Wallace's approach at the Museum of the City of New York sought to combat urban decline using exhibition techniques that would play a role in 'reconstituting civic comity

and saving our cities' (Wallace, 1998: 19). Museums like Croydon's *Lifetimes* sought to improve the experience of living in the city by creating a sense of local identity and pride (MacDonald, 1998). City museums also aimed to expand their audiences, reaching out to represent 'people who are alienated by or distracted from the museum idea, and to empower people in the making of their own histories' (Kavanagh, 1998: 11). As the social aims of city museums became more significant, social history became more central to these museums' work. Articles by people working at city museums populated the pages of the Social History Curators Group's publications, as the radical social history curators matched their interest in social history with a new kind of museum activism.

In Britain, as Kavanagh argues, museums 'carry the evidence of local authority attitudes towards cultures and education, leisure and tourism, access and plurality' (Kavanagh, 1998: 15). Local councils at this time were funding museums as part of redevelopment work, for example in Croydon where MacDonald wrote that: 'Senior officers within the Council perceived that Croydon had an image problem and that this was key to its economic future' (MacDonald, 1998: 61). Local councils' money gave a chance for museums to enact new ideas and new approaches, but this relationship also meant that councils were using museums' eagerness to celebrate diverse histories as a part of their cultural policy, as a part of civic boosterism in challenging negative perceptions of their cities.

This celebratory form was felt by some to challenge the credibility of the city history museum, and self-conscious notes of caution appeared amongst the optimism. At the end of his 1998 treatise on the social role of the city museum, Wallace conceded that: 'there are perils, perhaps, in getting so deeply involved with the development of one's host city - the high enthusiasm of the 'nouveau boosterism' might conceivably blunt one's critical historical sensibilities' (Wallace, 1998: 38). Presenting a balanced narrative in the circumstances of cities in the 1980s and 1990s was crucial, and museums were keen that their new social history narratives avoided the patrician tone taken in their early years.

These ideological changes relating to how the city museum should represent the city were manifest in new approaches to display. These museums took a thematic

approach, as opposed to the Museum of London's chronological structure. At the People's Palace in Glasgow: 'new displays have been organized thematically, rather than chronologically' (Kavanagh, 1998: 13). In Hull Frostick also structured adopted a thematic approach, following the stages of a person's life, beginning with childhood and advancing through age, instead of presenting a historic chronology (Frostick, 1990).

Critics began to identify a move away from the material of the collection towards a narative emphasis, in what Frostick later called a 'shift from an object-centred to a people-centred approach' (Frostick, 1998: 193). In the museum writing of the period, objects are de-centred, becoming one of a number of methods to represent history, as in David Fleming's discussion of technology in museums, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 (Fleming, 1998: 145). Alongside the de-centring of the object came a de-centering of curatorial authority. Having joined the Museum of London, Cathy Ross advocated the collaborative approach of 'constructing the city's history as a partnership between the public and curators' (Ross, 1998: 125). At Croydon's *Lifetimes* museum, MacDonald experimented with new ways of collecting material objects, making a public appeal for donations of objects (MacDonald, 1998: 66).

Having pre-empted the new 1980s city museology, the Museum of London occupied an ambivalent position during this period, during which it was both praised and criticised for its appraoch. Being a larger museum, and covering a larger area than other British city museums, the Museum of London was on the periphery of the new wave of city museum projects. Whilst the Museum of London had been praised as object-rich in early reviews, in the wake of the new museology, critics now found the displays text-heavy: 'In the Museum of London artefacts are essentially used to authenticate the social description written around them. 'Written' because the museum is in many ways a book around which the visitor may wander' (Shanks and Tilley 1992, quoted in Black, 2005: 273). However an influential 1993 temporary exhibition, *The Peopling of London: 15,000 years of Settlement from Overseas*, drew praise, and will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter (Kavanagh, 1998: 12).

Reflecting on the representation of cities in museums Ross argued that 'the trend has been away from city museum as civic trophy room, monolithic narrative or static celebration of a past 'golden age'' (Ross, 1998: 116). Museums found new ways to celebrate their cities. The social histories of urban space invited museums to celebrate the city's inhabitants, rather than celebrating the means of its organisation. Local authorities' interest in funding museums with a social purpose allowed a period of experimentation. Rather than highlighting a past golden age, in the 1980s and early 1990s museums celebrated the populations of their cities. Instead of celebrating the visual aspect of decorative arts, as city museums had done since Van Rensselaer's time, museums shifted the emphasis, and were more likely to celebrate the skill of the craftspeople and manufacterers. This shift in tone, fought for by a generation of innovative museum workers, shaped the future of city museums. When in 2008 the Museum of London's Director Jack Lohman asked 'what sort of a city it is we ought to celebrate?' the question underlined the assumption of a celebratory tone, but also reflected the options available to city museums (Lohman, 2008b: 61). For later city museum figures it is nothing short of the museum's responsibility to celebrate the city, which Lohman notes gives the museum the opportunity to 'benefit hugely in return' (Lohman, 2008b: 67).

Despite its adoption to the mainstream work of museums, this work remained contentious for several years. When the Museum of London displayed 'History Painting' by John Bartlett, which depicted anti-poll tax protestors in Trafalgar Square in 1990, some MPs complained that the museum should celebrate 'much greater episodes' of London's history (Kavanagh, 1998: 2). The 1980s new museology consolidated threads that had run through iterations of city history museums, and the approach to celebrating the city shaped the city museum of the 1990s and beyond. This phase of city museum work showed the potential of the city museum to adapt to new approaches to history. City museums proved themselves to be meaningful, useful and exciting ways to collect and represent history. City museums' lack of established generic conventions accommodated a new wave of museology, worked through in museums by a group of innovative staff. The next section of this chapter discusses how city museums presented the city as place, but this phase of city museum work demonstrated the city museum's ability to represent, and celebrate, the city's population.

Global and Local

With a renewed interest in looking at identity, in 1993 the Museum of London put on the exhibition *The Peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas* (Merriman, 1993). The book and exhibition sought 'to establish the part immigrants have played in the creation of London' (Khan, 1994). The museum also hoped to attract more visitors from ethnic minorities by presenting the history of migration into London (Selwood, Schwarz and Merriman, 1996: 11). The exhibition and its accompanying book placed London in a global context, examining the city's links with other cities and countries through the story of London's inhabitants. This was part of a broad reconsideration of London's global context at the time. In April 1993 the Museum of London hosted a symposium called 'Reflecting Cities' which brought representatives from the world's city museums together in London (Johnson, 1993). The new emphasis on the global context of the city was characteristic of the next years of city museums, and this final section of the chapter will examine how the city museum places the city within a local and global context.

The 1993 'Reflecting Cities' symposium was the 'first to discuss [city museums'] problems, to develop theories and methodologies and to promote our special place in the museum movement worldwide' (Hebditch, 1993: 1). Delegates from New York, St Petersburg, Zagreb, Bucharest, Ljubljana, Warsaw, Jerusalem, Birmingham, Victoria, Montréal, Vancouver, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Barcelona convened in London to discuss city museums (Johnson, 1993). This formal sharing of ideas surpassed the existing networks of informal connections and visits, of which Scholle's 1920s tour of the European city museums for the MCNY was part (Page, 1999: 55). At the symposium discussions were grouped around several themes: interpreting the city; relationships; reflecting cultures; reflecting political change; and skills and collection (Johnson, 1993). The strand entitled 'Reflecting Political change' was dominated by papers from city museums in countries from the former Soviet Union, but the other themes had a more even geographic spread (Johnson, 1993).

In his keynote to the circulated papers of the symposium Max Hebditch, the Museum of London's director, noted that the 'symposium was agreed that museums of cities must address and reflect the life of all citizens and inhabitants and not the culturally dominant group alone. The museum clearly has a role to describe and explain cultural diversity' however Hebditch also noted that 'it was by no means so sure that the museum, as part of their mission, should proceed positively to promote multiculturalism' (Hebditch, 1993: 5). The Museum of London was a step ahead of more cautious museums, as *Peopling the City* recognised the value of London's diverse population, and 'its rich history of cultural diversity, something we can all celebrate and of which we can be proud' (Merriman and Visram, 1993: 25).

The promotion of multiculturalism may not have figured in all city museums' aims at the start of this period, but in the following years a number of projects opened that sought exactly that. In 1994 the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York was designated a national historic landmark. The museum examined the histories of one specific building, exploring its waves of immigrant inhabitants in order 'to break down stereotypes about immigrants and to draw attention to the immigrant experience past and present' (Russel-Ciardi, 2008: 40). In East London the building at 19 Princelet Street set up as a Museum of Immigration and Diversity and represented the Huguenot, Jewish and Bangladeshi inhabitants of the building. These museums combined the stories of their buildings and their inhabitants with a narrative that celebrated the contributions of migrants and contemporary multiculturalism. By constructing the personal histories connected with the buildings, these museums of urban history used their historic buildings in ways that the Carnavalet, the London Museum at Lancaster House and the MCNY at Gracie Mansion had not managed. The new museums interpreted their buildings as objects, and the '*elements architecturaux*' were not just preserved, but were used to discuss the social and historical geographies of the city. The Tenement Museum in particular established a successful approach to balance the evocation and explanation of the past at an urban history museum.

In May 2003 the Museum in Docklands opened as a sister museum to the Museum of London (Museum of London, 2004d). Displaying much of the Museum of

London's Port and River collection, the museum was housed in a former warehouse in London's docklands. Like the Tenement Museum, the Museum in Docklands (now called Museum of London Docklands) used the history of the building as part of its historic narrative, making links between the site and its use over time. In its descriptions of the galleries the museum argued that: 'the building was literally a cog in the machinery of slavery, its owners the merchants and absentee plantation landlords who harvested profits from the suffering of others' (Spence in Bressey and Wareham, 2010: 7).

Whilst some urban museums developed a localised, building-based approach to presenting global narratives, the international discourse between city museums discussed global urbanization with increasing urgency. In 1993 the United Nations predicted that more than half the world's human population would live in cities by 2005 (United Nations, 1993). This point did not pass city museums by, and at the 1993 Reflecting Cities symposium Max Hebditch argued that 'dwelling in cities is the principal human phenomenon of our times' (Hebditch, 1993:1). This point was stressed with increasing urgency when city museum representatives met, and was repeatedly emphasised as the years passed (see Fleming, 1998: 138; Unsworth, 1998: 185; Stephens, 2005: 22; Grewcock, 2006: 5, Jones, 2008: 2). Iterations of the United Nations' prediction were spoken of as a challenge to city museums, and as a factor that required a response. For most, the question was used to advocate the significance of city museums, and to emphasise the urgency of developing the ways that city museums present history. In her introduction to the 2005 conference *City museums as centres of civic dialogue* Renee Kistemaker typified this response, when she questioned whether city museums would be able to cope with the fact that 'within two years, half the world's population will live in a city. How will city museums handle this? Are we prepared?' (Kistemaker, 2006: 4). In 2008 Max Hebditch revisited the discussion he had highlighted fifteen years before, challenging the common assumption that urban living equated to living in big cities and suggesting how museums in smaller urban centres could respond to global change (Hebditch, 2008: 114).

Alongside the new historic building museums and the discussion amongst city museums about global urbanization came experimental approaches to presenting

urban life in museums. Urbis opened in Manchester in 2002, with another self-consciously new approach to presenting urban history. Urbis aimed 'to tell the story not just of Manchester but of all cities, and five in particular: Tokyo, Singapore, Paris, Sao Paolo and Los Angeles' (Sudjic, 2002). Devised after the IRA bombing of the Arndale centre in 1996, Urbis was an ambitious part of the city's regeneration, and used lottery funding distributed through the Millenium Commission (Houston, 2006). Under its founding director, Elizabeth Usher, Urbis eschewed involvement with the existing approaches and growing networks of city museums, focussing on its connections with the Manchester Institute for Popular Culture and avoiding all descriptions of the project as a city museum (Ward, 2003). As with the Museum of London the visitor followed a planned route through the building, beginning at the top of the museum, then moving through exhibitions that wound around and down. Visitor numbers were lower than projected, and reviewers were highly critical of Urbis' exhibits (Sudjic, 2002). Vaughan Allen, Urbis' final director conceded that 'The idea of being the 'museum of the city' just didn't work' (Turner, 2010). Usher left in 2003 by mutual consent and Urbis devoted its exhibitions to popular culture: exhibits on Japanese manga, computer games and the Hacienda followed (Ward, 2003). Despite showing improvement in its later years visitor numbers remained lower than hoped, and Urbis closed. In 2012 the site reopened as the National Football Museum (Airey, 2012).

In 2005 a new International Council of Museums (ICOM) committee was formed for city museums. The International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC) broke away from associations that defined city museums by the material in the collections, rather than their subject matter: 'the creation of the new city museum committee was opposed by some members of another ICOM international group, the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History (ICMAH)' (Stephens, 2005: 24). CAMOC was also a departure from the more informal International Association of City Museums, and 'the committee broke fresh ground in that it was to be a forum for not only museum professionals, but also for architects, urban planners, historians, sociologists, geographers-indeed for anyone with an interest and involvement with the city' (Jones, 2008: 7). The inclusion of a range of disciplines was important to a new generation of museum directors who placed great importance in connecting

with the city in new ways, like the Museum of London's Jack Lohman who argued that 'Making outward contact with the capital—in terms of architecture, situation, attitude—is essential' (Lohman, 2008b: 67). Emphasising the city's connections reflected a theoretical interpretation of the city as a series of flows that was gaining momentum. Texts like Massey's *World City* (2007) and Amin and Thrift's *Cities: Reimagining the Urban* (2002) represented some of the innovative approaches CAMOC's delegates aspired to for the city museum. This discourse destabilized the idea of the city as a site for a kind of metropolitan history, and rather than the artefact-focus of earlier city museum associations it presented the city as an experience. Just as individuals once competed to represent their ideas of the city in different city museums, in the early 2000s city museum committees pursued their own ideas about what the city museum should or could be.

In 2008 CAMOC published the book *City Museums and City Development*, which marked how city museums themselves had become more networked and global since 1993 (Jones, McDonald & McIntyre, 2009). CAMOC's members organised regular conferences and wrote numerous publications, and unsurprisingly were keen advocates of the idea of the city museum. Museum of London Directors Lohman and Hebditch each had a chapter in the book, and were both involved in CAMOC's programme of conferences and publications. At times both Lohman and Hebditch proved instrumental advocates for CAMOC, although Simon Thurley, who served as Museum of London director in the period between Hebditch and Lohman, did not become involved in these discussions. *City Museums and City Development* was drawn from conference papers, and was typical of CAMOC's tone, arguing that 'the twenty-first century—when cities will be, even more, the places where people live and where so much will happen—ought to be the moment of the city museum' (Orloff, 2008: 27). Other museums were keen to respond to this mood, and when the London Transport Museum reopened in 2007 after redevelopment its introductory exhibit was a walkway that passed through outsized transit maps from world cities, orientating the visitor within a global context (London Transport Museum, 2007). The mood and appetite for global city exhibitions extended beyond city museums, and in 2007 two UK contemporary art galleries took up the discussion: in London Tate Modern presented the exhibition *Global Cities* and Bristol's Arnolfini put on *Port City*, which included a composite

city model made of sugar, by the artist Meschac Gaba (Tate Modern, 2007; Mahoney, 19/09/07).

Also in 2007 the *London, Sugar and Slavery* gallery opened at the Museum in Docklands. It was one of several museum projects that marked the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery, alongside other port city museums in Liverpool and Bristol. In the foreword of a booklet published when the galleries opened, the Museum in Docklands' director David Spence argued that the subject of slavery was essential:

> 'The business of slavery primed hundreds of companies, banks and private estates, and amongst other things paid for some of the art that now hangs on the walls of London's greatest public galleries... for that reason alone any museum that purports to narrate the history of London must include a gallery on London and the transatlantic slave trade'
> (Spence quoted in in Bressey and Wareham, 2010: 7).

The gallery functioned as a memorial space, self-consciously conveying the lasting effects of old global processes that contemporary research had highlighted (Buntinx and Karp, 2006). The building itself was used as evidence of a mercantile, imperial and financially powerful city, confluent with the models of power and influence Sassen and Friedmann were developing to categorise world and global cities (Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 1991).

As Black argues, 'history galleries should play to the strengths museums offer, and those all involve direct encounters with the past through the objects and other material that has survived' (Black, 2005: 273-4). Around the millennium the Museum of London began another phase of experimentatal contemporary collecting, gathering objects nominated by community groups in the Collecting 2000 project. Collecting 2000 sought both to include diverse communities and invite them to choose how to represent themselves.

Emerging from this period of questioning and discussion came a new, more selective approach that no longer sought to present a mirror to all of the city. As Black wrote: 'if a full description of the 'story of the city' in all its aspects were the absolute priority, a better and much cheaper solution would be to publish an

illustrated book' (Black, 2005: 273). The Museum of London did in fact publish a book: *London: An Illustrated History* that came out in 2008 (Museum of London, Clark and Ross, 2008). Amongst new museums and new approaches, the old city museums in Paris, New York and London continued, learning from their own galleries, other experiments and from new networks with other museums.

In the 1990s and 2000s city museums began to cooperate internationally through formal networks, and this working context was reflected in the way that they represented their cities. Bold attempts to show the city in an international context were undertaken, although it was those that linked these narratives in their specific surroundings that proved most successful. City museums' new interest in one another was matched by displays that conveyed a greater degree of reflexivity. City Museums like the Museum in Docklands and the Tenement Museum made good use of old buildings, using their premises to convey narratives about the city's global connections. These museums, and projects like *Peopling the Museum* represented a significant phase in museum work, where the city was represented as experience that, although rooted in place, was not confined to it.

The City and the Museum

As Mumford described, the city and the museum are compellingly connected. Describing the British Library's account of its past and relationship with the British Museum, Pile argued that: 'the implication was that the Museum was born of London' (Pile, 2005: 524). Despite the compelling connections between their form and subject matter, city museums are 'contingent on the political, economic, social, and geographical circumstances in which they find themselves' (Hebditch, 2010: 118). As this chapter has shown, city museums are in constant process of development. This chapter identified a series of approaches to understanding city museums: about narratives, collections, individuals, institutions, explanation, evocation, geographic scope and celebration. These ideas provide a means to understand the shapes and scopes of city museums, exploring how the museum's response to the city has changed over time.

The first section of this chapter looked at the earliest city museums, considering the

display techniques and their influences. Tracing the eighteenth century cabinet of curiosities through to the nineteenth century city museum, the chapter argued that city museums were atypical museums, influenced by playful and commercial exhibitions, theatres and panoramas that populated cities. Unlike many museums, who Bennett argues sought to distance themselves from burgeoning urban attractions, city museums drew on their playful, multi-sensory techniques and challenged the idea of the totalizing museum. City museums sought to evoke lost phases of cities as urban space developed, and by opening in older buildings created immersive historic environments. Even when opening in new premises museums adapted theatrical techniques, evoking street scenes in galleries like *Kirkgate* and *Victorian Walk.* Reviewers recognized this playfulness, and described the Museum of London as 'being more in the nature of a waxworks show than a place of high erudition' (Brawne, 1977).

Exploring the early years of the Museum of the City of New York, the second part of this chapter focussed on how individuals used their agency to influence the ways institutions represented cities. Taking two contemporaries, the chapter showed how individuals made decisions that shaped the city museum, questioning, disrupting and challenging one another's work. The chapter showed how individuals within and outside institutions competed for support and resources, illustrating the diverse agendas of figures in the development of the city museum and how their divergent agency affected institutions.

Urban rebuilding projects following the disruption and devastation of war brought with them the opportunity to re-explore the notion and form of the city museum. Woodham's work on 'a new museum for London' provides a useful resource to explore how the London Museum's relationship with London was conceptualised. The city provided the physical landscape for Woodham's imagined museum, which was accompanied by a growing academic interest in studying museums as a subject in their own right. Writing about the Museum of London in the 2000s, Museum of London Director Lohman argued that 'when properly designed, new museums should be as varied and surprising as the locations in which they stand' (Lohman, 2008a: 88). This part of the chapter showed how the geographical, spatial, historical and cultural setting of the city museum is affected by the location and form of the

museum's physical presence within the city.

The next part of the chapter discussed how city museums have responded to disparities between narrative and collection. This part of the chapter has argued that museums have sought to balance their collections and narratives in different ways throughout their existence, as curators and museum staff have tried to reconcile the same kinds of issues in different ways. These material decisions are a way to look into city museum work, and city museums themselves. The decisions about objects in the city museum enact the idea of the museum, providing a manifestation of individuals' ideas about urban history museums. This brief discussion of how museums respond to collections and narratives provides context for this thesis, which examines how curators at the Museum of London negotiated the same issues in the making of the Galleries of Modern London. Scholle and Speyer, Sorensen and contemporary curators like Henry all work at the interface of collection and narrative, and all negotiate a balance between the two in the context of their institution, their research, and their city.

The London Museum had begun as a 'patrician' city museum, taking a 'boosterish' tone to talk up its city and its governance (Ross, 1998). By the 1990s, the Museum of London was celebrating a different model of the city, with the contributions of multicultural Londoners at its core. New urban museums sought to use their position in the city to alter the experience of living within it and the critical or celebratory narrative stance of the museum had become linked to the social purpose of the museum.

The final section of this chapter looked at recent concerns in city museum discourse. Although city museums had explored cities' local and global connections in the past, in the 1990s and 2000s this became a dominant theme. Academic discussions of globalization and the nature of the world city were taking place, and city museums like the Museum of London responded to the same concerns. In part, this was played out in the presentation of individuals' stories, doubtless influenced but the success of the people's museum approach of earlier decades. The nature of the museum made it harder to display hierarchies of power like contemporary financial influence without an engaging personal story, and abstract experiments

like the Urbis project supplied a cautionary note. City museums also experimented with an approach more akin to historical geography, looking at the role of place in historical processes. The Museum in Docklands opened in a dockside warehouse, giving the museum a new method of exploring the significance of place in the history of the city. Objects were presented in order to explore the stories of people and place, rather than for any intrinsic value, as museums sought to respond to the global and local qualities of the city that were becoming ever more prominent in discussions of cities and urban life.

The ideas that form this overview of the development of the city museum were chosen because the ideas are not only key phases and discussions for the museum, but hold particular relevance for the Galleries of Modern London, the thesis's central case study. Although this chapter had an ambitious scope, alternative attempts could foreground different ideas. Approaches for other purposes may do more to focus on the influence of Scandinavian museums, or look in more detail at walking tours for example. However this explanation of how city museums have developed underpins parts of this thesis, providing a historical context for the research I have undertaken into the Museum of London in the twenty-first century.

The ideas discussed in each of the chapter's six sections have all been re-negotiated by city museums throughout their history. By discussing episodes where these ideas were expressed, this chapter argues both that as Mumford identified, there are compelling connections between the city and the museum, and secondly that the work of making a city museum affects the kinds of urban history presented. This chapter also demonstrates that no convention has been established for the city museum. Mumford argued that the city had characteristics of the museum, but the museum also resembles the city. Just as cities constantly change, so does the city museum. Like the city, the museum is affected and shaped by different kinds of agency. The city museum is a material and geographical expression of narratives about the city, and this chapter shows how the work of producing these has changed throughout the city museum's history, exposing the creativity and agency in representing the city.

Chapter 4: Planning the Galleries of Modern London

> ‘Science displays are never, and have never been, just representations of uncontestable facts. They always involve the culturally, socially and politically saturated business of negotiation and value-judgement; and they always have cultural, social and political implications’
> (Macdonald, 1998: 1)

The previous chapter showed the range of approaches that city museums have taken since their inception, and demonstrated that there is no straightforward convention for representing a city in a museum. This chapter will look in detail at the making of two galleries at the Museum of London. The galleries were opened in the same museum, in the same building, using objects from the same collection, and both were opened within ten years of one another. Looking in detail at the way these galleries approached the city, this thesis will explore what Macdonald has called the ‘culturally, socially and politically saturated business of negotiation and value judgement’ that goes into gallery making (Macdonald, 1998:1). Although Macdonald was writing about science displays, this chapter will argue that the same processes of negotiation occur at the city museum.

This chapter has three main aims: firstly it will show the range of approaches to display at the Museum of London over ten years, to suggest the range of social, political and cultural attitudes to the display of place. Secondly it will explain the context of these displays, reflecting on how these two exhibits connect with social, cultural and political moods. Thirdly this chapter will start to develop an argument that runs through the thesis: that the nature of museum work affects the finished gallery narrative. This chapter will introduce some of the themes that will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis by starting to show how the complexities of the process of making a museum exhibition, including its actors, building and collection, affect the outcome of the process.

The first two thirds of the chapter are broadly chronological, following the work of the Museum of London in the 2000s. The final third builds on these discussions and

pulls out points for further discussion, before returning to the museum to show how these ideas are expressed in gallery space.

World City Gallery

In December 2001 the Museum of London celebrated its 25th year, having been formally opened by Queen Elizabeth II on the 2nd of December 1976. The museum's celebration coincided with the reintroduction of free entry to national museums in England, Wales and Scotland on the 1st December 2001 (BBC, 2001). It was an exceptionally busy time for the museum, which used the moment to launch a large new suite of galleries. The galleries were called World City and covered London's history from 1789 to 1914.

To mark the occasion, the museum published a short anniversary booklet. The booklet conveys the museum's self-perception in 2001. Although prefaced and finished with quotes from previous directors, the booklet articulated significant changes in the museum's fabric and narratives. The introduction to the new galleries stated:

> "World City is the first gallery in an entirely new London biography, departing substantially from the 1976 scheme, and carving out new larger spaces in which to tell the city's ever more complex story."
> (Ross and Swain, 2001: 6)

The World City galleries were part of an ambitious master plan to change the course of the Museum of London, originally charted in 1976. This part of the chapter will explore both the galleries and the masterplan they were part of as an approach to curating the global city.

As the booklet explains, the new galleries departed 'substantially' from the 1976 museum, and this intention was apparent in the appearance of the galleries. (see figure 4.1). The overall look of London World City's design contrasted with the museum's other, older galleries. World City replaced the galleries installed by the museum earlier with Sorensen and designers Higgens Ney & Partners, which had remained since the museum opened (Sheppard, 1991). The original galleries, with

their ‘refreshing – and for a time radical – combination of artefacts, models, reconstructions, graphics and music’ were taken out, and Sorensen’s vision of a ‘three-dimensional biography’ of the city was removed to make way for ‘an entirely new biography’ (Ellmers, 2001; Ross and Swain, 2001: 6). The new World City galleries were a marked contrast to the older galleries upstairs, especially the Roman galleries which, like the galleries World City replaced, combined a linear visitor route with objects, models, recreations and set works. Early reviews of the Museum of London had criticised the displays as ‘overwhelmed by the written word’ (Brawne, 1977). Alex Werner, the World City gallery’s lead curator, recalls how World City’s focus on objects moved the museum away from “an old-style gallery where you’d have lots of graphic panels. The approach that was being renewed was the book-on-the-wall approach” (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012).

Figure 4.1 - Entrance to the World City gallery, still taken from film of galleries © Museum of London

Figure 4.2 - Inside the World City gallery, still taken from film of galleries. © Museum of London

The wide walkways of the World City gallery, shown in figure 4.2, suggested a less defined visitor route than the museum's older galleries, and although the text was sparse, the galleries were structured around a "very strong narrative line":

> "Even though [World City gallery] was thematic it had a narrative to it. It was a very simple approach because there were two parts to the gallery and it was really hanging around the year of the Great Stink. There was a build up, with an enormous new city underway and lots of stuff happening but then, hey, there's a real problem with the sewers and with health and all that. The year of the great stink, 1857, was where the two galleries were divided"
>
> (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012).

The introductory panel (see figure 4.3) presented the narrative to visitors, and read:

World City 1789–1914

In the 125 years from the French Revolution to the outbreak of the First World War, London was transformed into a world city, capital of the largest empire the world has ever known.

The city's economy thrived on a system of free enterprise and London grew dramatically in size – a monster, as some saw it, consuming surrounding villages and sucking people in from the countryside. The population rose from under one million to over seven million by 1914. One contemporary travel guide boasted that London had 'more Scotchmen than in Edinburgh, more Irish than in Dublin, more Jews than in Palestine, and more Roman Catholics than in Rome.'

So many people massed together created severe problems of congestion, pollution and disease on a scale never seen before. The Thames became a giant sewer. Cholera swept through the city. Yet with radical improvements, the capital evolved into a modern city not that different from the London we know today.

Figure 4.3 – Introductory Panel, World City Gallery, Museum of London 2001

The panel's 162-word length is in line with conventions that suggest the amount of text museum visitors will read from a panel in a gallery, a substantial break from the text-heavy 'book on the wall' approach the museum sought to move away from. The panel introduced the topics that would be covered in the galleries, and set them in the context of a broader history of London's growth: in terms of population, infrastructure, and influence as the capital of the British empire. The panel stressed a narrative of modernization, and a progression from what was called a Monster City through to "a modern city not that different to the London we know today" through a series of "radical improvements." The gallery text framed the objects with a discourse of modernization and infrastructural improvement, projecting a story of progression onto the displays.

Figure 4.4 - Another view from the World City gallery, by Museum of London photographers. © Museum of London

The World City galleries were designed with the external firm Conran & Partners who subsequently worked on the London before London gallery of archaeological material. Both galleries share the designers' preference for a modernist style and feature large glass cases, perpendicular paths and neutral rectangular shapes. World City made use of the white ceramic tiles which give the museum its distinctive external appearance, in the internal design of the space, finishing plinths and object mounts, as can be seen in figure 4.4. The visual style of the gallery invited critics to draw parallels with the gallery narrative: Design Week described the 2001 World City gallery as having 'an industrial feel to reflect its content and the industrial age in which the gallery is set' (Design Week, 13/12/01).

Figure 4.5 - World City gallery, as seen in Conran & Partners' portfolio.

Photographs of the galleries in Conran & Partner's online portfolio (see figures 4.5 and 4.6) frame the galleries in a way which exaggerates the clean lines and regular spacing of the cases, and reflect several other projects in Conran & Partners' portfolio (Conran & Partners, 2012). The galleries are photographed in such a way that the eye is encouraged to follow the paths, rather than linger on some of the 3,000 objects on display in World City (Museum of London, 2002). The photographs do not include any people, and there is little text shown in them. The photographs are taken in alignment with the pathways, emphasizing the grid-like gallery structure. Aside from including a little red, the colours are harmonious; although the tone varies, there is little to jar the eye. The images are taken at eye level, and show cases that do not extend to the gallery ceiling, giving the viewer a sense of the entire space. Because of the regular shapes and square spaced cases it is easy for the viewer to get a sense of their position very quickly. The Museum of London's own assessment that it was a radical departure from the 1976 scheme was certainly true in terms of gallery design: the grid-like structure and regular spacing

of World City had little precedent at the Museum of London, although they did recall some of the photographs of the old London Museum.

Figure 4.6 - World City gallery, as seen in Conran & Partners' portfolio

Conran & Partners' design was well placed to bring out the museum's desire to move away from reliance on text, and to emphasize the objects on display. As the galleries' curator argued: "the modernist feel of the galleries—the very clean lines—meant that the objects within the cases were where the attention was. Once you got past the modernist perfection of the lines of the cases you could just concentrate on what was on display." (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September 2012).

Figure 4.7 - World City Gallery image by Museum of London photographers

Figure 4.7 shows a livelier image of the galleries. Rather than in alignment with the cases, this photograph enlivens the setting by shooting at an angle. This image makes more of the objects in the galleries by placing them in the middle of the frame, and leaving the paths as a framing device. The transport items lend themselves to the suggestion of movement more easily than the static water pump in figure 4.6, and their direction in the image disrupts the frame and complements the suggestion of motion. The structure of the gallery again appears sleek and contemporary, but less grid like than figures 4.5 and 4.6.

Figure 4.8 - World City gallery, showing film alongside objects. Still taken from film of galleries.

Newspaper commentators made favourable comparisons about the number of objects on display with the more expensive Victoria and Albert Museum's redeveloped British Galleries, which opened in November 2001 (Worsley, 2001). Many of the objects in the galleries were on display for the first time, as not only did World City allocate more gallery space to the period than there had been before, but it also placed a greater emphasis on objects than other display techniques. The galleries largely eschewed digital film and sound elements, with the exception of a recording of Queen Victoria's voice, some oral history elements and a handful of screens showing film (see figure 4.8).

The smooth, glassy finish to the galleries was not applied throughout the lower floor. Just as the 2001 booklet includes quotations from the opening of the museum, the galleries themselves also included parts of the 1976 museum. Although the museum sought to present 'an entirely new London biography' parts of the building were recontextualised rather than replaced. *Victorian Walk*, created as immersive space, combined objects and set works to produce a walk-through environment (see figure 4.9). A picture of Queen Elizabeth II visiting the shopfronts in 1976 is included in the anniversary booklet, and the gallery remained largely unchanged. For the World City website photographs of the walk were linked to a gallery plan,

so users could navigate around the site in a manner that pre-empted google streetview (see figure 4.10). The museum could not be completely revised, and the shopfronts' exhibition style contrasted with the ambitious hopes for an entirely revised museum, but did provide visitors with a little variety in presentation style.

Figure 4.9 - Victorian Walk in the World City gallery film

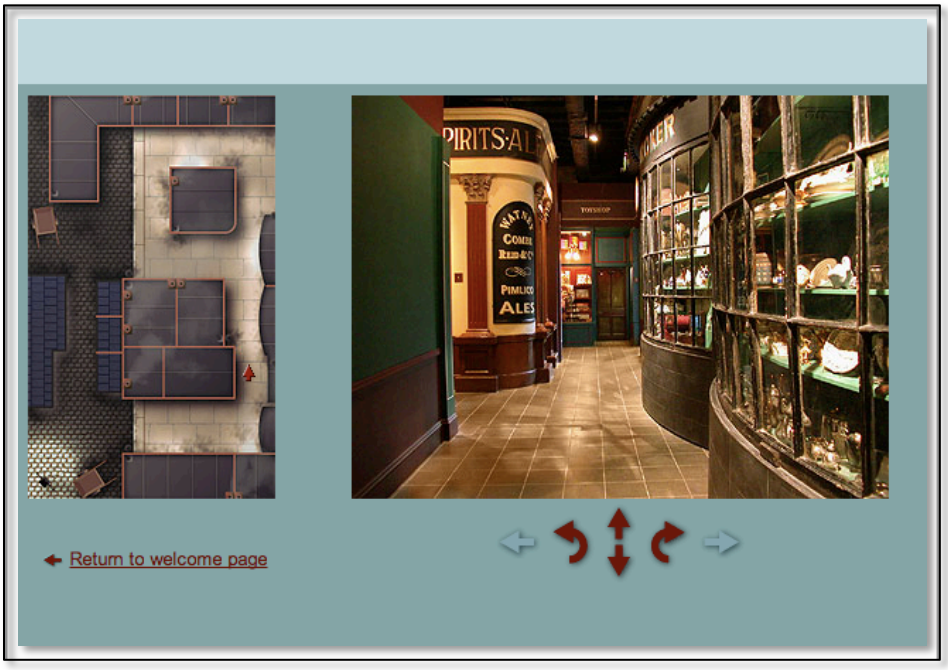

Figure 4.10 - 'Virtual Victorian Walk' from the Museum of London's 'World City Website'
(Last modified: Wednesday, 30 January, 2002)

World City was envisioned as part of a much larger project, one that the museum's then head of Later London History described as an attempt "to fill the gap from the second world war onwards" (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). The museum had not always sought to bring its narrative up to the present day, although various schemes had been developed through the years. When it opened in 1976, the Museum of London had aimed to tell a story 'ending, in so far as it can ever end, with an impression of the most complex and dynamic urban organism in the world' (quoted in Ross and Swain, 2001: 6). This impressionistic approach was as pragmatic as poetic, a compromise balancing the desire to evoke and explain the city. As the city outside the museum continued to age and change, the approach became frustrating to staff. Sheppard's history of the Museum of London records that before the museum opened in 1976 there had been negotiations about how the museum's space should be divided between time periods: in the initial plans the Roman and Medieval periods were allocated more space than 'the whole modern period from 1700 to the present day' (Sheppard, 1991: 172). The museum's persuasive keeper of the Modern department Colin Sorensen, amongst others, challenged the plans and advocated a greater proportion of space for displays of modern London (Ellmers, 2001; Sheppard, 1991: 172-3). Amongst this period of negotiation the museum had perhaps not foreseen the extent of changes that would happen to London between the museum's opening and the end of the twentieth century and the museum's leadership had certainly not anticipated the extent of the museum's wish to display these changes. Although the 2001 booklet describes the ambitious goal of an 'entirely new narrative, the aim to 'fill the gap' was more significant to some staff, who perhaps did not agree with World City's claim that London in 1914 was 'not that different from the London we know today.' The compulsion to 'fill the gap' recalls the discussions about allocation of gallery space in the 1970s, and the museum's aim to 'carve out new larger spaces to tell the city's ever more complex story' is one episode of an ongoing process of negotiating space between agents within the museum (Ross and Swain, 2001: 6).

As the previous chapter suggested, not all city museums share this gallery-based approach to urban history. Even those city museums which sought, in the early 2000s, to make new links between the twenty-first century city and the city of

previous centuries did not go about this in the same way. It was around this time the Museum of the City of New York updated its interpretation of the city. Its range of thematic displays were updated and supplemented with a twenty-five minute film, *Timescapes*, which runs throughout the day and provides a synoptic overview of the city's history.

Timescapes provides a coherent narrative, connecting the first Dutch settlement of what became Manhattan with September 11 and New York at the start of the twenty-first century. The film combines maps, paintings, photographs and actors' readings of contemporaneous texts to present the connections between the city through time. The Museum of London, however, was adamant that it would present object galleries for each part of London's history, and this required new use of the building, because, as Ross explains: "the second world war gallery had taken up the last available space" (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). Whether individual members of staff felt the purpose was to tell a completely new narrative, or just to add material to an older one, the museum needed space. There may have been a narrative 'gap' but there certainly wasn't a physical one.

Telling the city's 'ever more complex story' would require 'carving out new larger spaces'; the space would have to change in order to accommodate the story (Ross and Swain, 2001: 6). The museum's director, Simon Thurley, was instrumental in putting together a plan to bring the museum's permanent galleries up to the present:

> "[Thurley] came up with a great masterplan which was to bring into public use the third floor of the museum—the lower floor... The idea was that that would become an enormous twentieth century gallery. As part of this we would redo the nineteenth century gallery and bring it up to 1914, and then for 1914 you would go downstairs to this whole new floor and do the twentieth century."
>
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December, 2008).

The museum building, purpose built twenty-five years before, was suddenly envisioned in a radically different manner. The lower floor had been used as stores and workshops, but Thurley's ambitious scheme would see these removed and replaced. The 'masterplan' was a major project that needed a large amount of work

and finance, and World City was a substantial investment in the intentions. World City was a confident statement, not just an investment of money, but of time. Considering the significance held in bringing the narrative to the twenty-first century, the making of a gallery on the nineteenth century did not always feel like progress towards bringing the museum's story up to date:

> "Under Simon [Thurley] we did that nineteenth century gallery called World City, which in many ways sort of colonised a lot more space for the nineteenth-century and took our story up to 1914. In many ways we were sort of going backwards in our effort to get a twentieth-century gallery in." (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December, 2008).

As the first stage in a redevelopment of the Museum of London, World City had cost £11 million and had been imagined and installed with the intention that it would have a "life span from fifteen to twenty years, and a minimum of fifteen years" (Kennedy, 2001; Rob Payton, interview, 28 May 2010). The World City gallery was considered so successful by museum leadership that the designers were commissioned to produce another gallery for the museum. Rather than following the chronology onto the lower floor and the twentieth century gallery that was planned to follow World City, Conran & Partners were contracted to work at the other end of the museum's timeline, on a gallery that would be called London Before London. Thurley raised the £700,000 the gallery cost through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (administered by English Heritage) and two charitable foundations: the Rayne foundation and the Gosling Foundation (Bott, 2002). Although it was a smaller gallery, London Before London included many similar design elements to World City.

Although happy to give interviews about his plans for the ambitious redevelopment of the Museum of London, Thurley had remained vague on the subject of how those plans would be funded. World City had been paid for without a major grant, and announcing a competition to design the redevelopment in the Architects Journal, Thurley gave little away but divulged that 'he did not plan to be like the V&A, coming up with the design first and then searching for the money', and although mentioning that 'the museum had been in discussions with a private-sector

partner over the possibility of an entire redevelopment of the site', conceded that 'the offers were not the answer to our problems' (Slavid, 1999).

Thurley, whom the Guardian referred to as the 'boy wonder' of the museum world, was ambitious: 'I was never interested in the Portrait Gallery or the National; they're smaller, less interesting and filled with flat art. The job's too easy' (Kennedy, 2001; Thomson, 2002). The final few months of 2001 offered an ambitious museum director a series of opportunities to lead large national museum and heritage institutions: the British Museum, the National Gallery, English Heritage and the National Portrait Gallery were all seeking new directors. Soon after World City opened, it was announced that Thurley would leave the Museum of London, to take up the post of Chief Executive of English Heritage (Kennedy, 2001). Recalling his move, Thurley describes how he "felt hideously disloyal leaving the Museum of London, but I wrote a long list of pros and cons and, in the end, I decided EH [English Heritage] was crying out for me" (Thurley quoted in Thomson, 2002). Thurley announced his departure on the 13th of December 2001, ten days after World City opened to the public.

New Direction

Professor Jack Lohman had been Chief Executive Officer of Iziko museums, in Cape Town, South Africa, before his appointment as Director of the Museum of London. Speaking in 2012, Lohman recalled the museum he joined in August 2002 as: "Worthy. It was doing great work, it had great specialists here and it was doing very good work, but it was not talking to the whole of London" (Lohman, interview, 13th February 2012).

Lohman was keen to 'fill the gap' and bring the museum's narrative right into the twenty-first century. Two months after his arrival Lohman published a short article in the Guardian. As well as promoting the launch of the London Before London gallery, Lohman used the opportunity to describe how the museum would turn its 'attention to the opposite end of the historical spectrum—living memory and the creation of new twentieth and twenty-first century galleries' (Lohman, 2002).

Looking towards London's immediate past meant revisiting Thurley's plans for the redevelopment of the lower floor of the museum. Lohman requested a review of costs for Thurley's scheme. The museum's Head of Public Programmes recalled that: "It would have cost something like, I don't know the exact figure, between thirty five and forty million pounds to do. That was just too exhausting" (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29 October 2008). The scale of expense, lack of funding, and influx of new leadership combined with the absence of a detailed plan for use of the lower floor, meant that the plan's future and the continued existence of the World City galleries was uncertain.

With limited financial or intellectual commitment to the next phase of Thurley's masterplan, the museum considered its options. Ross explains that the museum "could have just chopped out a little bit of the old nineteenth century gallery and sort of squashed in the late nineteenth century", or "patched it", which would involve making use of the some of the displays from the World City gallery (Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). However, McIntyre argued that World City's limitations would not justify this piecemeal approach:

> "The galleries were very traditional... The objects were quite placid, and a lot of things were not coming through in the exhibition. So the idea there was to take a holistic view if you like, of London's history from the great fire through to the present day"
>
> (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008).

World City's approach was so successful at showing objects that at times it risked a shortcoming Jenkins argues many history museums suffer: presenting objects "almost as pieces of fine art, rather than as a link in man's cultural development" (Jenkins, 1989: 123). Werner believes this approach suited Thurley, who Werner recalls "loved museums where you'd have cases with thousands of objects" but McIntyre's dissatisfaction with World City was evident, and he was not impressed with what he described as the "placid" appearance of the objects or his impression of the inconsistent contextual narrative (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012; Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008).

The museum identified five options for its future, which were recorded by the museum in an Options Appraisal document, and were included in a subsequent bid submission in 2004 (figure 4.11):

1) Meeting maintenance requirements only.
2) Developing the Clore Learning Centre only.
3) Developing the Clore Learning Centre and converting the current temporary exhibition space into more gallery space.
4) Developing the Clore Learning Centre and extending and refurbishing the existing lower galleries.
5) Developing the Clore Learning Centre and creating a new, large 20th century gallery space in the basement under the current galleries.

Figure 4.11 Taken from: Options Appraisal document, Museum of London, 2004a: 5.

In all but the most basic option, the learning centre would be reworked. The document set out the options in sequence, from maintaining current provision at one end of the scale, through to combining Thurley's master plan with developing the learning centre at the other. Each of the five options was costed, and was then scored against a set of criteria which included (figure 4.12):

- Learning provision – ability to meet identified needs for content and presentation
- The collections – potential to maximise imaginative use of collections for learning
- Visitor experience – potential to deliver a comfortable and stimulating visitor experience
- Audience development – ability to meet identified needs of target groups
- Organisational development – degree to which matches potential, skills and aspirations of staff
- Future development – sustainability and potential for growth

Figure 4.12 - Taken from: Options Appraisal document, Museum of London, 2004a: 8.

These criteria for assessing plans are interesting, because the terms were created by the museum. Criteria such as 'audience development' tied in to Lohman's

recognition that the museum was not speaking to all Londoners and ideas like 'organizational development' had a clear line through from Lohman's aims for the museum. The criteria 'visitor experience' and 'learning provision' originate in a particular philosophy and approach to the museum, one well suited to the climate for museum research and funding in 2004.

Dissatisfaction with the displays and a lack of alternative physical space for the narrative, combined with a lack of funding and the arrival of new leadership had a deleterious impact on the World City galleries. As Ross argued, "the only way forward, and the best way forward, was to just redo the whole thing from scratch" (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). Within the first few years of its existence, World City was earmarked for change. It was a radical shift of direction and a new approach to the display of London.

Lohman had continued Thurley's new entrance scheme, completed in 2003, but aside from that the museum's building had remained unchanged. The possibility of a new project excited staff, who were keen to make a series of improvements to the museum's facilities and infrastructure:

> "You could re-allocate space, you could also solve some of the circulation problems that the old galleries had. You could do things like improve the visitor experience by bringing a cafe in (very important), we could improve the spaces that we hire to private firms to get an income stream in, we put more wiring in, put more technology in, digital stuff was just beginning to have a real effect on museum displays so we thought that and we could redo the learning centre all in one go... Putting in the infrastructure to make us a museum 'fit for the twenty-first century' was our phrase, and it sounds like a bit of a slick phrase but that's what it's all about, it's actually really getting us fit for purpose for the twenty-first century."
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008).

Equipping the museum for the twenty-first century was a major project, and would require substantial funding. Early projections suggested the project would cost just under £18 million, a figure that was less than half the figure in the costing Lohman commissioned of Thurley's masterplan (Museum of London, 2004a).

The Bid

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), founded in 1994, is one of the United Kingdom's major sources of public funding for museums, alongside the government Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The HLF awards funds raised through the National Lottery and is a non-departmental public body, overseen by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Although other public money is available to museums through European funding and other government bodies, Simon Thurley described the foundation of the Heritage Lottery Fund as "the single most important heritage decision of the last thirty years" (Thurley, 2009). Having benefited from four successful project grants from the HLF between 1998 and 2002, ranging in size from £30,000 to £149,500, it was this body the museum approached for funding to rework the learning centre and the ground floor (HLF, 2012).

The sheer amount of work involved in applying to the HLF meant that the project began to develop: "What really got it going was the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and that took us about two years to do" (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). The HLF's requirements that the museum prepare detailed plans as part of its bid was part of a period of growing mainstream recognition of the importance of interpretive planning in museums. The interpretive planning approach, researched in detail by organisations like the Smithsonian Institution and practitioner-writers like Graham Black, is a non-linear process of exhibition development, and one which is both praised and criticised for its focus 'on the quality of the visitor experience. It places the interpreter, learning specialist and other audience advocates on a par with the curator' (Black, 2005: 256).

Reflecting on his time at the Museum, Lohman expressed the importance of his desire to change the culture and attitudes of the museum: "I remember when I was pitching this to the HLF and I said: 'We have an opportunity -- you're providing the carrot and I can change the whole culture of an organisation'" (Jack Lohman, interview, 13th February 2012). Employing the strategies of interpretive master planning was one of Lohman's key approaches to changing the culture within the

organisation. Darryl McIntyre, the Director of Public Programmes Lohman appointed, explains the move from the sequential, curator-led strategy to the team-based interpretive planning approach:

> "Traditionally with a lot of exhibitions you'll have curatorial point of view, then learning come in with their point of view, then design will stage and then learning, whereas our approach was actually to bring all of those elements together at the beginning so that you'd have your collections knowledge, and learning styles and who the audiences were all brought together and thought of, and then the design challenge is that how do you deal with all those different elements and make the experience something which will attract people to come."
>
> (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008).

The traditional approach McIntyre described certainly reflects the relationship between the education department and curators Werner recalls during the making of the World City galleries, when "you create a gallery and then you get the education section to draft some gallery tours that can be used by schools. Education is put on afterwards" (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012).

Cathy Ross described "two separate projects: put the bid into the Heritage Lottery Fund and get that money; and then there's the project to actually do the thing" (Cathy Ross, interview, 4th December 2008). The bid itself is a lengthy document, and its compilation was a significant exercise in developing the skills of working across the museum's departments to plan an exhibit. The bid required the development or overhaul of several strategic documents, an approach that lent itself to the museum leadership's commitment to the system of interpretive master planning. Members of staff throughout the museum, from learning to design worked on elements of the bid, which included alongside the Options Appraisal quoted earlier: a schools plan and policy; a gallery concept; a heritage statement; an access policy; a business plan; a marketing plan; a publications policy; audience research summary and more, including a 17-page design brief (see figure 4.13). The structure of the application process complimented Lohman's aims for organisational change at the museum, and the extensive application process the museum carried out informed the museum's ways of working.

Bid Contents:

Folder 1:
Headline Document
Learning Policy
Museum of London Act - 1965
Museum of London Act - 1986
Organisational chart
Project CVs

Folder 2:
Audience Consultation, adult corporate
Audience Consultation, adult tourists
Audience Consultation, Teachers, pupils and adult learners
Audience Consultation summary
Audience research summary
E learning scoping report
Focus group, families
Review document, plans, event, business

Survey group travel

Folder 3:
Architectural cost plan
Contingencies and inflation
Exhibition cost plan
Signed off costs, December 2004

Folder 4:
Advisory committee
Audience development plan
Audience development policy
Business plan
Child protection policy
Equal opporunity
Exhibitions policy
Feasability study
Risk assessment - project
Risk assessment - building
Fundraising strategy
Green policy
HLF timeline
Marketing plan
Options appraisal
Publications poicy
Strategic plan

Folder 5:
Access plan
Access policy
Charging policy
Clore learning concept
Collecting policy
Collections management
Gallery concept
Heritage collections
Heritage statement
Information zone
Learning framework
Learning plan
Learning strategy
Schools plan
Schools policy
Training plan

Folder 6:
Design sheets

Figure 4.13 - List of documents submitted as part of the Museum of London's 2004 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund

In 2004 the Museum of London submitted its detailed bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The museum's head of programmes explained that: "doing the HLF bid focused the mind a lot" and although it was not the first or final expression of the galleries, the headline document from the bid offers a glimpse into a key stage of

the remaking of the museum (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29 October 2008). The next part of the chapter explores the bid as an alternative model of the city museum: a different display on different terms from the World City galleries. This part of the chapter will discuss the five key aims of the new project and will analyse the ways in which these aims were expressed and explained.

The museum's full bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was made up of more than fifty policies, procedures, reviews, reports and strategies, organized across seven different e-folders, and listed in figure 4.13. Rather than seeking to investigate every part of this expansive collection, this chapter will focus on two specific documents within the bid. The first of the two parts of the bid this chapter will focus on is the Headline Document, presented at the front of the bid. The Headline Document was a 24 page summary of the project and described the museum's aims, assets and argument (Museum of London, 2004b, hereafter referred to as 'HD.') The second document to be explored in detail is a Gallery Brief, called the 'Brief for the Modern London gallery and associated spaces' (Museum of London, 2004c, hereafter referred to as 'GB.') The Gallery Brief explained the museum's commitment to making new galleries, demonstrated the narratives that would be discussed in the new galleries and gave information about how the gallery content, including some objects, would be used to discuss London's history.

The Headline Document set out the museum's bid in broad terms, including a list of aims such as: 'This project will re-equip the Museum of London physically and intellectually for the next generation. It will change what we do, how we do it and who we reach' (HD:1). By presenting it in careful juxtaposition with extracts from the Brief for the Modern London Gallery, this part of the chapter aims to show how the museum's abstract aims were expressed as spatial narratives, in the form of galleries. To demonstrate how these organizational aims became articulated in the gallery plan this section will explore both the museum's aims and how the museum expressed its argument.

The bid argued that the project's primary aim is 'To change our presentation of London's story to make it more relevant and engaging to present and future audiences' (HD: 8). The Headline Document of the bid framed the need to change

the museum's presentation of London's story as its priority, as opposed to simply extending the span covered. The bid was uncompromising in its affirmation that the museum needed to become both more relevant and more engaging, and lists three 'change objectives' to break down this aim into separate tasks. The first was 'to create the Modern London gallery from 1666 to the present day', a specific, quantifiable undertaking (HD: 8). The second was 'to bring into our galleries more and better learning exhibits' (HD: 8). It was a less measurable aim, because although models of visitor studies are improving, 'more and better' was not as straightforward to demonstrate as the existence of a new gallery (HD: 8). The third objective was 'to bring into our galleries a stronger sense of London's contemporary identity as a vibrant and dynamic world city with diversity at her heart' (HD: 8). It was the most abstract and perhaps the most revealing, touching on some of the key themes of the bid – identity, diversity, London's global connections – whilst describing the museum's commitment to a narrative of London as 'vibrant and dynamic.' By including this description the museum expressed its understanding of contemporary London and how such an interpretation could be displayed.

The documents articulated a new vision for the Museum of London, which can be broken down in several ways. These bid documents portrayed a specific understanding of London, which the museum argued should be displayed in particular ways. The documents also expressed an idea of the city museum and how such a museum should be presented and managed at the start of the twenty-first century. This part of the chapter will look at how the museum presented both of these arguments, and the ways in which the arguments intersect. To most usefully analyze the bid in the context of this thesis, this section of the chapter will look at the bid's treatment of three key themes. Firstly it will look at the museum's relationship with its visitors, and part of the section will discuss the importance of multiculturalism in the bid for a new city museum. Secondly, the museum's use of voice and authority will be discussed. The third theme the chapter explores is how the bid's model of the city museum, and the interpretation of London relate to the specific organizational context of the Museum of London. The section of the chapter ends by drawing these themes together in a discussion of a poem used in both of the documents from the bid.

The documents themselves were presented in a structured, formal manner, which made use of professional report styles and were attributed to the Museum of London's corporate identity, rather than named individual contributors. The main body text was written in paragraphs, but the flow of text was frequently broken up by journalistic techniques: standfirsts, bullet points, sidebars, pull quotations, diagrams and tables all featured repeatedly and were supplemented with appendices. The Headline Document began with a summary, but the Gallery Brief provided an introduction in place of an executive summary. Each document had its own contents page, outlining its structure. The headings for each of the parts of the documents were presented as a series of questions, such as 'Why is the project important?' (HD: 2) and 'What are the gallery's values?' (GB: 15). Each of the responses to these questions was between 1 and 5 sides in length. The formal structure of the application is evidence of the museum's engagement with the planning process as part of a professional application for the use of public money. The interpretative planning process that went into the bid helped to formalise the museum's ideas and approach and the chapter will now consider the extent and form of the bid's influence.

The Gallery Brief presented a handful of objects as text descriptions in text boxes, rather than as images, to make its case (GB: 5). Although this is an example of the museum advocating object display, the objects were being used to support a narrative in much the same way a figure or illustration is used in academic writing. This approach demonstrated some of the ways that the museum proposed to integrate objects into a narrative, structuring them into the story it is telling about London and the idea of the city museum. In this instance it was the museum's funding bid; in the galleries it would be a narrative about London. The gallery's key messages were explained in six bullet points, all of which expressed the importance of the city's human population (figure 4.14):

Main messages
• London has always been a city in flux, its population, ideas, institutions and appearance constantly changing, constantly diverse and constantly adapting to new influences.

• London's population has always included groups who have been considered 'insiders' and groups who have been considered 'outsiders'. Usually, over time, the outsiders become insiders.

• One of London's success stories over the past 300 years has been to raise the standard of living for all its citizens, including the poor.

• London's fortunes have always been inextricably entangled with events and people overseas. It is a truly global city.

• London's history demonstrates that individual lives and politics are intertwined: people can bring about political change and political change affects people's lives.

• London is a city of great excitement and a testament to human achievement. It is a dynamic city of individualism and enterprise

Figure 4.14 - Taken from Gallery Brief, Museum of London, 2004c: 9.

Museum staff acknowledged that the history they were working on was 'not just a new museum version of an old history, but as a completely new public history for London, different in scope and focus from the view of the past that we have presented before' (Ross, 2006: 40). It is important to note that the museum's new approach included changing the overarching style of presentation, from the style of the museum's previous galleries which were 'similar to chapters in a biography of London, and so if you have had, you know, London before London, Roman London and the Medieaval etc, it was chronological time periods... [we aimed] to broaden it out and look very much at London histories and the diversity of London in that sense' (McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008). Rather than presenting a history of London that dealt with time periods in separate galleries, the museum proposed a system of galleries that would convey how the city changed, rather than always looking at how the city was at certain times. In doing so the museum accepted that its new galleries would be affected by contemporary ideas about London. The Gallery Brief explained that to understand the changes of the second half of the twentieth century, the museum would need to think again about the time preceding it: 'London has undergone massive changes since 1950. Reflecting these changes is not just a matter of telling the story of London post-1950, it is also a matter of revisiting the way we look at the past to bring out the processes of change

which have created London's character today' (GB: 4). The bid did not aim to produce a galleries on Georgian or Victorian London, its main aims were configured around the desire to demonstrate how a series of narrative threads were in continuous development throughout 1666 to the present.

The bid argued that London is something that can be usefully expressed through Londoners. Londoners take priority in this bid, both as an audience, and as a means of engaging that audience. Speaking about the planned galleries at a conference about city museums in 2005, Ross described the usefulness of this approach:

> 'One way, of course, of dealing with hard truths is to present them through people, delivering the messages of cause and effect through personal stories. Presenting history through eye-witnesses is an enormously helpful strategy for museums. It disguises the institutional voice and authenticates the stories we tell – history through witnesses somehow seems more 'real'.'
> (Ross, 2006: 43).

The Headline Document from the bid framed the proposed gallery in terms of audience need, and presented the creation of 'the Modern London Gallery from 1666 to the present day' as one of three sub-clauses to the project's overall aim to 'change our presentation of London's story to make it more relevant and engaging to present and future audiences' (HD: 8). The museum used the word 'audiences' here, when it might easily have used the term 'visitors.' Although a minor distinction, the term suggests that the museum was deliberately locating itself in a specific professional context.

However this is done unevenly: the Headline Document referred to audiences and visitors equally, but the Gallery Brief used 'visitor/s' three times for each use of 'audience/s', only referring to 'audience/s' in discussions of strategy and aims. Using the word 'audience' was a way for the museum to perform its re-examination of the model of the relationship between the museum and the public. Putting audiences first was a feature of the Headline Document and anticipated the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, which stipulated that museums should 'Put the public interest before other interests' (Museums Association, 2008: clause 2.1). Earlier in this chapter staff such as Cathy Ross discussed bringing the historical

narrative of the galleries to the present day as a valuable goal on its own right, but the bid stressed to the HLF that this was not the case, and loaded the discussion with new terminology for the museum/visitor relationship.

Although the galleries are the 'largest element' of the project, the aims in the Headline Document marginalized the museum's own staff and resources, as the list of aims and clauses did not mention the museum's objects, collection, staff expertise or research (HD: 5, 8). This tension was compounded by the Gallery Brief's assertion that the new galleries were needed for three reasons, the first of which was to 'complete the story of London we present' (GB: 4). It was only after the Gallery Brief had established that the project would allow the museum 'to introduce new learning exhibits to the galleries' and 'introduce new ways of connecting the past and the present' that the Gallery Brief echoed the Headline Document's priorities in two bullet points: the first was the same sentence about 'engaging present and future audiences' from the Headline Document; and the second addressed the connection between visitors and collections, arguing that the museum will 'create new spaces and resources which will actively encourage more people to come to use the Museum's collections and knowledge-base for their own learning and enjoyment' (GB: 4). Although both documents were committed to providing new galleries, they each advocated a slightly different relationship with the museum's audience, or visitors.

The bid has specific ideas regarding how the new galleries would change the museum's visitor profile. Earlier in the chapter Lohman alluded to the museum's visitor profile, suggesting the museum was not talking to "the whole of London" (Lohman, interview, 13th February, 2012). The Headline Document expanded on this, and it pointed out that '11% of the Museum's visitors are from a minority ethnic background and 13% from socio-economic classes C2DE, as compared to 29% and 49% in London's population as a whole' (HD: 4). This discrepancy was identified by different museums throughout the sector, and work to redress this balance was often carried out by museums on a project basis. The Heritage Lottery aimed to fund projects that would 'break down barriers that prevent engagement with heritage, whether physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural or economic, especially of under-represented, excluded or disadvantaged groups' (Heritage

Lottery Fund access policy statement, quoted in PLB consulting, 2001: 108). It was through this strand of the HLF's aims that the Museum of London had submitted the successful smaller bids to the HLF in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Foregrounding audiences and using visitor research to make their case, the museum was able to demonstrate how the galleries would respond to the HLF's own strategic priorities.

The Museum of London linked its content to its visitor profile, and the bid argued that the correlation between low numbers of visitors from minority ethnic groups and lower socio-economic groups was connected with a low level of gallery representation. The Headline Document argued that including the story of London from 1950 to the present would 'increase our opportunities to attract and retain target groups underrepresented in the Museum's current audience profile by reflecting the cultural and social diversity of London' (HD: 22). Representation in the gallery narrative was identified as a means to ensure visitation. This is consistently expressed throughout these documents in the bid. This includes being expressed in the findings of the museum's evaluation, which stipulated that multiple voices would be included in the narrative, and made the clumsy distinction between 'the views and experiences of ordinary people and people from minority ethnic communities' (GB: 19).

To attract visitors from lower socio-economic groups and minority ethnic communities the museum argued it was essential to represent London's diverse population in the complex historical context of London's links with the rest of the world. The HLF bid responded to contemporary museological concerns about diversity and representation by advocating the inclusion of 'galleries which cover the recent history of London, so making stronger connections with the everyday lives of ordinary people, and celebrating London's cultural and social diversity.' (HD: 16). The Gallery Brief argued that the museum needed to recognise that London's diversity has a lengthy history, stressing that the new gallery would 'emphasize Britain's global character, not just in the last 50 years but in the last 300. We see this as particularly significant in the way we deal with London's cultural diversity.' (GB: 6). Museum staff also argued that representation of Londoners' diverse identities needed to be deeply embedded in the galleries the

museum proposed developing: 'It is important to look at ethnicity, gender and sexuality not as bolt-ons but as mainstream issues' (McIntyre speaking in Stephens, 2005). This narrative decision strengthened the case for remaking all of the galleries on the lower floor of the museum, which had not sought to convey the same narrative priorities.

Having identified the groups of visitors that were underrepresented in visitor figures, the museum segmented its visitors into target groups it hoped the galleries would address. The museum identified 'Main audiences' and proposed that the 'interests and learning needs of the following audiences will be given equal weight in the development of the gallery's content and interpretation' (GB: 8; figure 4.15). These groups were listed as bullet points:

- Adults (leisure/general interest)
- Families
- People from diverse communities
- People from socio-economic groups C2DE
- Schools (in particular KS1/KS2/KS3 History and KS3 Citizenship)

Figure 4.15 - Taken from: Gallery Brief, Museum of London, page 8.

The museum also identified "Secondary audiences" and when the needs of this group differed from those above, the museum argued that they would 'be catered for through deeper levels of interpretation within the gallery, associated programmes and publications, and temporary exhibitions (GB: 8; 6.16). The 'Secondary audiences' in the Gallery Brief were described as:

- Older people age 70+
- Young people age 16-21
- Adults (specialist interest)
- Adult learners (following FE/HE or adult education courses)
- Overseas tourists

Figure 4.16 - Taken from: Gallery Brief, Museum of London, page 8.

This list demonstrates the ways in which museums seek to provide material for different visitor profiles. As the draft content accompanying the Gallery Brief explained, the museum aimed to cater for 'different learning styles, comfort-levels and audience groups' (GB: 5). Key gallery features, such as a '20th Century Walk' were imagined in terms of how they would appeal to different groups of museum visitors: 'as a high-quality reminiscence area... and as a 3D potted history of popular design for students' (GB: 25). The Gallery Brief was developed with the use of public evaluations carried out during summer 2004. These included reiterating the museum's point about different audiences, stipulating that the museums should 'provide layers of information so that people can engage with the gallery at a level that suits them' (GB: 19).

Audience segmentation is a crucial tenet of interpretative master planning, used both to gauge current museum use and to develop and audience development strategy (see Black, 2005). The museum's usage here is particularly significant because the audiences are listed in the Gallery Brief, demonstrating a new approach at the museum and showing how layers of interpretation are built into galleries for different audiences.

Speaking in 2009 the museum's Head of Learning argued that integrating this kind of discourse into gallery discussion at this stage marked the start of a process of change in the museum: "curators now talk about learning and learning styles and Generic Learning Outcomes and all these things naturally, in a way that 5 years ago it wouldn't have occurred to them" (interview, Frazer Swift, 6th November 2009).

The museum's commitment to its visitors' needs was expressed in tandem with the need to represent the people it hoped would become visitors. Throughout the bid the museum referred to the need to reflect 'the social and cultural diversity of London' (GB: 14). Although this complemented the HLF's aims and project profile, it would be unfair to characterise this aspect of the bid as a cynical appeal to the HLF's agenda. The Museum was one of many voices who identified London as a diverse city with a distinctive experience of multiculturalism. By exploring the ways that the museum used other voices and sought to share authority the section

will now show how the museum's appetite to address multiculturalism reflected its own internal agenda, and would serve to reinforce its own authority.

The Gallery Brief stressed the 'subtle presence' of the curatorial voice, as 'wherever possible it will talk through others, and convey the illusion that this is a space where people from the past talk directly with people from the present' (GB: 6). 'We are particularly keen to include creative work by artists and writers as a central thread in our 'history' story' the Gallery Brief argued, and this is as true of the bid as the galleries they describe (GB: 7). The bid stressed that the curatorial role will work as 'director and producer, rather than author or star' and the bid itself demonstrated the ability of the museum to select, edit and frame different voices rather than maintaining exclusive authority at all times (GB: 6).

The Gallery Brief began this work, and included a variety of quotations from historians, writers and artists: from a 13-year old's poem about London, to the photographic artist Tom Hunter and the film director Patrick Keiller. Most of these descriptions of London were presented either in the text or as sidebars, but some voices, usually historians', were woven through the body text of the museum's words. Quotations from Roy Porter and Jerry White were used to support the museum's argument in the Headline Document and Gallery Brief (GB: 4; 7). The example of Porter's contribution is interesting, because although the museum's text refers to 'London's past as the capital of a nation inextricably linked with places overseas' it remains squeamish about discussing the impact of the British Empire on the city (GB: 7). Quoting Porter in both the Headline Document and the Gallery Brief, the museum is able to briefly argue that: 'London was the beneficiary-in-chief from the British Empire' whilst maintaining its focus on discussing how the museum will tell the story (HD: 3; GB: 7). This links to Ross' earlier quote about a way of 'dealing with hard truths is to present them through people' which is the technique that had been used here (Ross, 2006:43). It is an interesting curatorial technique, chosen for its ability to engage people whilst presenting evidence, but the technique is not neutral. Because the museum used the approach throughout the bid, and later the gallery, the technique changed the presentation of the gallery narrative beyond the social history approaches of Porter and White and on to an experiential account of London's history. The bid described how the museum

wanted to create 'populated' galleries, but this technique is so good at peopling the bid that it becomes a more radical history of London, with a people-centred, poly-vocal history far removed from the World City Galleries of 2001, which chose to speak exclusively through objects.

The Gallery Brief stressed the importance of sharing authority when discussing London from 1950-the present, especially when it explicitly acknowledged that: 'we do not have sole and privileged ownership of the story of modern London' (GB: 6). Referring to other interpretations of the city situates the museum's ideas in a deliberate context of popular scholarship. By using Porter and White, the museum demonstrated an understanding of the significance of the previous decade's social history, whilst making the point that these writers had successfully tapped into public interest in the history of London and demonstrated the existence of a significant audience for it. The Gallery Brief explained that this process of conversation would also occur more literally, as the gallery would 'draw on an outstanding oral history collection' (GB: 12). The Gallery Brief also suggested that the museum would approach individuals, community groups and local history societies to carry out object research and source new acquisitions (GB: 12). As well as these two examples, where the museum would still produce and present the content, the bid explained that there would be a community exhibition space, and room for public participation and comment (GB: 12).

The museum used an example of a visitor comment in the bid at this point, to demonstrate the kinds of engagement its exhibits had provoked (GB: 13). In this case the comment was a response to an exhibition in the Capital Concerns series.

Integrating these multiple voices throughout the bid and the proposed gallery was a means of sharing authority, but was not presented as a community project, like the museum's previous bids to the HLF. The work was presented as a museum project, and although it explained that voices and individuals would contribute, the museum remained firm in the assertion that it would order, structure and contextualise these into a pre-designed narrative. The museum introduced its draft content in the Gallery Brief with the comment that: 'The draft content set out here is shaped by our own ideas plus the discussions and evaluations carried out over summer 2004'

(GB: 19). The timing of these discussions and evaluations demonstrates how the museum structured these contributions: the museum's own ideas, developed over the course of several years, formed the basis of the brief, and the "plus" denotes the supplementary influence of ideas generated in discussion and evaluation in the summer months of 2004, whilst the bid documents were in preparation for submission that winter.

In the Gallery Brief, the museum argued that the gallery's first value was 'excellence' and stressed that excellence was necessary 'in all aspects of [the galleries'] execution, including scholarship' (GB: 14). The museum's valuing of scholarship is significant to an understanding of the bid, as it is the argument that was used to justify the museum's model of its own authority. Speaking at a conference in 2005, the project's lead curator, Cathy Ross, reclaimed an authoritative, expert voice for the history museum. Ross defended the role of the museum curator in presenting narratives about place and advocated a model of the curator as dutiful historian: 'we must, I feel, resist the temptation to abdicate our own responsibilities as historians and we must strive to balance these stories with a more analytical account of the past' (Ross, 2006: 43). For Ross the city museum has a set of responsibilities, and one of these is the requirement for the city museum to set individuals' interpretations and experience in a wider context.

The museum's emphasis on excellent scholarship underpins Ross's claim that the museum 'must reclaim the perhaps slightly old fashioned role for the museum as the place which delivers an authoritative public history' (Ross, 2006: 43). By stressing the need for the museum to deliver an authoritative historical context, Ross distanced the museum from an early 21st-century concern that sought to use museum representation as a means to address social injuries and injustice. Around this time museums such as District Six peopled their galleries with personal testimony for a wider civic purpose (Layne, 2008: 53-62). Setting the Museum of London apart from other museum projects of the time, Ross argued that multiple voices are important when the museum has incorporated them into a broader historical context. In this instance the museum's poly-vocality was used in conjunction with its own commitment to scholarship to present an overarching narrative in a way that would reinforce the museum's credibility. Although the

curators would not be the stars of these galleries, the narrative agendas of the galleries would be defined by them, as historians.

The sense of the city museum curator as historian and the city museum visitor as an audience had an effect on the role of the museum's collection. In the bid the collection was referred to as a means to construct and tell a narrative. The collections were not mentioned in the Headline Document's aims and objectives, but they were the focus of the facing page of the document. Having demoted the museum's collection from the focus of the project, the Headline Document repeatedly referred to the collections as 'heritage assets', a title that the Gallery Brief avoided using altogether (HD; GB). The Headline Document was quick to point out the value of the collections: 'All parts of the collection were designated as of national importance in 1997 and they are unrivaled among city museums internationally for their scope and size' but by structuring the bid in this way the Headline Document ensured that the collection was seen as a resource, rather than the focus of the project (HD: 9). The Gallery Brief complicated this prioritization when it argued that the project would be the museum's chance to display late 20th century objects. The Gallery Brief praised the 'good practice' of past collecting, invoking the spectre of Sorensen: 'Thanks to past good practice in collecting and documentation most of our objects are precise and specific rather than generic. They speak eloquently of real lives and real experiences' (GB: 7). In doing so the Gallery Brief made a subtle yet convincing case for continuity of practice at the Museum of London. The Headline Document may have foregrounded change and innovation, but in its praise of earlier collecting, the Gallery Brief highlighted a commitment to social history that had been ongoing at the museum beneath the directorial level.

The Headline Document identified how the museum's workforce had developed skills over the past five years: the longest part of the Headline Document was the five page sequence that detailed 'How does it [the project] fit our organization?' (HD: 11-15). The bid did not speak at length about World City. In a list of 21 recent museum projects that contributed to the Modern London galleries, World City is the 15th project to feature and one of seven which are not elaborated upon. World City is listed second in a sub-group of three recent projects that the bid modestly

explained had given museum staff experience in ‘developing content for permanent galleries’ (HD: 16). The Headline Document made little reference to the need to remove World City. The Options Appraisal, discussed earlier in the chapter, was stored elsewhere, and the Headline Document explained that what it called ‘high risk factors’ forced a change of plans (HD: 5).

The bid documents made striking use of a poem by Benjamin Zephaniah that was commissioned by the Museum of London in 1996 (figure 4.17). The poem appears at the end of both the Headline Document and the Gallery Brief, each time presented with credit but no commentary, allowing the curatorial role to be ‘director and producer, rather than author or star’ (GB: 6). The poem’s presence in the bid, especially given the absence of any caption or contextual information, makes it an interesting feature of the museum’s description and intentions for the Galleries of Modern London. By using the poem in this way the museum was able to demonstrate its commitment to using artists’ descriptions of London in the galleries, and the presence of the poem in both documents highlights its significance. The gallery brief stipulated that ‘wherever possible’ the museum would ‘talk through others’ and this chapter will now focus on the poem, to examine the intellectual work that the poem does by appearing in the bid documents.

Although the rhythm of the poem’s opening line (‘I love this great polluted place’) recalls Blake’s bleak London (‘I wonder’d thro’ each charter’d street’), Zephaniah’s poem is a celebration of London, and the experience of living amongst a diverse range of Londoners. Aside from mentioning old and new buildings, the poem makes no topographic references to the city, and, like the museum’s plan, Zephaniah’s London is defined by the people who populate the poem. As the poem begins, Zephaniah foregrounds pop stars, ravers and politicians, all of whom have come to London in pursuit of their desires. As the poem continues the categories are left behind in a celebration of the music and food Londoners can enjoy, and by the middle of the poem Zepehaniah includes a numerical celebration of the population, where ‘two hundred languages’ are spoken. The poem ends by stressing that London’s value is in bringing people and cultures together in a specific sensory landscape:

THE LONDON BREED
Benjamin Zephaniah

I love this great polluted place
Where pop stars come to live their dreams
Here ravers come for drum and bass
And politicians plan their schemes,
The music of the world is here
This city can play any song
They came to here from everywhere
Tis they that made this city strong.
A world of food displayed on streets
Where all the world can come and dine
On meals that end with bitter sweets
And cultures melt and intertwine,
Two hundred languages give voice
To fifteen thousand changing years
And all religions can rejoice
With exiled souls and pioneers.
I love this overcrowded place
Where old buildings mark men and time
And new buildings all seem to race
Up to a cloudy dank skyline,
Too many cars mean dire air
Too many guns mean danger
Too many drugs mean be aware
Of strange gifts from a stranger.
It's so cool when the heat is on
And when it's cool it's so wicked
We just keep melting into one
Just like the tribes before us did,
I love this concrete jungle still
With all its sirens and its speed
The people here united will
Create a kind of London breed.

© Benjamin Zephaniah 1996
Poem commissioned by the Museum of London in 1996

Figure 4.17 – Poem as presented in the Museum of London's bid to the HLF, 2004

"I love this concrete jungle still
With all its sirens and its speed
The people here united
Create a kind of London breed"
(Zephaniah, quoted in HD: 23; GB: 18).

The poem's repeated declaration of the words 'I love' celebrates the ambivalent experience of the city, by juxtaposing affection with pollution and overcrowding. Throughout the poem Zepehaniah is critical of London's 'dank skyline' and 'dire air', contrasting these impersonal characteristics with the human pleasures of living where 'cultures melt and intertwine'. Three-quarters of the way through the poem Zephaniah is less celebratory, but frames the difficulties of London in terms of objects, rather than people. 'Too many cars' begins one line, the next 'too many guns' and then 'too many drugs', which presents a contrast to the numerous 'Two hundred languages' and 'fifteen thousand changing years' cherished elsewhere in the poem. Zephaniah's London is celebrated for accommodating its population, where people 'from everywhere' 'keep melting into one'.

The poem is not just a celebration of multiculturalism, it is also a celebration of the distinctive experience of multiculturalism in London. The last lines emphasize it is 'this' concrete jungle, that being 'here' is important and that London itself engenders its characteristic populace.

The Gallery Brief notes that a video of The London Breed will be used in the gallery alongside 'portraits of people in their homes' and 'personal memorabilia' to make the point that the city has 'a greater diversity of people than ever before' (GB: 26). The poem mirrors much of the emphasis on Londoners themselves throughout the museum's bid. The museum reiterates that 'the gallery story is being told by London's people, past and present' (HD: 6) throughout its bid; whether aiming to 'make more of our collections' potential to personalize history' (GB: 6); to 'produce a very heavily 'peopled'' gallery, that must 'do real justice to London's multi-cultural character' (GB: 25). Zepheniah's poem serves as an eloquent reiteration of the role of people in London's history and its inclusion in the bid

demonstrates the way the museum intends to present the voices of multicultural London to a multicultural audience.

The museum's wish to present multiculturalism had two significant motivations. Firstly, including the multicultural narrative of London's past would redress a prominent absence, connect the older galleries to the present city, and would give the museum credibility. Secondly, including a multicultural narrative was seen as a necessary step to encourage visitors from minority ethnic communities: 'it will increase our opportunities to attract and retain target groups under-represented in the Museum's current audience profile by reflecting the cultural and social diversity of London' (HD: 22). Presenting the positive experience of multicultural London presented a contrast to the way World City had discussed population growth and immigration in its introduction, which focussed on the difficulties of crowded living and the impact on the city of creating infrastructure to accommodate the city's new population (figure 4.18):

> The population rose from under one million to over seven million by 1914. One contemporary travel guide boasted that London had 'more Scotchmen than in Edinburgh, more Irish than in Dublin, more Jews than in Palestine, and more Roman Catholics than in Rome'.
>
> So many people massed together created severe problems of congestion, pollution and disease on a scale never seen before. The Thames became a giant sewer. Cholera swept through the city. Yet with radical improvements, the capital evolved into a modern city not that different from the London we know today.
> (Museum of London, 2001).

Figure 4.18 – Extract from introductory panel, World City Gallery, Museum of London 2001

Presenting pleasurable experiences of the city was one of Lohman's aims for the city museum, as the next section of the chapter will explore.

Museum and heritage context

The museum's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund complemented an organizational and political context, which this chapter will now consider. It will first look at the organization of the museum and identify the ways the bid reflected the museum and its leadership, then the chapter will consider the broader political context and how London was understood, before finally looking at how the specific context of the museum building gave shape to the expression of these ideas. In doing so, this section of the chapter shows how the Galleries of Modern London represented a moment in the relationship between the city and the museum, and some of the significance of the spatial conditions of the museum. Although the museum's bid documents were quick to point to innovation and change at the museum, there was a lineage of projects and an institutional context to draw on.

Making a new gallery in an old museum is not just a matter of re-using physical infrastructure, but negotiating the intangible infrastructure too. Although the museum sought a radical new direction after the World City gallery, at times the museum drew upon an older form of itself as a model for the future. Earlier the chapter showed how the Headline Document recalled Sorensen's collecting practices and debates about positioning the twentieth-century gallery echo his arguments in support of a larger space for galleries exhibiting modern London. This also happened directly in the bid, when it drew on a 1988 quotation from Max Hebditch to describe how to build: 'complexity, diversity and multi-layered information into the stories we tell' (HD: 10). In 1975 the museum's first director, Tom Hume, expressed his hopes that the museum:

> 'can give young people who appear to be lost a feeling that there is something worth belonging to, and we can do this by giving them a sense of history. It's our aim here to get actively involved with people... We've got to diversify our activities more than museums have normally done in the past'
>
> (Tom Hume, speaking on the 30th May 1975 and quoted in Museum of London anniversary booklet, Ross and Swain, 2001).

When Hume talked about history and belonging, he foreshadowed the museum's 2004 assertion that it wishes 'to build up a new family tree for London, one that enables present and future generations to see themselves in it' (HD: 1). Although his sentiments aren't expressed in the same terminology, the sentiment of Hume's statement reflects research being produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the early twenty-first century, such as their report entitled *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of Museums* which argued that museums 'inspire powerful and identity-building learning in children, young people and community members' and that museums 'complement formal education when pupils are off curriculum' (DCMS 2004: 4).

The museum's previous incarnations produced a family resemblance amongst the institution's own approaches to city display, but it could also be argued that at different moments the museum and its staff have had influence beyond the organization. The Museum of London was a large and influential city museum, and the context chapter showed how Hume and Hebditch managed the museum's influence and entered into discourse with other museums. The Museum of London's influence has contributed to the same pool of ideas which agendas in various museums and other bodies have built on. One of these examples is the *Peopling of London* project, discussed in the previous chapter, which was led by Nick Merriman at the Museum of London in the early 1990s. The project culminated in an exhibition and a book, which showed how immigration is not new to London, and explored how seventeen groups of people have made the city as they made it their home (Merriman, 1993).

The project "was very innovative, at that time it felt like a very new approach... If you're studying museology it's really a groundbreaking exhibition and it does come out of thinking quite theoretically about cities and the population of cities and how cities evolved" (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September 2012). Despite the influence of the book and exhibition extending beyond the museum, the Museum of London itself did not maintain the links it had built with communities or pursue the project, as directors sought to focus the museum's activities in other directions. The influence of the museum's own history provided an intellectual context, but did not itself determine the museum's future. Both Thurley and Lohman built on the

museum's history with their own different ideas about urban history museums, and this chapter will now consider the influence of their ideas about how the museum should represent the city.

Different Directors' approaches

Thurley and Lohman's discussions of the city museum took different forms of expression, pointing to two distinct ways of understanding the city museum. While Director of the Museum of London, Thurley continued to publish research following his established interests in historic houses. Thurley maintained his contributions to the journal *Architectural History*, published a monograph on the historic palace of Whitehall, contributed a chapter on Royal Palaces for an encyclopedia about the Tudors, wrote another chapter on country houses for a book about the Stuart court, and published a series of other articles, including three pieces for *Country Life* magazine. Through this pattern of publications Thurley sustained his academic and antiquarian interests, and engaged only indirectly with the topic of the city museum.

Lohman took a different approach, and was much keener to engage directly with discourse on the topic of the city museum itself. Lohman's ideas about the city museum were expressed throughout the time he was director of the museum, from early after his arrival at the museum in a Guardian article in 2002 and his frequent to contributions to the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC). Looking at museums beyond the city, Lohman was chairman of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for six years whilst at the Museum of London, and contributed to a series of museum studies books with the publisher Berghahn.

In a review article, the *Antiquities Journal* summarised a talk Thurley had given at the Society of Antiquaries of London in December 1999. Thurley was one of three speakers invited to talk about his antiquarian dreams and nightmares for the coming century, and the journal records that:

> 'Simon Thurley, the Director of the Museum of London, then painted an enticing and convincing Blairite vision of the museum of the future, all

> interactive screen and high-tech access, before revealing his conviction that this was a dangerous mirage, that it was futile for museums to compete with the international moguls of electronics and their vastly superior resources, and that, instead, *il faut cultiver son jardin*, in other words the real objects with which, if they are properly presented, no simulacra can compete.'
> (Jervis, 2000).

Thurley was critical of electronic interactives to the point of hostility. Whilst discussing the new British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum in an interview for the Guardian, Thurley complained that: 'The objects look great, but all the other bits stopped working after five minutes' (in Kennedy, 2001). Thurley sometimes found himself at odds with members of staff at the Museum of London, and his comments to the Guardian about the British Galleries Victoria and Albert Museum were such an occasion:

> "I remember storming into his office just at the time the gallery opened just because he had criticised the V and A and I thought it was so bad, so wrong what he did. He didn't really apologise but he allowed me to say my thing."
> (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September 2012).

Thurley fell into the trap of seeing objects and interactives as oppositional. This distinction had been made elsewhere by David Fleming, who expressed concerns that interactive and digital display techniques risked 'dethroning' objects (Fleming, 1998). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, but at this point it is interesting to note that this was shown to be a false dichotomy by Thurley himself in the same interview, when he discussed the use of a recording of Queen Victoria's voice in World City: 'that is actually an exhibit, not a gimmick. It is her voice' (Kennedy, 2001).

Thurley was not interested in evoking the city, prioritising explanations above evocation. He repeatedly stressed the need for clarity in representations of the city: 'there is a real challenge to tell the stories we have to in a clean and clear way. I hope we are setting the trend again just as we did when this gallery opened, 25 years ago' (in Kennedy, 2001). Obviously this wasn't as influential as Thurley had hoped; in 2004 the Museum of London argued for a museum that evoked the city as

well as explained it. Clarity was important, but this was matched by another priority: that of simulation. The Museum of London was re-designed to resemble London: it would be populated with 'Londoners', it would be more experiential, and would have detail 'knocked back' into online facilities. Clarity was important, but not at the cost of complexity: the museum was clear about its audience segmentation, and developed a complex system of provision.

The directors also diverged on the subject of audiences. For Thurley there was an 'absolute clarity of purpose' in attracting as large an audience as possible (Trapp, 1999). Thurley certainly had ambitious aims to increase visitor numbers: 'On his arrival, he told the governors of the institution... that visitor figures should at least pass the 500,000 mark' (Trapp, 1999). Thurley was successful at increasing visitor numbers: '[Thurley] transformed its fortunes, increasing visitor numbers from 250,000 to nearly 400,000, even before entry became free' (Kennedy, 2001). Thurley stressed the need to grow the museum's audience, but did not discuss the need to broaden it. Earlier, this chapter discussed the 2004 bid's audience segmentation, which grouped visitors into different categories, using social grading developed by the National Readership Survey. Using these, the bid stressed that the museum would address groups under-represented in its visitors, and identified key audiences in these terms (GB: 8). Thurley was critical of setting targets for museums, based on visitors' ethnicity, and was critical of the market-research developed measures used to group visitors: 'such methods of identifying people - taken from the world of advertising - are crude and old-fashioned' he argued (Milner, 2001). When targets for ethnic diversity amongst visitors to national museums were dropped: 'Simon Thurley, the director of the Museum of London, agreed, adding that the system of targets did not work, anyway. He said: "It was very difficult to measure what an ethnic group actually is. Are our Scottish visitors an ethnic group? Or Welsh? Our groups of French schoolchildren?"' (Milner, 2001). The audience segmentation that Lohman brought in reinstated a system that drew directly from the quota-led model that Thurley had been so critical of in comments three years before.

Speaking to the Guardian in 2001, Thurley explained that he would be '"unashamedly pitching" the new-look Museum of London at adults. "You have

got to involve them as well as the children. There is no use in dumbing down to their level. You have got to have both"' (Kennedy, 2001). Pitching a permanent gallery at adults was a different focus than the 2004 museum bid expressed, and Thurley couched his assertion in the adoption of the problematic popular discourse of 'dumbing down'. Thurley was committed to a populist, object-centred approach at the museum. The example of the display of a stone sarcophagus found the in the city is illustrative of the difference in the directors' approaches: 'When the Museum of London's archeologists dug up a stone sarcophagus in London's Spitalfields with a Roman coffin inside, [Thurley] took it straight to the museum's galleries and opened it live on television, ensuring blanket next-day press coverage' (Design Week, 2002). Lohman was more engaged with debates about the ethics of human remains, having edited a book about museum practice and human remains published in 2006. During Lohman's directorship the museum kept the coffin on display, but replaced its lid, covering the human remains. Although Thurley sought to use objects to avoid 'dumbing down,' his emphatic belief in their populist power prompted uncritical use of the objects, and led to what would be recognised under further scrutiny as problematic displays.

The Telegraph praised Thurley for not using Lottery money in World City: 'Work on the first phase of the museum, which will include a new entrance, better circulation and new galleries, is about to start on site, without a penny of Lottery money being involved. It is an impressive achievement' although of course other, smaller, projects at the museum whilst Thurley was director did use Lottery money (Worsley, Telegraph, 2001). In a fawning piece profiling Thurley himself, again in the Telegraph, entitled 'The kind of conservative we need' A. N. Wilson argued:

> 'Simon Thurley is a man in a million. He is, in my view, one of the single most cheering things about England at the moment. He is funny, intelligent, good-looking. Though completely English - his grandfather was the great Dickensian scholar Humphry House - he has many of the qualities I had come to believe existed only in Americans: shameless ambition, charm, humour, scholarship and brio.'
>
> (Wilson, 2001).

Wilson's profile of Thurley bragged that he was 'completely English' and Thurley himself made the similarly unappealing boast that: 'When you're first asked to be in Who's Who - and that happened ages ago - I didn't really think before I put 'ruins' as my passion, but they are' (Thomson, 2002). Lohman's presentation of his background differed from Thurley's conservative model. A Museum of London press release in 2011 was typical of Lohman's cosmopolitan self-presentation: 'Poland, where my parents were born, is as intrinsic to my identity as London - where I was born' (Lohman, quoted in Museum of London, 2011).

Lohman's ideas about the city museum are based around pleasure, liveliness and identity, themes he stresses repeatedly when describing the city museum. When Lohman writes about 'The prospect of the city museum' he stresses the importance of finding out 'what sort of a city it is we wish to celebrate' (Lohman, 2008b: 61). Even whilst Lohman professes the Thames is 'a key feature of London's history' Lohman describes it in terms of the migration and movement it allows between people: 'from the first Roman settlement along the Thames, bringing trade and commerce from the Mediterranean and North Africa, to nineteenth-century communities of Chinese immigrants building one of London's many "small cities" in Limehouse' (Lohman, 2008b: 63). Lohman's interest in presenting the 'sheer pleasure of populousness' goes hand in hand with his commitment to celebrating the positive experience of London's distinctive diversity.

Representing Multicultural London

The mid 2000s provided a political, social and cultural context that the museum, specifically with Lohman as director, was able to seize on. This part of the chapter argues that the museum's bid reflected discourse in the Olympics bid, which shared a focus on London as multicultural, and also put people at the centre of its argument. When Seb Coe, as bid chairman, presented London's bid for the 2012 summer Olympics, he presented the same model of London as the Museum of London suggested in its own bid. Onstage with 30 teenagers, Coe argued that:

> 'Each of them comes from east London, from the communities who will be touched most directly by our Games. And thanks to London's multi-cultural mix of 200 nations, they also represent the youth of the world. Their

> families have come from every continent. They practice every religion and every faith. What unites them is London'
> (Coe, 2005).

Denise Lewis reiterated the point, arguing that: 'Thanks to the city's diversity, there will be supporters from every Olympic nation. Every athlete will have a home crowd' (Denise Lewis, 2005). Ken Livingstone echoed the sentiment: 'A city in which 300 languages are spoken every day and those who speak them live happily side-by-side... And it's a city which is a magnet for young people from all over the world. London is already their number one destination.' (Livingstone, 2005a). The 2012 games bid promoted a model of multicuturalism as peaceful co-existence, the idea of London celebrated by Zepheniah and described by the museum's bid.

The model of London as a multicultural construction is not new, and nor is it new to the museum as it recalls the *Peopling of London* project from a decade before, but during the mid-2000s this idea of London was endorsed by government and state figures. When it was announced that London's bid for the games was successful, Prime Minister Tony Blair said: 'London is an open, multi-racial, multi-religious, multicultural city and rather proud of it. People of all races and nationalities mix in with each other and mix in with each other well' (Tran, 2005).

The following day, at a Singapore airport, in response to the '7/7' terrorist attacks, London's mayor, Ken Livingstone spoke again about London's population, describing London's role in uniting diverse people:

> 'People from the rest of Britain, people from around the world will arrive in London to become Londoners, to fulfill their dreams and achieve their potential. They choose to come to London, as so many have come before, because they come to be free, they come to live the life they choose, they come to be able to be themselves.'
> (Livingstone, 2005b)

Livingstone's words, used in the introduction to Massey's *World City*, celebrate London's multiculturalism the same way Coe did, and the same way that Zepheniah

did (Massey, 2007). When Livingstone addressed a rally in Trafalgar Square the following week, he reiterated his argument:

> 'In every country in the world young men and women and boys and girls will go to sleep dreaming that in seven years they will come to this city to run faster, jump higher and throw farther than anyone has done before. And for every one who dreams of that, a thousand dream of coming to this city to study, or to become surgeons, or to create new products and processes the world has not yet envisaged. It's what makes this city great.'
> (Livingstone, 2005c).

Livingstone's opening focuses on individuals coming to London to fill their aspirations, and echoes Zephaniah's poetic iterations of pop stars, politicians and ravers. So too does Livingstone's recognition that it is the people who come to London that make it 'great'. Livngstone expresses it with a quotation attributed to Pericles of Athens, saying that 'in time all great things flow towards this city, and the greatest of these is the people that come' (Livingstone, 2005c). Zepeheniah makes the same point in The London Breed: 'They came to here from everywhere/ Tis they that made this city strong' (Zephaniah, 1996).

The celebrated vision of multicultural London in the Olympic bid has been criticised as 'banal cosmopolitanism' (see Beck, in Newman, 2007). The Museum of London's celebratory focus, reiterating the positive experiences of multiculturalism risked facing the same criticism. In 2005 Cathy Ross spoke about her concerns about the galleries, and how to balance the positive and negative experiences of London's history to a visitor experience without becoming banal: 'We would lose another sort of legitimacy if we delivered a tourist board vision of London as a place of happy, smiling people. But how far can we explore the less admirable aspects of our past without making the museum into a place of collective penance?' (Ross, 2006: 43). Ross explained the position of the museum 'as agents of civic improvement' and argued that the museum had 'a responsibility to say this is generally a good society: that, on the whole, London may not be a Jerusalem but it is a good Babylon rather than a bad Babylon' (Ross, 2006: 43). Ross commented specifically about how the Galleries of Modern London would treat multiculturalism:

> ‘Perhaps the most thought-provoking area in this regard is the current debate about multiculturalism. How do we portray the demographic change of the last half of the twentieth century in a way that acknowledges the massive cultural disturbances that have taken place but which accentuates the positive aspects of change? What will we say about the clash between new and old value systems? We aim of course to create some sort of calm basis for reflection but at some point we will have to say that we believe this is a better value system for our city than that. This responsibility is something we can’t pass to others on our behalf’
> (Ross, 2006: 43-44).

In 2006 Ross argued that the museum had an obligation to represent London in positive terms. Ross’ description of London as ‘good Babylon,’ and the assertion that: ‘we believe this is a better value system’ is a historical interpretation, and one Ross connects with the museum’s aim to present the museum in a pleasurable way: ‘We must give deep thought to our new galleries but at the end of the day we must wear our deliberations lightly and create spaces that visitors will enjoy and take pleasure in.’ (Ross, 2006: 44). This supports Lohman’s argument that the museum should celebrate the city, which he expressed in 2006: ‘before we come to the question of what sort of institution we might want to represent a city, that we first understand what sort of a city it is that we wish to celebrate’ (Lohman, 2008b: 61).

If we understand modernity as a fractured, cross-sectional, non-binary process, as Ogborn advocates, then it is possible to see World City gallery as about modernization and a series of progressive improvements, as a whig historiography (Ogborn, 1998). With the Galleries of Modern London the nature of modernity is problematized and explored, although the museum’s overtly celebratory tone maintains the same sense of the gallery as presenting an ‘evolutionary itinerary’ that Bennett identified in the earliest natural history museums, albeit directed towards multicultural London rather than something more conservative (Bennett, 1995: 181).

Ideas into plans

In the bid the museum was frank about how 'the shape of the story is in part determined by the physical shape of the building and the need to make maximum use of the World City infrastructure and the Victorian Walk' (GB: 20). The chapter has already shown how the building's constraints affected the galleries it could accommodate, and how the museum sought to redevelop the space. The chapter has also shown how the narrative development of the new galleries, but it will now look directly at how the museum planned to present this narrative in gallery space. By looking at gallery designs and object choices in the 2004 bid, this chapter argues that museums are more than textual, and shows how 'perambulatory rhetorics and narratives' are built into galleries (Silverstone 2002: 173).

In 1976 the Museum of London's galleries were designed with a linear route for visitors to follow. The museum's funding bid for the Galleries of Modern London continued this idea, as the December 2005 plan of gallery content shows (figure 4.9). The staircase at the bottom-left corner of the courtyard links the galleries on the first floor of the museum to the Galleries of Modern London. The galleries were planned so that visitors could follow the linear path around the first floor of the museum, seeing 'London before London,' 'Roman London,' 'Medieval London,' and 'War, Plague and Fire,' before coming down the stairs to continue the chronological narrative with the 17th-19th century.

The Victorian Walk display shown in the anniversary booklet and the World City website is marked on the plan as 'existing.' The bid argued that the display was 'a popular part of the existing World City Gallery and we propose to leave it virtually unchanged' (GB: 23). Everything else had to fit in around it.

Figure 4.19 - Schematic Plan of Gallery Content, 2005 © Museum of London

In the bid process the museum split the Galleries of Modern London into three different zones: zone 1, 17th-19th century; zone 2, 19th-20th century; and zone 3, 20th century-now (GB: 5). The three zones were arranged around different sides of the museum's central rectangular courtyard, which, despite earlier discussion about enclosing it, would remain a garden (figure 4.19). At this stage in gallery development none of the zones had titles, and the bid stressed that the zones would be 'roughly corresponding to a time span' rather than adhering to specific years (GB: 5). Each zone had a lead curator, designer and conservator, tasked with

developing gallery content within the gallery framework. The museum hoped that this would create a slightly different tone in each gallery, which it hoped would prove refreshing for visitors: "people do get tired going through galleries, and if it was one person doing the whole of the bottom floor of the galleries then they might be quite flat, or they'd be the same sort of pace" (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008). The lead curators were soon confirmed as Alex Werner for zone 1, Beverley Cook for zone 2, and a little later, Cathy Ross for zone 3. For several years museum staff would informally identify the three zones by their lead curators: as either 'Cathy's zone,' 'Beverley's zone' or 'Alex's zone.' Later, as work on them progressed the zones were given their own titles. Zone 1 became Expanding City, zone 2 was called People's City and zone 3 was given a new, old name: it was called World City.

Rather than simply extending the existing visitor route, the 2004 plan provided visitors with the opportunity to move 'backwards through time' (GB: 25). The Galleries were designed to provide visitors with a choice in direction: "so that you could allow for people to have choice, the don't have to start in 1666 and work your way through, they could equally start at the present and work their way back" (McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008). This conviction appears on the gallery plan, and can be seen in plan with the inclusion of an 'Introduction (17th century-Now)' as well as an 'Introduction (Now-17th century)' (figure 4.19). This was an innovation for the museum, but by maintaining a chronological structure the Museum of London remained distinct from other city museums which did not take the same approach. The three zones' broad historical sweeps and design invited thematic concerns to be dealt with in the spaces. Although the museum had always been laid out along a chronological route, each of the individual zones in the Galleries of Modern London would take a more thematic approach. The World City gallery, for instance, led with a thematic structure, with cases focussed on 'government', 'entertainment' and 'transport'. This thematic ordering provided the means to explore the development of elements of the city, and to demonstrate how 'radical improvements' were achieved in the control of 'congestion, pollution and disease.'

Elsewhere in the plan it is possible to see how the Headline Document's focus on audiences is borne out into the gallery space. The 'information zone and coffee point' provide seating for visitors on the ground floor (figure 4.19). The museum had a larger cafe near its entrance, but by providing a coffee point on the lower floor the museum could encourage visitors to buy refreshments without interrupting their route around the museum. Pragmatic concerns like this may seem cynical, but would also allow for visitors to spend longer in the galleries, which has been used as a measure of engagement with exhibits (Serrell, 1998). The plan includes symbols of projectors in the information zone and a coffee point, showing a desire to extend the techniques and displays of the galleries into the space.

The gallery plan provides an insight into how the narrative was written into the space, and how the museum's narrative priorities were developed alongside other elements of the museum visit. Acknowledging the need to provide visitors with time in their visit to consider what they have seen in the galleries, each zone provided a designated 'reflective area.' The Victorian and twentieth-century Walks would provide immersive spaces, transition zones would guide visitors to the next zone, projections of films would start and finish the visitor route, large cases would give visitors, displays and reflective areas would allow visitors to absorb what they had seen, and an object timeline around the courtyard would give visitors a notion of historical sequence. The plan shows how the museum built a rhythm into the space, by plotting areas for immersion, observation, interaction and reflection into the museum.

The plan submitted in 2004 was an early iteration of the Galleries of Modern London, and working on the gallery project would change them. The 2004 plan was altered as work on the gallery progressed. Different individuals working on the project were able to influence these in different ways, and in the absence of an interpretation department the project was driven: "jointly as a three-legged thing, essentially it's me, Cathy [Ross, curator] and Gail [Symington, designer]. We've kind of been the consistent thing all the way through in shaping the whole project" (Swift, interview, 24th June 2009). Zone 3 had been assigned one lead curator, who was then moved from the project. When the zone's designer left, Cathy and Gail were able to make substantial revisions to redesign the space:

> "Once [zone 3] was fully given to Gail, she did her thinking and came up with this causeway idea, then everything just fell into place naturally... It was always just done in abstract, we never quite knew what it was going to be... As soon as she did it, even in outline, I could see it would work"
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 10th February, 2010).

Symington, Ross and Swift were very influential staff, and could have a specific, as well as substantial impact on how the galleries developed. The Gallery Brief explains that both of the introduction sections would 'include an introductory video and a large world map interactive to reinforce the message that London's welfare has always been tied up with places elsewhere on the globe' (GB: 21). Both introductions would use interactive displays, rather than objects, to establish a narrative framework for the galleries themselves. The introductions were 'designed to orientate visitors and introduce them to the large overarching themes and messages that will run throughout the gallery' (GB: 21). Earlier the chapter showed that presenting an "holistic view... of London's history from the great fire through to the present day" was an important idea in the project (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 9th October 2008). Presenting the thematic similarities at the outset was a means the museum used to establish this approach in visitors' minds.

The zones were divided into three chronological sections and to convey a sense of continuity between zones, each zone was structured around the same key themes. The gallery plan shows how a series of themes would be reappear in the different zones. Zone 2 curator Beverley Cook describes the process of structuring the zones:

> "What we did as lead curators, was be responsible for object selection and obviously the telling of the story, so we did that quite early on. What we did first of all was decide that we would do the zones thematically rather than chronologically... Although subjects are covered and scenes are covered in all three zones, we try to have some sort of message matrix, which went across all three zones, like, The Empire, which in some of the zones some of those messages are more prominent and have a higher importance. So in my zone, there's a quite a big emphasis on a subject like Poverty, because obviously that was very key to that period, whereas it's more underlying in Alex's zone and Cathy's, or it's more telling the story of the build-up to an

> issue, rather than a subject. So there are messages that go across the three zones, but there will be a different emphasis on those messages. So that was the first thing we really decided on. And we decided on those individually and then got together to do this sort of message matrix, to see how what we thought were the most important stories, to see how they fitted in with what the other two felt."
> (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008).

The plan demonstrates how the same themes are addressed in each zone: cityscape, work/wealth, home, Londoners. The 2004 plan also includes topics, such as War, that only appear in one zone. The Gallery Brief argued that the museum should reevaluate its historical narrative, and the 'family resemblance' the headline document discussed wasn't left to chance, but was plotted onto the space.

Within the 'message matrix', each zone had its own narratives. The gallery brief expressed zone 1's narrative priority as being 'The overall message for visitors is that in this period London became a city of money-makers, making faster commercial and industrial 'progress' than any other European capital' (GB: 21). This emphasis linked to older (1997) ideas about a different World City Gallery, which had looked at the story of the City of London as a financial centre. The central narrative for zone 1 also reflected the 2001 World City gallery's story of London's modernization, although the use of quote marks around the word progress suggests a degree of ambivalence and ambiguity. Without the strong narrative message of World City, it was less clear how the museum would interpret this period. The museum was distancing itself from a celebratory narrative of progression, but the use of the term suggests there was an unresolved contradiction and it was not clear how strong or subtle critique of 'progress' would be expressed in the gallery.

Although the narratives and themes for each zone were set out in the Gallery Brief, it was not a straightforward matter of getting curators to make the galleries the brief ordered up. Cook has explained how the four gallery themes were collaborated on, and how they would be treated unevenly in different zones. Werner recalls how

working within the themes and gallery narratives was a negotiation between the individual curators and the structures put in place by the museum:

> "Individual curators were set 'this is the space' and we worked with designers and we were following the model we were given. Obviously some of the thematic elements are personal to us so that's why the galleries have turned out the way they have. Some of them have turned out because we had to investigate that theme so it's a bit of the personal curators in the spaces but there's quite a lot of - not the straightjacket - but the overall form that was imposed"
>
> (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012)

This quote shows the balance between the curators' influence and the 'overall form' and alludes to the occasional friction that was prompted by this negotiation. The Headline Document and Gallery Brief stipulated a structure for the galleries, but the intellectual and practical work of making the galleries was a creative process for curators, and demanded a degree of collaboration between the individual curators and the overall form.

Alongside the plan, the Gallery Brief presented tables of objects for each zone, dividing them into columns for 'focus exhibit', 'supporting exhibits' and 'subject area' (GB: 22-26; figure 4.20). These tables of Gallery Elements represent an early stage in the negotiation between individual curators and the galleries' overall form. The format the objects were presented in stressed how the objects would support the gallery narrative, in a structure that specifically linked objects with the subject they would represent in the gallery. The exhibit list not only reinforced the relationship between objects and narrative, but also reiterated the gallery's themes. The four thematic strands of Londoners, Work and Wealth, Home and Cityscape were all presented, with a separate section for the zone's reflective area. The lists suggest the ways that the museum would fill the spaces plotted out in the gallery plan (figure 4.19).

LONDONERS

focus exhibit	*Supporting exhibits*	*Subject area*
Wall group of painted and printed portraits	Costume Huguenot silk Personal items from named individuals	London was full of different types of people with different types of interests and loyalties.
Group of items from clubs and societies		
Wooden Printing Press	Printed broadsheets	London was a hot-bed of new ideas
Wellclose Square prison cell	Bethlem sculptures	Families had to fend for themselves: there were few safety nets

HOME

Blackett Baby House	Foundling figures Toys Handling objects	Daily life in an 18th century household

WORK and WEALTH

Massive group of manufactured goods (ceramics, glass, sedan chair, pianos, silver etc.)		Londoners made things and money on a scale never seen before
Lloyd's rostrum	Ledgers, paper money etc	Behind the manufacturing revolution was a financial revolution.

CITYSCAPE

Group of paintings / prints Covent Garden, Bridges, Trafalgar Square, Regent Street Panorama, Rhinebeck Panorama etc	*London villages interactive*	London spread outwards, creating some of London's most famous spaces, roads and squares
Trafalgar Square video		Contemporary views

REFLECTIVE AREA

The O'Neill Paintings	Slavery exhibits Contemporary work responding to the idea of Empire	The underpinning of London's wealth was its Empire.

Figure 4.20 - Gallery Elements Zone 1 (Museum of London, GB: 26)

Although the list of Gallery Elements in figure 4.20 is a preliminary list, it shows the process of narrowing down which objects to display. This level of preparation was a contrast to World City, which was prepared in "about a year... It was very, very quick" (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012). With so much less time the process of selecting objects for display meant getting objects out of storage and trying them out in the cases, a process which "when you're a curator it's great, it's what you live for, getting all the stuff out" but which has other consequences for other staff at the museum (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012). One

of the lessons learned from World City was the experience of object conservation staff, as the museum's head of conservation attests:

> "One thing I was very adamant about was getting curators and learning and people involved with the content of the galleries to give a commitment that they would work hard with us to get the [object] list into a semblance of order so we could confidently start the conservation on"
> (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May, 2010).

Developing reliable object lists in advance would allow conservation staff to focus their work on ensuring the chosen objects were in a good enough condition to go on display. Learning lessons from World City, the museum was quick to start considering which objects would be useful in the new galleries. The chapter will now focus on how objects were considered for zone 1.

Figure 4.20 is taken from the Gallery Brief's presentation of the object list and shows the objects proposed for zone 1. Although it mainly describes objects, the table uses the term 'exhibit,' which implies the concept of an audience, rather than 'object,' which does not. This distinguishes the term from a bare object list, by showing how creative thought has already gone into the galleries in terms of display. Although zone 1's key exhibits are all from the collection they are not all individual objects: to respond to the subject area 'Londoners made things and money on a scale never seen before' zone 1 will include a 'massive group of manufactured goods' (see figure 4.20).

Here the museum has moved beyond World City Gallery's approach of presenting individual objects almost as fine art, and has used the scale of object selection and the style of display to convey meaning, as well as the objects themselves.

Thurley's vocal opposition to use of video and interactives was challenged by others in the museum whilst he was director, and with a new director these elements reappear in the exhibit list. The zone 1 list includes 'Trafalgar Square video' and a 'London villages interactive' (figure 4.20). Using a range of display techniques would not only make the gallery look more modern than World City, it would offer different kinds of learners different ways to engage with the collection.

The Headline Document had stipulated the different visitors the galleries should address, and by providing a range of display techniques the museum could broaden its appeal to different kinds of learners. Elsewhere, in zone 2 it is possible to see new approaches to display, in the example of the painting *Popularity*. The painting had been included in World City inside a glass case, alongside objects (figure 4.21). Rather than being displayed alongside lots of other objects, in the Galleries of Modern London it would be shown alongside film of street dancing (figure 4.22). This new approach reflected contemporary concerns in the 2003 UNESCO convention on intangible cultural heritage, which aimed to safeguard intangible cultural heritage including social practices (UNESCO, 2003). In zone 3 the museum planned to use film for 'video histories of first generation immigrants' to address the subject area 'The story of the end of Empire' (GB: 26). This reflected Ross's conviction in the technique of using first-person testimony to address 'hard truths' in museum displays (Ross, 2006: 43).

Figure 4.21 - '*Popularity*' as it appeared in World City Gallery, still from film

LONDONERS

focus exhibit	*Supporting exhibits*	*Subject area*
Group of photographs and film of working class and poor Londoners	Booth map Working history groups	Creating wealth also created poverty. London's rich and poor lived in different worlds.
Group of C19th city life paintings Frith, Joy, Charles Hunt etc.	Dickens material	Artists and writers were fascinated by modern life
Dr Homa distillery group	Jewish memorabilia	Jewish refugees moved into the East End
Il Ticino banner		Italian Swiss were attracted to London for economic reasons
Painting: Popularity	Film of street dancing	Working class Londoners created their own culture of music hall, song and dance

Figure 4.22 - Gallery elements zone 2 (Museum of London, GB: 23)

Using film and video histories was one technique the museum planned to use to display histories not easily conveyed with objects. The absence of material evidence was a problem in zone 2, where Cook faced the old city museum challenge of finding an object to suit the chosen narrative:

> "There's always things missing, or gaps in the collections, particularly when you're dealing with certain subjects, like something like Poverty. It's quite difficult sometimes to say exactly what you want to say through material culture, because the material culture just isn't available. And the designers do complain that I have too much 2D stuff in my Zone... it would be lovely to have a lot more 3D, but that just doesn't exist for some of the stories I want to tell"
>
> (Cook, interview, 4th December 2008).

The opposite problem appeared in zone 1, where areas of collection strength were not reflected in the gallery themes. The table of exhibits in figure 4.20 shows some of the difficulties of structuring a gallery according to themes; the table is not complete, and there are gaps within it where groups of objects appear without supporting exhibits or subject area. The thematic table structure highlighted both the absence of material and strengths of the collection. Earlier chapters have shown how different museums have approached the collection/narrative dichotomy at different times, and the tables of gallery elements in the Museum of London's 2004 bid clearly demonstrate the difficulties of reconciling the two.

The language of the text in the lists of gallery elements is interesting, because the object descriptions do little to explain the links between the exhibit and the subject. The Henry Nelson O'Neil paintings the gallery brief refer to are the companion pieces *Eastward Ho!* (1857) and *Home Again* (1858) and depict the departure and return of soldiers sent to fight the First Indian War of Independence in 1857, once known as the Indian Mutiny, showing the physical and emotional effects of the conflict on working-class Londoners. Someone unfamiliar with the collection would not necessarily intuitively understand the link between the O'Neil paintings and London's financial connections to Britain's imperial interests. The lack of explanation suggests the plan was used within the museum, by people who were familiar with the collections the gallery brief referred to.

The format of the exhibit tables (figures 4.20 and 4.22) offered little scope for detailed explanation, something that curators felt also happened in the galleries themselves. The two-dimensional design for the galleries maintained resistance to the 'book on the wall' approach, and sought to avoid placing too much text in the galleries. Consequently in the:

> "Galleries of Modern London we didn't have that bit between the caption and the graphic panel. We didn't have that intermediary panel which is usually quite useful and allows you to contextualise a theme--whereas if you don't have that you have to contextualise a theme in the caption"
>
> (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012).

Without the intermediary panel, it was difficult for curators to clearly express information that linked the gallery themes to information about a specific object, and Cook argues that:

> "Sometimes the link between the objects and the story is quite tenuous, and I think that visitors wouldn't necessarily get that message, and that's where the captions come in. So although the captions might say something like, 'this is a pot, produced by or made by blah blah, most of my captions are more interpretive, so there might be a photograph, of, I don't know, a messenger boy, and I'm saying 'messenger boys became male prostitutes', so I'm not actually describing the objects necessarily, I'm saying what that object represents because if you want to get your message across then you have to interpret the objects; you can't just say 'this is a so-and-so, isn't it

> pretty?' I don't know how the visitors will feel about that, because some visitors come and they want to know information about a particular object, they won't be so interested in where it fits within your story. They will want to know, 'ooh, that's a nice pot, who made that? What was it used for?' and certainly in my zone, they're not going to get that."
> (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008).

The specific forms of text the galleries would accommodate affected the kinds of meaning the museum was able to provide to visitors, and the kinds of visitors the museum was writing for. With specific caption lengths and the absence of gallery panels, the museum was limited in what its curators could say about the objects in the galleries, although the museum hoped that its collections online facility would offer visitors more information about the displays. Earlier the chapter discussed the museum's categorisation of its audience and as 'Adults (specialist interest)' these visitors were designated a 'secondary audience.' This decision meant that sometimes the design decisions about the physical appearance of the gallery, and the importance placed in conveying narrative themes and a social history of the city, precluded the fulfilment of some groups of visitors' expectations.

Away from the funding bid, Ross reflected Cook's concerns about putting a new narrative in the museum. Speaking at a conference focused on city museums, Ross expressed her concerns that the new narratives the Museum of London would present might not match the expectations of visitors, and stressed the museum's aim to 'ensure our visitors receive our new story as legitimate, something they recognize as matching their own understanding of their city's past' (Ross, 2006: 40). The plans and more detailed descriptions noted that a timeline, or 'chronological spine', that would run around the inner perimeter of the zones and would 'provide an opportunity to name-check famous events, such as royal weddings, that may not feature in the main displays but which figure large in visitors' own memories' (GB: 20). The timeline appears in the plan, as the spines radiating from the courtyard into the galleries (see the gallery plan, figure 4.19). The timeline is by far the most literal manifestation of the method of chronological display mentioned earlier.

Several of the objects listed for zone 1 had been on display before, in the World City gallery. The Rhinebeck Panorama was one that had been prominently displayed at the entrance of the gallery (figure 4.23) and many examples of the less-specific objects in the table had also appeared. The Blackett Baby house had been displayed on the museum's ground floor in its eighteenth-century gallery. Some objects proved especially suitable for display, having the visual qualities that suited the process of making World City as an object-focussed gallery with a strong narrative, as well as proving suitable for a gallery that was developed around different narrative and thematic priorities.

Figure 4.23 - The Rhinebeck Panorama on display in World City, still taken from gallery film.

Figure 4.24 - The Great Exhibition model in the World City Gallery, still from film.

Not all objects were suitable for both galleries, and some themes in the narrative structure did not always complement the collection's strengths. Later the thesis will discuss rejected objects in more detail, but it is possible to identify moments where an object's transition from World City to Galleries of Modern London breaks down, as in this quote which refers to the model in figure 4.24:

> "The themes that work really well with our collection we haven't done in the new galleries because there wasn't any room, there was no space to do that. If you think of the Great Exhibition there's a fantastic story to tell and a titchy little case, whereas [with World City] we could tell that story in a much more interesting way from lots of different angles because it was in a big case and we had the big model. You could actually see the enormous exhibition model we've got, which is often out on loan, because it does give you that sense of the enormity of the exhibition building and the modernity of it. We've got that grotty little model we've got out on the [Galleries of Modern London] display, it's a curiosity, but you don't get the sense of something incredibly modern."
>
> (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September, 2012).

The museum needed space to tell the story with material objects, and without reinforcement in the galleries' major narratives, even some of the highlights from the collection objects risked not being re-displayed. The processes the museum undertook to make the Galleries of Modern London affected the display of individual objects. The negotiation between the museum's commitment to interpretative master planning, the process of dividing the gallery space in chronological zones, the work of developing a thematic structure for the galleries, the object's size and material qualities, and the curator's opinion were a different process of gallery making for the Museum of London.

By looking in detail at the process of proposing and preparing the Galleries of Modern London, this chapter has demonstrated how the Museum of London approached the task of re-representing London's history. The chapter took key texts and gallery footage to explore how the Museum of London carried out gallery work in the early 2000s, reflecting on the way work was structured. By exploring the changing relationship between the city and the museum in this way, the chapter demonstrated the different displays created by taking different approaches to museum work, and suggested some of the variety of approaches museums of urban history can use, even with few variables. In doing so, the creativity of the process was analysed, and the different forms influence operating on gallery space were acknowledged. The city museum negotiates a range of approaches, including those between: evocation and explanation; narrative and collection; thematic and chronological structures. This chapter presented some of the processes of negotiation, discussing both the form of the negotiation and its effects on gallery space.

By looking at World City, the chapter explored one model of the city museum. World City's 'strong narrative' framework presented a story of modernization as progress. In the World City gallery, history was presented in a modernist style as a series of progressing systems and infrastructures, and discussed on that basis. Although the section panels attached to cases ('intermediary text') investigated a more critical reading of the process of progress, the Conran & Partners-designed modernist glass cases undermined the galleries' critique of modernization. As

Werner described, the cases led visitors to look at the object, and this detracted from the galleries' more critical narratives.

After Thurley left the Museum of London, Lohman, the museum's next director, had different ideas about the city museum, and articulated these through discussions of museum cases: 'any city museum worth its salt must never try to restrict that character by boxing it into narrow display cases called 'Dublin in the Eighteenth Century' or 'Shanghai Today''(Lohman, 2008b: 63). Rather than a strong narrative line, Lohman was keen to stress that a 'sense of urban chaos' should figure on 'a list of qualities one might wish to see in a museum about a city' (Lohman, 2008b: 62)

The Galleries of Modern London presented an alternative narrative to the modernization-as-progress model advocated by World City. The name of the galleries themselves problematized modernity, and drew on what Baldwin *et al* have highlighted: that merely by calling something modern it is possible to prompt people to consider historical change (Baldwin *et al*, 1999). The Galleries of Modern London present a non-linear model of modernization and modernity, and display a model of modernity that reflects the approach discussed by historical geographers like Miles Ogborn. Although the Galleries of Modern London expand on linear processes of modernity, a narrative of progression was maintained in the new plans. Ross's assertion that the museum should present 'a good Babylon', and that it was her responsibility as a museum historian to do so, presented a new type of progression. Rather than ascending through industrialisation to a time of mass consumption, the progress that the Galleries of Modern London chart is a progress towards 'the London Breed' Zepheniah described.

This chapter has shown the similarities between the idea of London that the museum celebrated, and the idea of London celebrated by the state during the 2005 Olympic bid. This chapter has explored what Macdonald called the 'culturally, socially and politically saturated business of negotiation and value-judgement' that goes into making exhibitions (Macdonald, 1998: 1). Looking in detail at the preparation of the Galleries of Modern London, the chapter has investigated some of the different levels of influence and negotiation that took place: the preparation

material for the Headline Document; the key staff who develop and influence the narratives; the structure and interpretive master planning approach from the director; the influence of the museum's previous projects; the curators who are working within the larger plans; and, not least, the objects' material properties.

Chapter 5: Objects and installation

Research diary, 14th January 2010:

Into the Museum of London's lift in January 2010, and down two floors, to a lobby between two galleries, both of which are closed to the general public. In the lobby outside the lift you are faced with MDF double doors to your right, and a wide shutter door to your left. The doors to your right will lead you to the Galleries of Modern London, where installation teams are filling cases, where there are leads and wires and trolleys, and large objects wrapped in protective plastic; the doors lead to cold air, heavy boots and the intricate technical operation of putting objects into the old cases that will be their new homes. If you turn left in the lobby and raise the noisy shutter wall, you can enter the Linbury Gallery. Before it was closed off the Linbury Gallery was a space for temporary exhibitions, but at the moment it is a store. Just now the only traces of it having been a gallery are the letters near its entrance [see figure 5.1]; proud silver title announcing the Linbury Gallery and a forgotten faded caption about refugees, abandoned on a wall and full of missing letters [see figure 5.2]…

The shutter creaks and groans as it shrugs itself out of the way and reveals a large, illuminated room [figure 5.3]. Three enormous rows of red shelves dominate the room. At one end of the room are rows of old glass cases, like empty aquariums [Figure 5.4]. Turning to your right and peering to the other end of the room you can see two low, wide white tents; in front of them is a photography studio, with screens and lights and backdrops and tripods [Figure 5.6]. Nearer again are set out some folding tables, trolleys and along the side wall at the edge of the room there is a row of locked metal cabinets. Between you and the cabinets there are two desks and three PCs. A box of high-visibility jackets, cartons of plastic gloves, notices, lists, blue plastic trays, masking tape, tissue paper and pencil codes are around the room. Out of sight, behind the shelves, dozens of gold-framed paintings hang on the long wall [Figure 5.5]…

Figure 5.1 - The lobby outside the Linbury Gallery, January 2010

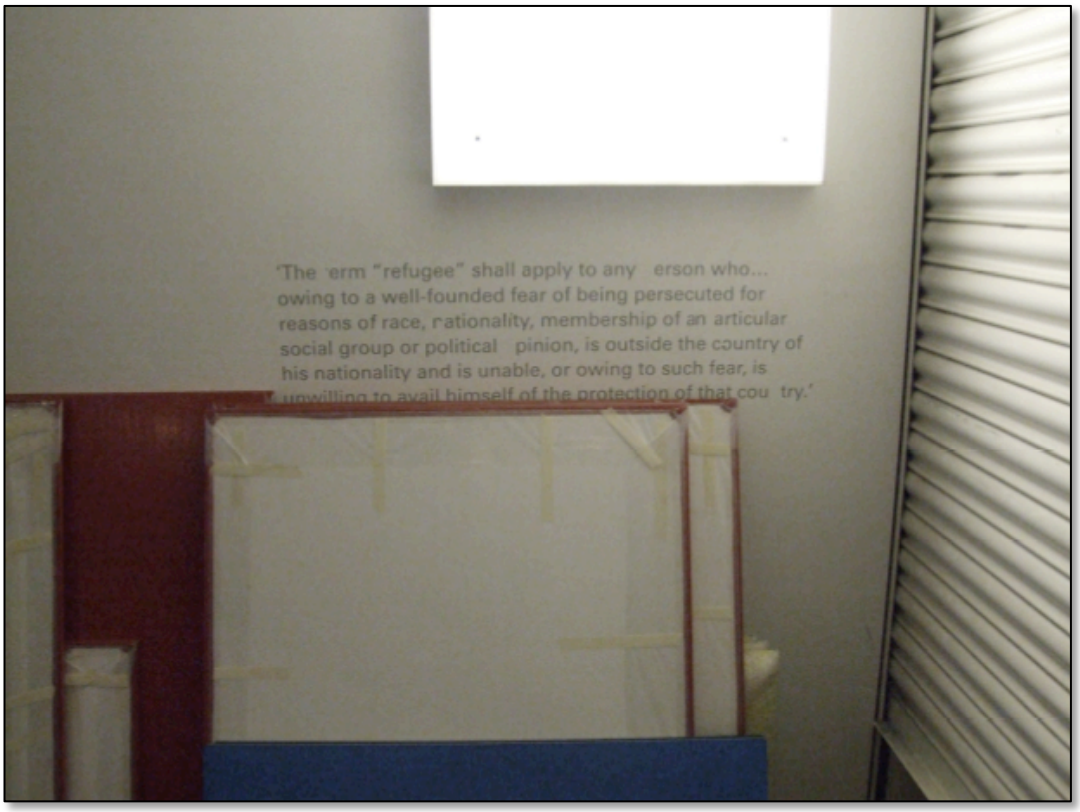

Figure 5.2 - The remains of the 'Belonging' exhibition text, January 2010

Figure 5.3 - Inside the Linbury Gallery, January 2010

Figure 5.4 – Empty cases in the Linbury Gallery

Figure 5.5 – Paintings stored in the Linbury Gallery

Figure 5.6 - Photo studio inside the Linbury Gallery, January 2010

Figure 5.7 - The Linbury Gallery in January 2010

> … There are around three thousand museum objects here, because almost all the museum objects in the Galleries of Modern London are stored here for now [figure 5.7]. The objects are boxed and waiting in groups to correspond to their new cases, but they are not yet an exhibition.
> (Research diary, 14th January 2010)

By January 2010 the old galleries, including World City, *Victorian Walk* and the Linbury Gallery, were closed to the public. *Victorian Walk* was mothballed, and World City had already been dismantled. The Linbury Gallery, which had been used for exhibitions like *Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees* (26th October 2006 until 25th February 2007) became a temporary store. The Galleries of Modern London were too empty for their name, and before they or the Linbury Gallery could re-open as a public part of the museum, the work of installation took place.

Timeline

In preparation for the process of re-making the museum, curators, education specialists and conservators had liaised with designers to refine the description of the three zones described in the museum's bid to the HLF. The first object lists for the galleries were included in the bid documents submitted to the HLF (see Figure 5.8). The plan that was discussed in the previous chapter was adapted to form detailed floor plans, object lists, case layouts and installation plans for all three zones of the new galleries.

LONDONERS

focus exhibit	*Supporting exhibits*	*Subject area*
Video histories of first generation immigrants	1950s Portraits Costume	The story of the end of Empire
The London Breed (Benjamin Zephaniah poem) video	Portraits of people in their homes Personal memorabilia	We have a greater diversity of people than ever before.
Dr Barber's surgery with its world dolls		
Collecting 2000 items		We have a greater diversity of groups than ever before
Group of protest placards and posters , including 'Protein Man'	Poll Tax riot painting	London includes more diverse views than ever before.

Figure 5.8 - Gallery elements zone 3 (Museum of London, GB: 26)

The physical installation work began on the 4th January 2010, and with varying degrees of intensity, continued until the galleries opened at the end of May. This five-month process had several general phases: the first weeks of checking and cleaning cases; the middle pase during which the majority of the objects were moved; and work in the final weeks as the galleries were tested in soft launches. Figure 5.9 shows one section of the galleries in February 2010, in the first phase of installation. Figure 5.10 shows the same section in March as the objects were installed in their cases. Figure 5.11 shows the galleries with the objects installed and waiting for their captions to be added.

The different phases were reached at different times in different parts of the galleries; for example cases in zone 1 could be empty whilst cases in zone 3 were full and just waiting for caption rails to be installed, whilst cases on zone 2 could be waiting for the process of 'off-gassing' to be complete so they were chemically stable enough to put objects into. Cases in one part of a zone could be empty whilst others were complete, because the work of installation was an iterative process, and the overall progress of the galleries was uneven as some cases were re-worked several times. For clarity's sake this chapter presents installation work as a sequence of phases, but it is important to note that these stages were not always sequential or completed in order.

Following the general sequence of work this chapter begins by discussing the kinds of work illustrated by figure 5.9, taking place beyond the galleries: in curatorial offices, and in the Linbury where the objects were stored. The chapter will then discuss the work shown in figure 5.10, where objects were moved to their new locations in the galleries. The next part of the chapter will talk about the installation of a particular object. Finally, the chapter will draw these threads together to reflect on the role disruption on the city museum as collection, activity and context.

Figure 5.9 - Empty cases in the war corridor, 11th February 2010

Figure 5.10 - Filling the cases in the war corridor, 10th March 2010

Figure 5.11 - Filled cases in the war corridor, 15th March 2010

Although the museum had undertaken a lengthy planning process, curators, designers and conservators could still challenge whether certain objects were installed in the galleries during the process of putting them into their cases. Some objects were withdrawn from display at this stage, whilst other objects were added to cases at this point. This chapter explores how the big statements about London that the museum decided to make whilst planning the galleries were expressed through these late decisions about individual objects. In this chapter the thesis looks at how the semiotic and material qualities of objects were negotiated and used within the museum, and explores the significance of the museum's materiality.

In her research into art museums, Tang describes the symbolic implications of the process of arranging objects in galleries: 'in that world of signs, they [exhibits] very quickly broke away from their use value to enter into play and correspondence with one another' (Tang, 2006: 244). Tang's research suggests that the symbolic meanings of objects are affected as the physical object is arranged amongst other objects, and Tang describes how the symbolic meanings of different objects interact. By looking at a series of decisions about whether to include certain objects in the Galleries of Modern London, this chapter explores the process Tang called 'curatorial play' and how it takes place within city museums (Tang, 2006: 244). This chapter uses interviews with curators and other museum staff to look at how the project team responded to the symbolic correspondence taking place between objects when they were arranged in the museum's cases. The changes that took place during the technical work of moving objects safely into new places disrupted the planning process, and this chapter interrogates the ways that 'curatorial play' during the work of installation addresses how objects co-exist in the work of signs and substance.

During installation the museum's objects themselves can affect museum work, and to explore this sense of object agency the chapter introduces Jane Bennett's discussion of 'thing power'. The chapter suggests that during the practical stages of preparing the museum, just as Bennett argues for other contexts, 'objects appear more vividly as things, that is, as entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics'

(Bennett, 2004: 351). By looking at how the processes of 'curatorial play' interact with 'thing power', this chapter discusses the control and ordering processes taking place in city museums that are enacted by different kinds of human, non-human, professional and institutional agency.

By discussing Bennett's theories of 'thing-power', this chapter begins to consider the limitations of the philosophical model of the museum as a system of ordering and control. Following Foucault, Hetherington has described the museum as 'an exhibitionary space in which heterogeneous effects and uncertainty are subject to controlling and ordering processes' (Hetherington, 2004: 52). This chapter questions Hetherington's assumption, by interrogating how the controlling and ordering processes of the museum are themselves subject to heterogeneous effects and uncertainty through thing power, the process of 'curatorial play', museum work and the unanticipated correspondence that objects enter into in the museum's materiality.

As Bennett argues, 'thing-power often first reveals itself as a negativity, a confounding or fouling up of an intention' and the disruptive last-minute changes occurring onsite during installation provide an apt case study to apply these ideas (Bennett, 2004: 361). The rejection of selected objects and last-minute additions to cases reveal where the plans and structure of museum work have been disturbed. Through outright discussion and changes, down to discrete substitutions and guerilla additions, the museum's internal controlling processes have been disrupted with a variety of methods and by a range of things and processes. This chapter also reflects on the lively, tactical and thoughtful examples of individuals expressing their expertise within an institutional context to explore the work of making a city museum. By discussing decisions about specific objects this chapter throws light onto how the making of museums affects the outcome; how the cases changed after they should have been decided; and how the galleries were shaped as spaces. In order to make sense of this, the chapter is structured to reflect the general sequence of work, although objects' and galleries' progression along this sequence was not always linear.

Selection

The three zone curators had drawn up lists of objects and key themes in the museum's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which the previous chapter discussed. These early lists took the form of tables, reconciling individual objects from the collection with general and specific gallery narratives (figure 5.8). The previous chapter suggested that the theme-to-object approach suited how some of the curators worked more than others, and looking in more detail at the ways that curators chose objects reinforced this interpretation.

Cathy Ross was lead curator for Zone 3, which presents London's history from around 1950 to the present day. For Ross the overall zone's narrative was a priority, even when it would mean refusing to select objects that could have made effective exhibits. Zone 3's object lists were redrafted with some regularity, only becoming more stable when the overall design for the zone took shape. In Ross' words:

> "As [the designer] drew it, even in outline, I could see [zone 3] would work this way. So I suppose again it's about how the presentation is absolutely key to the whole thing and less about what are the must-have objects and more about sort of, 'how will it all work together?' I could see this would work"
>
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 10th February 2010).

Ross worked on the zone from the basis that how the overall narrative would literally take shape in the space was a priority, and chose objects that would work in the gallery as an entire composition. One of the objects which Ross felt could not work as part of the design for the whole zone were objects from the Time Life Café, which Ross had hoped to include earlier in her plans. The café's fixtures and fittings are part of the museum collection, and initially Ross imagined them shown as a recreated section of the café, where visitors would be able to sit, as with Jeremy Deller's installation *Valerie's Snack Bar* (2009). However this evocative exhibit "wasn't core to the story, which is why it went in the end" (Cathy Ross, interview, 10th February 2010). In zone 3 there wasn't enough room to include

many large immersive spaces: “sadly there’s just no space for the Time Life café, and equally so for a lot of these things” (Cathy Ross, interview, 10th February 2010). Ross’s approach was to consider objects from the collection, then to imagine how they would work within the space of the museum and then to revisit her ideas; often making radical concessions in order to present a cohesive overall gallery.

In Chapter 3, this thesis reflected on the limits of the museum’s collection, and discussed Sorensen’s work to collect objects that reflected history from below. As well as restricting some narratives where there was a lack of supporting material objects, the collection’s strengths imposed certain obligations on curators. Some objects bypass the processes of selection, rejection and addition, some objects are dealt with in slightly different ways, and the discussion is about how the individual examples will appear rather than whether they would be included. The most obvious example of a key object is the Lord Mayor’s Coach. Although a long-term loan, the coach is regarded as the museum’s ‘star object’ and features on the cover of the museum’s guidebook (figure 5.12); its presence in the new galleries was considered inevitable. The museum’s collection also included a number of other key objects, and curators dealt with these in different ways. *The Bayswater Omnibus*, (1895) by George William Joy (b.1844-d.1925), is part of the Museum of London’s collection of paintings, prints and drawings. The oil painting depicts a group of passengers riding a bus through the capital (figure 5.13). Like the Lord Mayor’s coach the painting had been on display at the Museum of London since the museum opened in 1976, but unlike the coach its inclusion in the new galleries was not considered inevitable.

Figure 5.12 - The Lord Mayor's coach on the Museum of London guidebook cover © Museum of London

Figure 5. 13 - *The Bayswater Omnibus*, George William Joy © Museum of London

The Bayswater Omnibus was painted in 1895 and so it fell into the timespan of the zone 2, whose lead curator was Beverley Cook, curator of social and working history. In an interview that took place in the Linbury whilst it was a temporary store, Cook stressed that "the museum is known to have this painting," highlighting the role of public expectation in the making of museums (Beverley Cook, interview, 22nd January, 2010). The painting was iconic enough to feature prominently on the museum's website (figure 5.14) but Cook decided not to include the painting in her zone, as it did not fit into the narrative structure that she had mapped into the zone. Zone 2 tells the story of London from the mid nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century, and as the introduction noted, the anticipated visitor path presents a broad narrative of the disparity in wealth in London before the wars with the rise of the middle class and mass culture after the Second World War. The Bayswater Omnibus represents a range of passengers on public transport before the First World War, and included chronologically would disrupt the narrative arc of the zone, which sought to focus on the lack of common experience between different economic classes in the city, and the struggle to improve society at the time Joy depicted. Cook decided to uphold the general narrative, rather than prioritise a specific object, and her decision was characteristic of the early stages in the making of the Galleries of Modern London, which Ross' quotation also reflected.

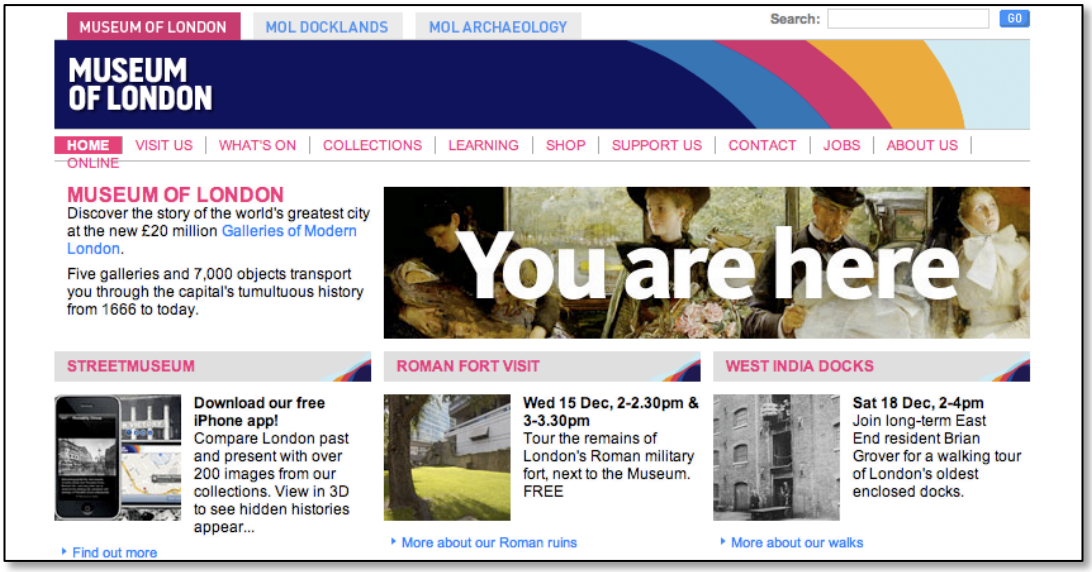

Figure 5.14 – Screengrab showing *The Bayswater Omnibus* as it appeared on the Museum of London's website in 2010

Another prominent object whose inclusion was questioned, and one of the largest, was Tom Hunter and James McKinnon's photographic model, *London Fields East - The Ghetto* (1994; figure 5.15). *The Ghetto*'s case cost between £30-40,000, and during a process of 'value engineering' when the museum sought to find ways to save money, the museum looked into replacing the object with something cheaper to display. After a spirited defence from Ross, who advocated the significance of the model despite its expense, the model and its case remained in Zone 3. Without Ross's insistence that the model should be included, it could have been rejected. By advocating its importance and fighting against its rejection, Ross was able to secure it a more prestigious status within the museum. *The Ghetto* is now one of the museum's key objects, and was one of the objects shown to benefactors when they visited the galleries before they opened to the public. The model's material qualities – its size and shape – combined with the museum's fundraising situation, threatened the object's inclusion in the galleries, even though it had been identified as a key object since the museum submitted plans to the HLF as early as 2004 (figure 5.16).

Figure 5.15 - The Ghetto Model in the Galleries of Modern London

CITY SCAPE		
The Ghetto	Tom Hunter photographs	London has an old physical fabric...
The Chelsea Bridge Tea stall van	Susan Hillier artwork (Notting Hill)	...but neighbourhoods change character
M11 archive	TV programmes about conservation battles: Piccadilly, Covent Garden, and the South Bank	Some of the biggest clashes of opinion have been about what should be preserved or changed
Docklands panorama interactive	Cityscape Paintings	

Figure 5.16 – Gallery elements zone 3 (Museum of London, GB: 26)

Case layouts

> "Right at the beginning we'd agreed a way that we could bring down the curators' wish lists into semblance of a shortlist and then what we called a final list, and we did this through the case trialling that we undertook in the Linbury Gallery. The case trialling, bringing together all the curators the project assistants, conservators, specialists in certain areas all together and then we would lay the objects out, sort them out. That way we're able to get from thousands of objects down to the few thousand that are almost-definites and we could also work on the conservation of those that were deemed definite-definites."
>
> (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010)

The case layouts were developed as a means to rationalize the work of preparing objects for galleries. The preparation of case layouts was an ordering process imposed within the museum, which had learned from previous projects, such as 'World City' which had been put together very quickly. The case layouts phase was one of several phases of planning introduced during the project that differentiated it from work done previously at the museum. This approach was taken in response to previous projects at the museum as Payton explains: "in the past, and I'm going back ten to fifteen years, the rate of object lists being inaccurate was anything up to about 25%, so in other words conservators would be wasting 25% of their time" (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010). The process of trialling the case layouts took place in the Linbury, whilst in its temporary formation as an object store and helped the museum to refine the list of objects for the Galleries of Modern London.

Despite staff committing time to this effort to mock up case layouts, the 'definite-definites' that Payton described were still subject to change. There were limitations in what could be achieved within the Linbury's material conditions. As one project assistant observed: "the trials in the Linbury were without gallery lighting, with no case colours or surrounds, it was probably why we didn't have a final say on what objects were going to go in" (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010). The case layout process shows how the curatorial play, which Tang described, is more than the interplay between the symbolic values and thing power of objects. Although the objects were brought together the limitations of what could be achieved in the Linbury without proper cases and lighting shows how the ideas of curatorial play and thing power are also contingent on the broader context of the objects' presence within the specific materiality of the museum.

Nevertheless, narrowing down the lists of objects gave the conservators confidence to begin work on conserving the objects and making the mounts:

> "Through two lots of case trialling we got the object lists down to where there was still some uncertainty but it was near enough for us to go on, so we could crack on with the conservation, crack on with the mount-making, the curators could crack on with the captions, the photographers could crack on with the photography. A very useful exercise and by doing it accurately we were able to make it into a very useful tool."
>
> (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010)

The narratives that curators sought to attach to objects had to be matched by the practical scope of the galleries. The size of the objects played a role in excluding several of the objects, but was rarely the only reason cited. Although the size of an object didn't rule it out of the galleries, once an object was in doubt size difficulties strengthened the case against it.

Figure 5.17 – Reject object dolls, rejected from display in the Blackett family dolls house

A variety of objects were rejected at this stage despite their size. A tea-set chosen for zone 2 was eventually put on display without all of its cups and saucers; the Blackett dolls' house in zone 1 went on display with fewer dolls than originally hoped (figure 5.17) and in zone 3 glass samples were left out because there wasn't room to display so many of London's lost industries. The relatively modest collection of reject objects were moved to the reject object section of shelving in the Linbuury (figure 5.18); but there were also much larger omissions. A nineteenth-century shop-front, which the museum's director was keen to include, did not find a large enough home in zone 1, nor, as Chapter 7 will discuss, was there room to create an immersive coffeehouse exhibit for visitors to sit in.

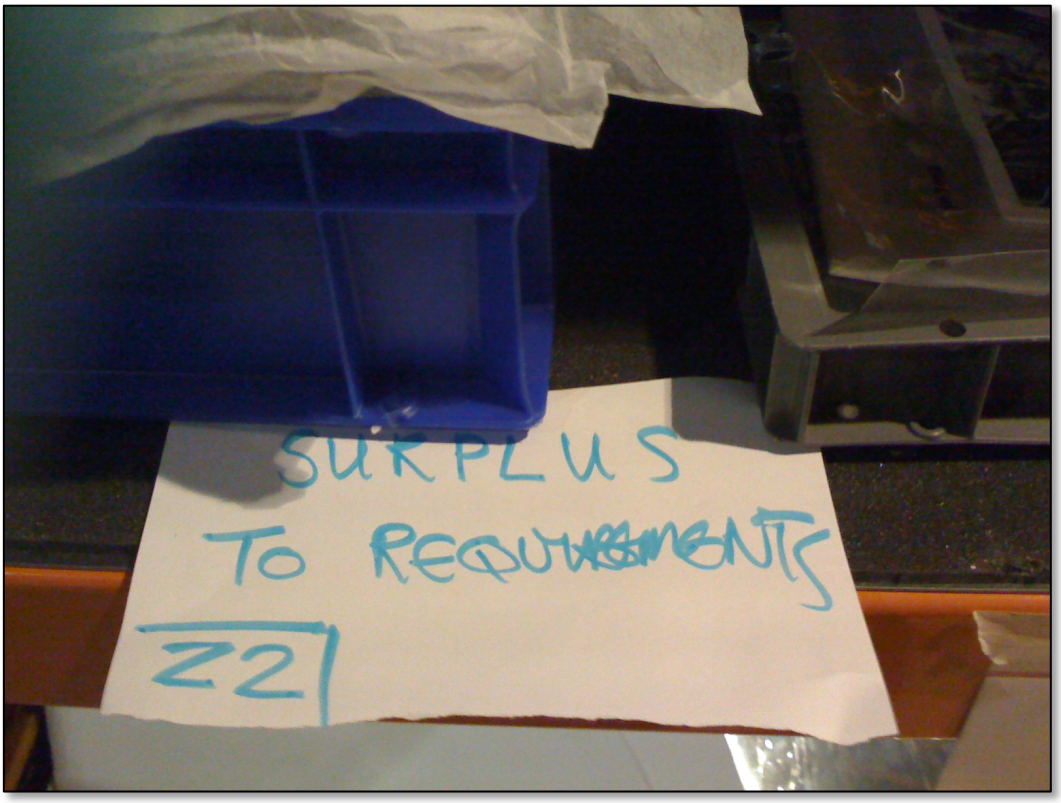

Figure 5.18 - A shelf of rejected objects in the Linbury Gallery, March 2010

Figure 5.19 - Typewriter rejected from zone 2

In an interview Cook discussed a typewriter from the reject object shelf in the Linbury gallery (figure 5.19). At an early stage in zone 2's development Cook had intended to produce a case which focussed on the changing experience of women during the zone's time period, which would contextualise the remarkable collection of suffragette objects the museum would have on display. Cook eventually decided that because the change in women's lives was so important for zone 2 to convey, it needed to be addressed throughout the gallery rather than within one specific case. The typewriter would have represented the story of changing women's work in the case Cook had imagined, but eventually Cook decided that this narrative would not be explicitly addressed in a specific area of the galleries. Cases that focus on the suffragettes cover some aspects of these changes in an obvious way, but Cook feared that the rest of the zone might address the topic in a way that would be too subtle for some visitors (Beverley Cook, interview, 10th January 2010). Despite a sense of disappointment that some visitors may not appreciate the changes that took place for women in this time, Cook felt satisfied that the broader story of change would be included, and concluded that it was more valuable to tell the story through time than boxed in its own separate case. Consequently Cook chose to address the theme with fewer objects, and the typewriter was rejected from display.

One key criterion for object selection was the object's capacity to convey multiple elements of the museum's narrative. Because, as Ross' choices show, space was an issue, some objects were included because of their capacity to support a combination of the galleries' major narratives. A selection of jars of spices was left on the Linbury's reject object shelf. Originally intended to reflect on London's historic and developing role as centre of global trade, these objects weren't eventually deemed suitable for inclusion (Beverley Cook, interview, 10th January 2010). The replacement spices, which went into the cases, were used to discuss not only London and trade, but could also touch on the topic of London's relationship with the British Empire. London's relationship with the wider world is a theme that runs through the entire historic scope of the Galleries of Modern London, and the earlier historic sections deal more specifically with the British Empire. The objects that are in the galleries have carefully constructed layers of meaning, entering into correspondence with one another as Tang would argue (Tang, 2006: 244).

Addition

Some objects bypassed the case layout selection process, and were included in the Galleries of Modern London once a case began to be filled. Such additions were usually the result of an aesthetic judgement, when a curator and designer agreed that the case was too empty, or not colourful enough. The added objects include things not shown in case layouts or object lists that the rest of the galleries' contents had been recorded on. The added objects came from a variety of places: sometimes they were summoned over from the museum's main stores at Eagle Wharf Road, sometimes chosen from a surplus of objects in the Linbury and sometimes acquired fresh for the purpose. Object addition reflected the more formulaic processes of the museum as an organization using material culture. After the case layout process and the object list, the conservators "knew there were going to be spaces there that the curators would fill with objects once they got them" and this part of the chapter looks at the processes of adding new objects (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010).

Additional objects tended to be sourced in two ways: either with objects from the collection, or by collecting new objects for the purpose. With zones 1 and 2, the easiest way was to use objects that were already stored at the London Wall site: in the Linbury gallery, ephemera store or costume store. For Alex Werner, lead curator of zone 1, adding objects was a reasonably quick process, taking place near the end of the work preparing the galleries. Speaking six working days before installation of zone 1 was scheduled to be completed, Werner was hopeful that he could still include some of the objects that were stored on zone 1's 'reject object' shelf in the Linbury (Alex Werner, interview, 23rd February 2010). One of the cases in zone 1 had a particularly high number of objects added during installation, as members of staff at the museum were unhappy with how sparse the case looked when the objects had been installed as planned:

> "When the chair in the sedan chair case went in, the judge's chair, it looked very silly, because of a huge expanse of modern leather on the chair. It looked very barren and very strange and again that really couldn't have been

anticipated until the case was all in and lit."

(Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010)

The case layout process had limitations, and zone 1's project assistant described how:

"In the sedan chair case twenty more items were added during installation... that case really had a lot more put into it. You couldn't have done that in a case layout, it was only when it was in the space, surrounded by everything else in the gallery and the lighting was sorted that we thought actually that looks a bit bland, we do need some more objects."

(Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010).

Each of the curators had a different approach to selecting objects for their zone of the galleries, and worked in different ways to produce object lists and case trials. Werner's selection of objects resulted in a supply of objects that could be arranged and re-arranged in the cases more fluidly than the other zones. As the lead curator for zone 1, Werner had the largest number of reject objects in the Linbury gallery. Werner explained that he had used the object lists stage of gallery planning as an opportunity to gather extra materials, and gave the example of "a table that's linked to the Wellclose Square Prison, which is on the object list and in the end we just left it on, because we thought 'hey we don't really know what's going to happen with the display'" (Alex Werner, interview, 20th April 2010). By requesting what he knew would be a surplus of objects from the museum stores, Werner put together a collection of objects that he could employ at short notice and made the most of the leeway offered by the limitations of the case layout approach, effectively sidestepping the process designed to narrow down how many objects conservators would be required to prepare. Werner's selection of a surplus of objects can be read as resistance to the museum's own ordering process of producing object lists and case layouts. The surplus of objects selected for zone 1 and stored in the Linbury provided objects that could be added to the case to make the composition of objects look less 'silly'. As Turner identifies, it is more than the objects that enter into correspondence with one another, for the successful symbolic composition of the gallery the spatial qualities must be moderated as well: the

lighting and cases were crucial to the correspondence too.

By taking different ways of working, the curators expressed their own agency, re-organizing the process and work of gallery making with their personal and idiosyncratic preferences. Whilst Werner sought to work with the objects within the gallery Cook spent more time with the objects in the stores and Ross was happier to work with the narrative and design and see how objects would work within the whole gallery. Each person's way of working shaped the galleries that they produced. The different approaches to work led to different decisions being taken, creating variety between all three zones, which as Chapter 4 argued, had been the intention.

The second approach to finding objects to add was for the museum to acquire new objects to go on display in the Galleries of Modern London. This happened more often in zone 3, especially with the 'London Look' case, as zone 3 project assistant Liz Scott explained:

> "The last fashion showcase, well that one's always going to be trouble because it's meant to represent fashion now, so it's going to have to change over time. It's kind of hard to put in a showcase how London looks right now; everyone's going to have their own opinions on it, that's one that we're still working on. I'm going to buy a pair of Paul Smith brogues this week maybe, and that's like a last minute thing again. But that's the nature of our gallery, the fact is I can go out and buy something to put into the gallery whereas with zone 1 and zone 2 it's harder"
>
> (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010).

Newly acquired objects needed to undergo the museum's full acquisitions procedure before they were placed in the cases. The acquisitions procedure involves generating entry and then acquisitions records in the museum's database and documenting the objects; advocating in writing why the acquisition is relevant and useful for the museum to collect, including explaining how the proposed acquisition satisfies the relevant collecting policy; having the acquisition endorsed by a conservator and the head of the relevant curatorial department; and then being

discussed and approved by collections committee, who meet monthly to review acquisitions. If this process is timely and successful the object can be fully catalogued in the museum's database; marked with its number; photographed; installed and have an online caption written before it goes onto public display. It is possible to imagine how the demanding and time-consuming ordering processes of the museum could impose their own bureaucratic uncertainty into museum work.

Scott described four criteria that objects from the collection would usually satisfy before they could be added, and interviews with the three zone curators echoed Scott's criteria. The four criteria Scott identified were: self-explanatory objects; objects in good condition requiring little technical attention prior to display; objects that fitted the context of the case; and finally objects that staff thought visitors would like to see (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010). This shared general set of criteria distinguished the addition of objects from the initial selection of objects, as the added objects did not have to relate directly to the gallery narrative in the way that the objects chosen earlier had to represent. When it came to removing objects from display there were a much broader variety of reasons, yet the consensus on the addition of objects suggests that this process is altogether more straightforward. I will discuss these in turn, exploring what each says about how museum work affected the contents of the Galleries of Modern London.

One of the most important criteria in deciding which object to include, was to look for an object that could "speak for itself". Ross, Cook and Scott each used this phrase in their interviews, suggesting its fundamental importance. This was important for the Galleries of Modern London because although added objects could have captions online, they would not be captioned in the cases. The caption rails in the galleries are backlit, and colour photographs of the object or group of objects accompany the text captions. The caption rails are expensive and time-consuming to change, and "each one would probably cost £100 or £200 to re-do" (Alex Werner, interview, 20th April 2010). Consequently the added objects will have no accompanying information, such as contextual description or discussion of their significance, so there is a need for added objects to be fairly self-explanatory.

Because of the time and cost it would take to rework captions the museum's project managers sought to limit these costly changes. If curators wanted to add an object that needed a new caption, one approach the curator could take was to suggest problems with the existing caption rails and suggest the new object caption as a secondary change alongside the correction. In zone 3 this was possible where a factual error had slipped through the lengthy editing process (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010). When Alexander McQueen died in February 2010 there was speculation about whether a caption rail referring to him in the present tense should to be changed, and whether changing it would allow scope to alter other parts of the same caption rail (research diary, 24/02/10).

Objects that were added are required to articulate something other than "just design" to an audience (Cathy Ross, interview, 10th February 2010). Often, as in zone 2 it was the objects which do this very literally that were added: "we've chosen a plaque, which is quite a sort of standalone, obvious object, because it's got within the plaque there's some writing to actually explain what it is and why it was made" (Beverley Cook, interview, 13th April 2010). Self-descriptive memorial plaques, printed ephemera, posters and banners were therefore popular additions because they could, to some degree, narrate and justify themselves.

The imperative for objects to speak for themselves had other consequences too. Cook felt that where there were no labels to contextualise objects on display it was the curator's role to be very careful about the ages of the objects on display, explaining to me her professional convictions and values (Beverley Cook, interview, 13th April 2010). It was for this reason that a tin of Lyons brand coffee had made it to the reject object shelf: its age did not match the otherwise similar objects in the Lyon's window case, and without a caption this could not be explained. Cook described how the absence of captions required objects to not only speak for themselves, but to represent a particular time, as she felt this was what visitors would assume. This approach was taken unevenly throughout the Galleries of Modern London, and Cook acknowledged that other curators would perhaps not

treat objects so strictly, giving examples from the Victorian Walk where objects were included because they had an evocative power which other curators felt outweighed their less appropriate dates of production. As chapter 7 shows in its discussion of the Pleasure Gardens display, each curator addressed this issue differently and not all thought age was imperative.

The second of Scott's criteria for object addition was pragmatic: newly added objects should not require a mount to be made for them, or need time-consuming conservation work. Cook explained the processes of preparing an object for installation:

> "You've got to conserve, mount things and you can't just bring something out of the store and stick it in the case. The technicians have to make a special mount for it, conservation has to be on board and be happy to do the extra work. It's a careful negotiation" (Beverley Cook, 13th April 2010).

The conservation and mounting of objects was a major consideration when it came to object addition, and the negotiation of staff time was crucial. Different members of staff had different appetites for negotiation and different amounts of authority, and these spread across different zones. From Scott's perspective as a project assistant working on zone 3, she: "just couldn't have asked [the mount-makers] to do anything else" (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010). These practical criteria reiterate the significance of materiality to museums that depend on objects. Some of the objects on display will have had extensive conservation work, and many have had mounts made specifically for them, but the last-minute added objects were subject to negotiation for these services. Just as banners and plaques were common forms of added materials, objects that could physically stand unsupported were also frequently chosen. Kitchenware and packaging were often selected, partially because they often responded so well to the requirement of being in good physical condition. The need to negotiate for practical care for the added objects was characteristic of the work of making the Galleries of Modern London, which required specialist skills from different parts of the museum throughout its extensive planning process.

Figure 5.20 – Poster, museum id number 2008.43/36 © Museum of London

The third requirement in Scott's list of criteria was that the object needed to complement the context of display and the objects around it. When it came to adding objects this could be difficult, as in some examples the bulk of the collection relating to a specific topic had already been selected. This was the case in zone 3, when Liz and Cathy tried to find more objects for the 1970s 'punk' case. As well as needing more objects to improve the general appearance of the case, it was important to members of staff that the cases reflected a balance of opinion:

> "I wanted to get some more anti-jubilee stuff in there, because I felt like we didn't have as much as the souvenir stuff. But the collection isn't so strong on that – whatever we had on anti-jubilee was already in there, apart from a poster of the Queen with bare breasts. I wanted to put that in, but in the end we thought no. And it needed a mount"

(Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010).

Scott expressed her aim to add more objects for narrative balance, and the quotation also reflects the limitations of the collection, as almost all the museum's objects were already included. The delicate question about whether to include the photomontage featuring the queen (figure 5.20) was quickly closed down and the practical difficulties of producing a mount for the object at short notice conveniently confirmed its exclusion. Adding objects meant satisfying all four requirements to some extent, and there was little point pursuing an object or entering into negotiation with staff from other departments if it would not meet all four. The contextual relevance of objects required curators and project assistants to choose objects that would sometimes be overlooked in favour of stronger pieces in the collection.

The fourth and final category Scott identified was the need to add objects that would make the display visually engaging. This was subject to the individual member of staff's own interpretation of what visitors would find visually appealing in the galleries. Scott's conviction that "people like to see tins with images on, so I knew I needed to get some of those in" led to her selections for what was eventually added to the 'punk' case (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010). Alex Werner worked from the basis that visitors would need colourful, visually compelling displays, and added jewellery to cases in zone 1. Werner explained that when adding objects his goal was "titivating the displays a bit - give them more life. Give more colour to something that might look a bit dull" (Alex Werner, interview, 20th April 2010). The visual appeal of added objects was an important aspect in selecting added objects across all zones, though Werner pointed out that this was not something only considered at the later stages of the process: "because I've done these kinds of displays before I select objects a bit for their sort of colour rather than just for the message they're delivering" (Alex Werner, interview, 20th April 2010).

Although the cases were planned with an appreciation of how they would look, in

reality the arrangements were not always satisfactory:

> "With the sixties one we looked at the case and we noticed that these three plinths were empty, and we just thought, 'oh, they look a bit strange'... in the case layouts it looked like it would be fine but it was quite noticeable. So we just picked some things to go in it. I selected some domestic items, so it was like sort of plastic home ware, and then some sunglasses. It was just to fill the case up"
>
> (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010).

Scott's account of addition of objects is dismissive, as she argues that additions do not always require the rigorous processes of choosing objects in advance. For the curatorial staff adding objects was a less complicated process than rejecting them. The addition of objects often had a more pragmatic emphasis than selecting or rejecting them, and reflects a more constrained situation, in which captions cannot often be reprinted, cases can be re-opened occasionally and the pool of objects available to choose from is already reduced.

Installation

Before the Linbury Gallery or the Galleries of Modern London could become a public part of the museum, the work of installation had to take place: the surprisingly laborious work of putting objects into cases. Installation is the work of changing the museum from building site, to workshop to public space. Despite the extensive preparations and planning that took place before installation began, the process remained a creative, lively activity.

Earlier, this chapter discussed the development of case layouts, the detailed plans of how objects would be arranged in their cases. The objects were grouped in the Linbury store according to how they would be assembled in the galleries, with the exception of larger objects. The detailed case layouts provided illustrated plans showing the position of each object, the height of plinths and the styles of mounts. These case drawings were cross-referenced with object lists from the museum database, and the corresponding object lists were masking-taped to each and every case in the Galleries at the start of January 2010 (see fig 5.9).

Despite the existence of these plans and the preparation of the objects actually putting the objects into their cases was a slow process. As one project assistant working on the galleries described: "something you could look at as a member of the public and think 'oh that could only take ten minutes, half an hour,' could have taken three or four hours" (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010). The museum's duty of care to its objects, and adherence to sector-wide guidelines on object care resulted in a number of specialist staff being involved in each object move.

It was not uncommon for conservators, curators, designers, project assistants, technicians and mount-makers to be present during installation. Consequently, as one project assistant describes,

> "There's a lot of hanging around in installation. No matter how well organised it is there will be people standing around at some point… In zone 3 a lot of it was mounts so [the mount makers] were doing it. 60-, 70-, 80% of it was done by either [mount makers] or technicians. So actually what I install isn't a lot actually. I think zone 1 is different, because I think some of them aren't so mount-heavy."
>
> (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010)

Because of the number of specialist staff involved, my work was predominantly based in the Linbury, where I made sure the objects were ready to go into the Galleries. This was not always straightforward, and I felt anxious that I did not know enough about the objects. My research diary recorded some of my concerns: "Liz and Hollie have so much knowledge about their zones and eras. Hopefully I am picking this up too, bit by bit" (research diary, 15th Jan 2010). There were times when I didn't know enough, and made mistakes:

> "I still felt bad when you were searching for things and couldn't find them, because I would be able to look straightaway and say 'that's it!' Like when the wrong radio was put in, you wouldn't know that, but I knew straight away" (Beverley Cook, interview, 13th April 2010).

Working in the Linbury sometimes felt isolated from the rest of the project, as my research diary records:

> "Installation was cool but I felt pretty distant from it if I'm honest. It was really mostly about getting the objects off the shelf and putting them on a trolley. I couldn't find all of them right away which was frustrating. When

> Hollie came in in the afternoon she helped me look through all the boxes for the last couple of things - a clay pipe and a photo of people standing in front of their umbrella shop."
>
> (research diary, 15/01/10).

I tried to find ways to work within the Galleries of Modern London themselves instead of in the Linbury, and sometimes found myself working with the cases, which I enthused about in my research diary: "I spent all afternoon installing with Rebecca, and I loved it, really loved it. We worked from half two to half five and it was one of those times you don't notice time passing" (research diary, 19/02/10).

One of my responsibilities was to record the new locations of objects in zone 2 and update the museum's database with this new information. Whilst recording the movements of a trolley-load of zone 2 objects about a month in to installation I described in my research diary what it was like to work in the galleries whilst objects were being installed and the audio-visual components were being tested:

> "Even though there's really just the three of us in this bit of zone 2 it feels busy – it's full of voices. Behind me voices call for women's right to vote (in very eloquent terms) and an air-raid siren blares out every now and again, looped against spoken tales of living through the war, set against churning, inhuman ambient noises of destruction. Somewhere else the mini-cinema tootles out jolly piano music. It feels busy and companionable and noisy and strange – aural collisions of times past and the voices of the mountmakers checking whether to put things up portrait or landscape, taking intricate measurements and discussing the minute details of putting objects in. Jack [Lohman] and his visitors have just popped up. They didn't stay long. I am being overseen by the ghostly seamstress behind the costume case. She is a projection – one from behind the back of the case onto a section made of a special screen. I snuck into the Pleasure Gardens earlier on, to be greeted by more projected people – history written and enacted and projected onto museum walls right here, right now."
>
> (research diary, 03/02/10)

The mount makers were just some of the specialist staff required in the installation

process. As Turner explains, object installation required specialists for different elements of the installation, which was time-consuming to co-ordinate:

> "There are lots of people that are needed for different tiny elements of just installing one case, so the case has been opened, then it might need cleaning by a conservator, then it might need mounts being put in by a Richard Rogers team. Then after the mounts have been put in, or during, you might need a designer to confirm where the mounts are being put in. Then you might need a conservator or project assistant to put the objects in, then you need some more tweaking from a designer to come back, then some more cleaning, then to put everything back and the fronts on you might need technicians, and then you might need the senior curator to finally come and say ok with the designer again. So you've got about eight people all needed, and this could be for just four objects going in. But to get all of those people there within those times, that could easily take a whole morning, just because you will be waiting for the people to come and do their little bit and obviously they're needed at other areas of the site doing other work, going to other meetings… And then you've got lighting and testing the lighting levels again cases are open. Graphic designers again, putting captions in."
>
> (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010)

To minimize the amount of time spent gathering the people required to work, the installation was carefully planned, and weekly schedules were circulated to members of the project team. Even opening cases such as the 'London Look' case in zone 1 (figure 5.21) required significant effort:

> "You need a small army. You need to have two, and I quote, 'big strong men', they have to come and open it because the door is heavy that it sort of sits further in within the lock, so you need someone who can physically lift it, then pull it open. Then you need to have a wooden box to hold the door, because the door's so heavy it will actually fall off. Then you need blocks to jam in it. And before all that happens you need to remove the plinth, and then the case is so high up that you need a six foot ladder to get up there to unlock it."
>
> (Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010)

Figure 5.21 - The 'London Look' case, 07/10/09

Figure 5.22 - The 'Empire' case, 14/04/10

The Empire case, in zone 1 (figure 5.22) provides another example of the difficulties and the high staffing requirements:

> "There's three doors on this section, if you only want to go to one end that makes it slightly easier, you only have to remove one piece of floor. If you need to access the whole case you need to remove three pieces of floor, which you can't just lift out because they're too heavy, it requires the technicians to use a special piece of equipment to lift the floor pieces out. Once the floor pieces have been removed there's actual metal plates which have been re-modified, but then you have to be able to unlock top and bottom and have it open so actually getting in is quite difficult. You'd need at least a conservator, probably two conservators, a curator and at least two technicians, just to get into one part of the case, then depending on what work you need to do you might need other equipment down there and then you have to put it all back because it wouldn't be allowed to be left open like that."
>
> (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010)

Figure 5.23 - The 'London Look' case, photographed 09/07/2010

The museum's material context was a demanding environment to work in, designed more for the visitors than the staff. Just as the amount of time spent on installation is hidden from view, pictures don't capture the physical work of museum making. The 'London Look' case shown in (figure 5.23 and figure 5.24) image may look as though it isn't especially elaborate but in an interview Scott captured the bodily work of putting objects on display:

"It took so long to lay those [pieces of jewellery] out. I was sitting in the case, with [the designer] telling me 'move it a little bit that way, move it a little bit that way'. It takes a long time, especially when it's fiddly stuff like the jewellery and it was a lot of jewellery that we wanted to put in. And also it's quite hard just to get into that case physically as well. Because there's mannequins in it you have to sort of weave yourself around the mannequins, then sit down and then fiddle about with it. And when you're in the cases you can't actually hear the person outside that well. So [the designer] would be literally shouting 'left a bit' and I'd only be able to tell what she was saying by her hand movements."
(Liz Scott, interview, 12th April 2010)

Figure 5.24 - Jewellery in the London Look case

Through the physical entanglement with the material museum that Scott described, something symbolic occurred. Although choreographed and rehearsed, there were unanticipated outcomes when the material context of the museum encountered the material conditions of objects.

On one of the middle weeks of installation, whilst I was checking objects off lists in the war corridor, I watched two technicians wheel a hulk of rusted metal on one of the trolleys:

> The metal was in two parts, and looked about two feet long. One part of the thing was domed/rounded, and one was cylindrical. I've seen it in the Linbury stores, but like many of the things there it looked somehow dull, and it lacked the immediate historic glamour of something like Emmeline Pankhurst's hunger strike medal. In the stores it was significant to me only for its bulky mass. But as the museum's technicians worked, as they heaved it from the trolley and into the corner of its case, as their hands twisted it around, arranged the different fragments and then tidied up around it, it looked different. By the time that they closed the case door, something more than purely practical had changed. The technicians had installed the object into the case and therefore they had installed it into the museum's account of London's history.
>
> (Research diary, 11/04/10).

Since the caption rail has been added the museum now explains that this casing is from a bomb dropped from a German Zeppelin on London on 8 September 1915. The bomb fell on Cooper's Bonded Tea Warehouse, in Cooper's Row in the City of London, but failed to explode. Other bombs dropped during this raid did explode. They killed 28 people and injured 60 more. From the trolley to the case, from one side of the glass to another, the object had taken on a new symbolic value. Outside of the case it was just another bulky piece of bomb casing. Once it was inside the case it stood for all of those pieces, and all of those bombs and for all of the loss of life. In the short journey from collection to exhibition, the bomb casing had gone from material to symbol, from something tangible to something beyond reach. The visual pre-occupation of museums has been discussed in more detail in works such as Svetlana Alpers', but here it happened in front of me as the object became part of the museum's narrative and was restricted by the museum's sensory hierarchy. Alpers describes how museums make even natural history objects into 'an object of visual interest' (Alpers, 1991: 25). I had felt this process occur during installation. I couldn't smell the metal after it was moved behind the glass, its weight was borne

by the case re-designed to hold it and its surface couldn't be touched. As the casing's material qualities were sealed away for its protection, its new surroundings accommodated an enhanced symbolic power. I had watched museumification unfold in real time.

Interviewed after the galleries were complete, the project assistants recalled this part of their work with fondness:

> "I love that part of it, for about 90% I was always there when the objects were installed. In the cases without complex mounts I could position the objects which is nice because you feel like you're finishing the story really, putting it in its final home which is quite a nice feeling. That feeling of putting an object in its case, it felt like my role was complete, like I'd take it to the final place it was going to be on display and the next stage is going to be a visitor seeing it. You feel proud when a case is finally signed off, you shut the doors and you know that's it, it won't have to be moved again."
>
> (Hollie Turner, interview, 2nd June 2010).

This physical entanglement with the collection ends with the opening of the museum. Although there are touch objects and touch-screens included in the galleries, apart from the replicas in the Pleasure Garden there is no further opportunity to 'weave yourself around the mannequins'. Once the cases are closed, the story is largely set and the objects become part of the display, having been given a role in the telling of London.

The object's symbolic role comes as a sensory cost:

> "You're taking them [the objects] from having complete access to them – you can pick them up, do whatever you want, in the [Linbury] gallery. They're wrapped in bits of old tissue and stuff – you know – so then you're putting them in the case. And there's that sense of *everyone else* is going to be viewing these objects like this. Because before you could view them like no-one else could really, but now the public are going to view them. And they're going to be judging them."
>
> (Liz Scott, interview 12th April 2010)

As Scott argued, once the cases were closed, the sensory relationship with the objects is altered, and the material surroundings create a different context. The

quietness of the workspace is gone, and visiting becomes, as the thesis' prologue reflects, a social process. My encounters with the same objects during the friends and family preview day described in the prologue were almost entirely different, as the materiality of the museum served its visitor-focussed purpose. The once-cumbersome museum context formed an assemblage with the objects, distinguishing the museum's objects from other objects elsewhere in the city.

Conclusion

When the Galleries of Modern London opened the meticulously planned objects and the objects added later were displayed together. Aside from the absence of a caption there was no obvious visual sign to distinguish objects that were selected in 2004 and those that were included in the final days of installation, having satisfied completely different criteria. This chapter has shown how the Museum of London's approach to making of the Galleries of Modern London has shaped the galleries, and how different members of staff used their agency to shape the museum's representation of London. It has also sought to illustrate the contingency of the city museum, by discussing the ways the object lists changed and how the inclusion of objects was not inevitable. Finally this chapter has also reflected on how the material spaces of the galleries were important to the museum work by looking at the different influences on the symbolic meanings of objects and how the process of designing the gallery space affected what the museum would use to speak with about London's history.

Installation is an iterative process, during which the objects' 'thing-power' intersects with the 'thing power' of the museum as a material context. The phases of work progress unevenly, with phases moving back and forward in response to the material conditions (cases 'off-gassing') sensory perceptions of the galleries (ensuring the visual appeal of cases) and the symbolic messages of the combinations of objects. Museum work makes things more than textual, as it puts things in places, creating a place that tells a story.

As work progressed several kinds of object rejection and selection took place between the Linbury Gallery and the Galleries of Modern London. Some of the reject objects were replaced by similar but more materially convenient objects: a collection of tobacco cards was exchanged for a better preserved set in zone 2; in zone 1, as chapter 6 will discuss in more detail, a dead cat was swapped for a dead cat that was decomposing less potently; in zone 3 a worn pair of Birkenstock sandals was replaced by a new and more colourful pair.

Returning to Hetherington's argument that museums impose ordering processes on uncertainty, it is evident that the ordering processes of museum work are themselves subject to uncertainty. The curatorial play that takes place during museum work has an unsettling effect on the narratives museums convey. Bennett's discussion of thing-power highlights the significance of objects' material qualities, and this chapter has explored how museum work offers an analogous experience of the power of things.

In interview the museum's head of conservation was pragmatic about the limitations of the museum's internal ordering processes. Payton acknowledges through working practices that the case layouts are only partial, and there is more of what Tang described as 'conversation' between objects occurring once objects are lit in their cases. The role of lighting, set works and cases all affect the way the objects interact and disrupt the ordering process of work, and therefore the ordering process of the gallery. Some selections were straightforward, like the Lord Mayor's coach, but the rejection of some objects could be a protracted process. The *Bayswater Omnibus* found its way into the guidebook and onto the museum's promotional oyster-card holders and website before it was finally rejected (Figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25 - Promotional Oyster Card holder featuring *The Bayswater Omnibus* © Museum of London

The ordering processes of the museum weren't committed to delivering exactly what the case layouts promised. Rather than the stubborn pursuit of realizing the case layouts, the museum's work was to manage the material and semiotic qualities of objects and compose them in the material context of the museum.

> "I would probably quantify it in the order of about 90% of the cases as planned and we always said right from the very beginning with the curators, but inevitably once you put the objects into the actual real cases, as opposed to the layout cases, you do get things cropping up that you could never anticipate."
>
> (Rob Payton, interview, 28th May 2010)

Curatorial play occurrs, as Tang has argued, as objects are selected and placed beside one another in the museum's cases. However curatorial play is also something that takes place as a disruption to the ordering processes of the museum itself. Although often associated with the authoritative voice of the museum, the curators occasionally enacted agency in contravention of the museum's procedures, disrupting its controlling and ordering process. Whilst making the Galleries of Modern London curators subverted the object listing process, undertook negotiation with other departments, advocated alterations to caption rails, and switched objects for replacements. Throughout the process curators expressed their commitment to the overall gallery rather than their favourite objects, and were capable of leveraging their professional position and experience to advocate the inclusion of things like *The Ghetto* and make caption changes.

Just as the objects in the galleries tell stories, the reject objects have a narrative of their own about museums that were not to be. Using the reject objects as a basis for discussion with the curators attached some narrative to the objects and the museum. The reject objects told stories of the curators' creativity in representing a historic narrative; the strength of the museum's collections and the ways that decisions were taken. In this way the reject objects illustrate how decisions were taken and how work was structured.

This chapter looked in detail at how the decisions about the museum narrative became connected to specific objects, and the ways that these decisions were made. This discussion has touched on issues of the materiality and power of objects, and these will be explored more fully within the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Peopling the galleries of Modern London

As well as providing a way of reaching out to 'all parts of London's uniquely diverse population' (Museum of London, Headline Document, [HD] 2004b: 2) one of the aims of the Galleries of Modern London was 'to bring into our galleries a stronger sense of London's contemporary identity as a vibrant and dynamic world city with diversity at her heart' (Museum of London, HD, 2004b: 9). The bid focused on London's ethnic and cultural diversity, stressing that 'London is a microcosm of the world. Minority ethnic Londoners account for 29% of the population and the proportion is predicted to increase as London's population continues to grow' (MoL, HD, 2004b: 4).

The Museum of London's work in the 1990s, around the *Peopling of London* project showed how waves of migration brought the city diversity, vibrance and wealth. The *Peopling of London* divided London's population into communities and showed the historic context of different groups' presence in London. The work of the *Peopling of London* was to represent the historical context of ethnic diversity, but between the *Peopling of London* and the time of Galleries of Modern London, theories of the city assessed cultural diversity in different ways. Massey's 2006 analysis, for instance, argues that:

> "Urban space is *relational,* not a mosaic of simply juxtaposed differences. This place, as many places, has to be conceptualised, not as simple diversity, but as a meeting-place, of jostling, potentially conflicting, trajectories. It is set within, and internally constituted through, complex geometries of differential power. This implies an identity that is, internally, fractured and multiple." (Massey, 2007: 89).

This fractured and multiple model of urban cultural identity was a challenge that the museum grasped. As one member of the Museum of London's directorate argued in 2008:

> "You've got to deal with the politics within communities… which can be quite fractured in terms of its sub-groups... There's not one single voice, so

it's multiple voices, but often they're in conflict with each other so you just have to be careful how you deal with that and present those multiple voices" (McIntyre D. Interview. 29th October 2008)

Representing the experience of London's diverse population was an ambitious aim for the museum, and even the museum's community partners were daunted by what seemed an impossible task: 'I would not like to be in their shoes - they may raise expectations that they can't deliver. It's too huge to deliver to all of London's communities' (in Lynch, 2010: 18). This chapter explores how the museum sought to respond to the challenge of working diverse, including fractured and multiple identities into the Galleries of Modern London. It begins by discussing the ways museums approached community engagement in the 2000s, then discusses the Museum of London's approach. The chapter then looks in more detail at examples from each of the zones in the Galleries of Modern London, before looking at how this work was received and its subsequent affect on the museum's community engagement work. In doing so the chapter picks up the discussion of thing power, curatorial play and museum work introduced in chapter 5.

In 1996 Zolberg studied the production of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum's exhibiton of the *Enola Gay*, the aeroplane that was used to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima (Zolberg, 1996). Zolberg described the museum's community consultation efforts and the ensuing controversy. For researchers such as Zolberg in the 1990s, museums' civic duties were fulfilled by the carefully-composed representation of rounded debates, including those which are unpalatable and not widely discussed (Zolberg, 1996). Over the following years museums experimented with extending the kinds of community consultation Zolberg has described. Phrases like 'civic engagement', 'co-production, 'participatory museums' and 'sharing authority' came to the forefront of museums discourse that involved and interested both academics and museum practitioners (Lynch, 2011; Buntinx and Karp, 2006; Kistemaker, 2005; Hirzy, 2002; Simon, 2010).

In 2002 the report *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge for Museums* was published by the American Association of Museums (AAM). In it, Ellen Hirzy imagines the twenty-first century museum as a community hub, a space where

individuals may debate and partake in civic actions, from protests to community gardening (Hirzy, 2002). Hirzy's influential report was interpreted as promoting a vision of the museum as a visible player in civic life, a safe haven and a trusted incubator for change (Cameron, 2006). In Hirzy's approach the museum was a facilitator for external processes, a neutral haven voicing its conscience through community relationships. In this paradigm, the museum's civic role, and social value, was bound up with its community engagement work (Hirzy, 2002). The museum's social and emotional role was exemplified in the work of Valmont Layne, who ran South Africa's District Six Museum. The museum's civic purpose was performed by providing excluded communities with a platform to discuss their experiences, and Layne published a piece in the 2008 special edition of *The Public Historian* that reflected on the emotional power and community value of the District Six Museum (Layne, 2008).

City museums were part of this project, and in 2005 the International Association of City Museums's annual conference focused on these kinds of issues, under the title *Centres of Civic Dialogue?* (Kistemaker, 2006). Cathy Ross and Darryl McIntyre attended the conference representing the Museum of London. McIntyre chaired two discussions, in which he argued that museums 'have a responsibility… to be pro-active in civic engagement and to be audience focused and responsive' (McIntyre, 2006: 142). One of the projects that McIntyre discussed was a collaboration between a group of museums and refugee communities in London (McIntyre, 2006: 142). At the conference Ross discussed the need she felt for the Galleries of Modern London to 'reclaim the perhaps slightly old fashioned role for the museum as the place which delivers an authoritative public history – but do so in a way which has legitimacy for today's audiences' (Ross, 2006: 53). Of three strategies Ross described using to achieve this, the first was consultation: 'It almost goes without saying that the most important strategy is to involve other voices and views in the choices we are making' (Ross, 2006: 44).

In 2004 the museum's bid to the HLF stressed how an 'ambitious programme of exhibitions, outreach and community involvement, including some risk-taking projects have helped develop skills and expertise within the musuem' (MoL, HD, 2004b: 14). The bid went on to list three examples of its experience carrying out

'Diversity / social inclusion work' (Museum of London, HD, 2004b: 14). The Museum of London's community programme resulted in several celebrated temporary exhibitions, like *Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees* in 2006, which was the exhibition output from the refugee project McIntyre discussed at the conference in 2005 (Benjamin, 2006).

Despite the self-conscious novelty of much of the civic engagement literature of the 2000s, in its bid to the HLF the Museum of London argued that the tradition extends through history, beyond the 1970s opening of the Museum of London itself:

> 'The Museum has always tried to reflect change, providing a place where London's identity is continuously made and re-made. It has always seen its role as one of civic engagement, not just in the subjects it tackles and the audiences it addresses but also in the collections it preserves and the opportunities it provides to learn about the nation's capital.'
> (Museum of London HD, 2004b: 2)

By retrospectively identifying an institutional agenda, the Museum of London described its inherent allegiance to the concept of civic engagement. In her 2005 paper Ross made a similar argument: 'When the London Museum opened in 1912 it saw its purpose as civic education... our enthusiasm for creating these new stories must be tempered by a sense of exactly how museums function as a place of civic dialogue. Whether telling new or old stories, we have to talk in a language that our visitors understand and to tell stories with rather than to them' (Ross, 2006: 44).

In some celebrated models of museum and community work, such as the District Six museum, the museum performs as a memorial, or site of healing. Ross was careful to distance the Galleries of Modern London from this kind of therapeutic or emotional effect from the outset. In the same 2005 paper, almost five years before the galleries opened, Ross stressed that the galleries:

> 'will be packed full of personal stories of suffering and redemption. However we must, I feel, resist the temptation to abdicate our own responsibilities as historians and we must strive to balance these stores with a more analytical account of the past. We are not creating a museum of

> individual therapy any more than we are creating a museum of collective penance.'
>
> (Ross, 2006: 43)

The Galleries of Modern London can be read as an argument for a different model of civic engagement to the dominant discourse of the early 2000s. Although the museum sought to present the multiple and fragmentary identity of London in the twenty first century, as Massey described, it sought to do so within a composed framework. The approach described by McIntyre and Ross is more aligned with what Hetherington has described as the museum's tendency to 'articulate a coherent cultural response to the fragmenting and challenging conditions of modernity' (Hetherington, 2006: 602). This chapter will now consider how community work contributed to cases from each of the three zones in the Galleries of Modern London, to reflect how the museum brought multiple voices to bear on its galleries.

The chapter will take a case study from each of these galleries, to look at the ways that the museum has worked with people living in the city in the twenty-first century to tell stories about the people in the city in the past. The first case study looks at underfloor cases, the second looks at the London in the Second World War and the third focuses on the Brixton riots and representations of contemporary communities. I will discuss the processes of making each of these exhibits before drawing out some themes towards a conclusion.

London Beneath

The first case study is in the Expanding City section, the first gallery in the historic sequence. The case is one of a series of distinct spaces, demarcated in gallery plans for community content within the Galleries of Modern London. The early gallery plans proposed a series of under floor cases, submerged beneath the floor and covered by reinforced glass. This part of the chapter focuses on the case in the foreground of figure 6.1

Figure 6.1 - *London Beneath* cases in Zone 1 'Expanding City'

Work began on the project to fill these underfloor cases in 2008, two years before the galleries opened. The museum worked with a programme called *Pathways to Work* and participants were referred to the museum project individually. The project is community work, even though it was working with a group of individuals rather than a pre-existing group. Working with the museum and an artist, the group curated the underfloor cases with objects from the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC). The process involved meetings with curators to learn about the galleries as a whole, being given a tour of the LAARC stores and meetings with designers. The *Pathways to Work* group developed the case concept, selected objects and arranged them. This work was done offsite, in Summer 2008, whilst the lower floor of the museum was closed and the previous galleries were being removed. The group photographed their arrangement of objects, which provided a template like that of the case layouts (figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 - Photograph of *Pathways to Work* project's design for underfloor case © Museum of London

After selecting the objects and arranging and photographing them, two members of the group carried out some work with conservators on their chosen objects. As a museum conservator reports:

> 'The selected objects needed marking as museum display objects, and basic conservation work. This was carried out by two volunteers from the community group, plus conservation students, supervised by conservation staff. In some cases "un-conservation" was required, such as taking down the occasional fill and removing old joins and tape residues, as the objects needed to look freshly excavated… The cases were designed to be well sealed and dustproof, and consist of metal boxes inserted into a false floor. They are lit with fibre optics. The case bases are filled with a layer of black "granular sand"… The public will be able to walk over the cases, with the archaeological objects directly beneath their feet.'
>
> (Long, in Fitton, 2010)

The case this chapter has focussed on is one of a subset of the *London Beneath* cases. It is one of two under-floor cases on the theme of the rebuilding in London

that took place after the Great Fire of 1666. The objects in the cases are things like animal bones, burnt bricks, and broken bottles from the museum's collection. Although research has shown how useful these objects can be for studying the material culture of the past, these objects would not usually be considered for display in long-term galleries (Jeffries et al 2009; Owens et al, 2010). Several hundred objects were selected and include broken domestic pottery, slate, glass bottles, elm water pipes, dice, marbles, gold rings and a desiccated cat (figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3 - Close up of objects the *Pathways to Work* group chose, featuring remains of a cat (bottom left) © Museum of London

The group finished their work on the project eighteen months before the gallery installation began, so their photographs were a crucial record of their work. During installation the photographs provided information about how the objects would be arranged. This was one of the cases I helped to install, and working with one of the museum's conservators we sought to replicate the display that the participants had designed (figure 6.4).

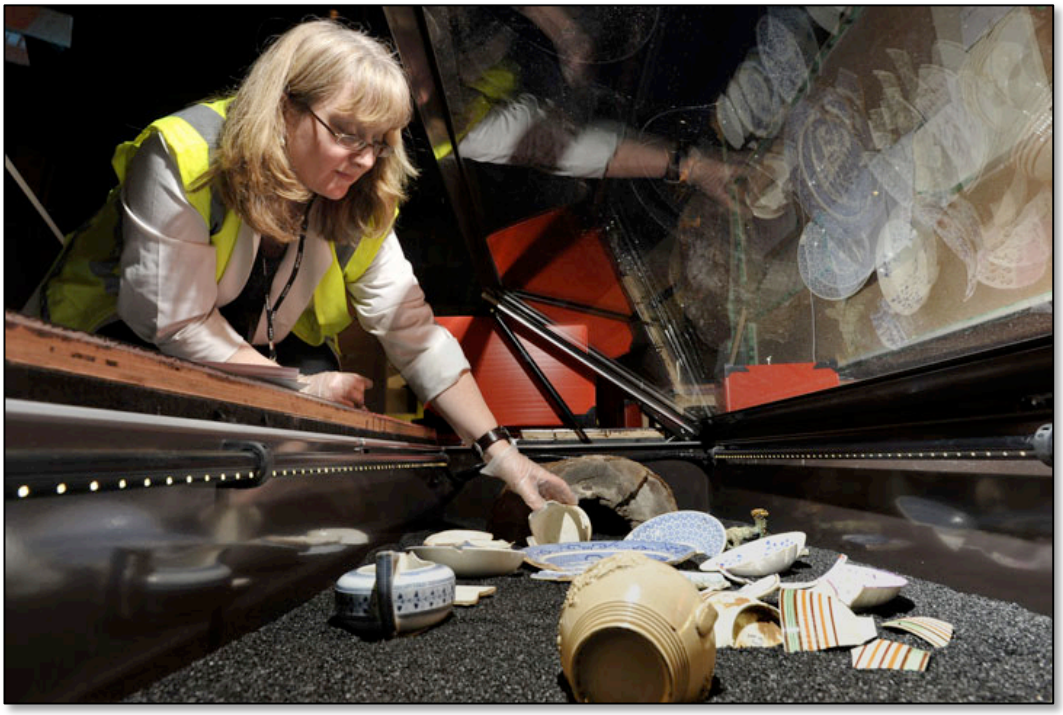

Figure 6.4 - Installing *London Beneath* © Museum of London

Another effect of the length of the project was the arrangement of the objects. Over the period between object selection and installation it became apparent that the dead cat the group had wanted to use was still decomposing. Its chemical instability meant that it couldn't be used in the case, so the project participants' plans could not be followed. Happily, the museum had a second dead cat already in the collection. The second dead cat was more stable and could be used in place of the one the group had originally selected. The replacement dead cat was much larger than the group's choice, so the case is much more crowded than the layout that group had intended.

There are layers of authorship and authority influencing this case, and in this way it is perhaps a good example of how multiple voices and kinds of agency intersect with one another in museum work. The case's context is provided by a broad gallery plan, curators defined the case's thematic concept and the contents were selected and arranged by the community group. The photographic stage was an intervention from the group's intention, and crucially the material qualities of the objects also had a bearing on the contents of the case. The most obvious difference between the images and the finished case is the foreshortening of the space and the

crowdedness of the objects. In the group's layout, one end was intended to be far more compacted than the other and the objects resembled the flow of water from a pipe. Because of the unanticipated larger cat, despite the efforts of the conservator and myself, we were unable to make the case completely resemble the one laid out by the group (figure 6.5). These are minor changes compared to some of the object rejections and additions covered in the previous chapter, but demonstrate the variety of forces shaping the peopling of the galleries.

Figure 6.5 - The replacement dead cat in the crowded 'London Beneath' case

One of the lessons learned form the *London Beneath* cases was the need to spend time and give space to developing community content with the rest of the galleries, subject to these various pressures. If the group had worked later on in the project, or if any members of the group had been present during installation then they would have been included in the discussion of how to fill the case around the second dead cat. Despite the difficulty with the cat, it received a remarkable reception. *The Guardian's* review of the Galleries of Modern London opened with this playful sentence:

> "The mummified cat, the single best-loved object in one of the world's greatest urban history collections, has a £20m new home from next week when the Museum of London opens its spectacular new Galleries of Modern London." (Kennedy, 2010)

The Blitz

Moving through the galleries, the next case study in this chapter looks at how the museum presented London's inhabitants experiences during the Second World War. Using individuals' stories, the museum exhibits some of the effects of the conflict onto the city's population.

The oral history curator at the time, Annette Day, was keen that the museum's new galleries should include space for a high profile oral history display. From early on in the project, the People's City section, dealing with around 1850 to around 1950, seemed like a good fit. The museum's oral history collections were especially strong on the topic of Second World War, and the museum's existing collection of oral history interviews were used alongside just one more interview recorded especially for the project. The museum worked with several specialist companies to produce elements of the new galleries, and the Blitz film was produced with a firm called Elbow. The museum produced a brief for what they wished and worked with Elbow to produce it.

The film Elbow made is shown on a large projection, at the end of a corridor that contains objects from both world wars. The room, shown in figure 6.6, includes a mirrored wall, some seating and some smaller screens that show footage synced to complement that in the larger projection. The middle of the room holds a tall glass case, with a bomb suspended from the ceiling. The film consists of oral history extracts accompanied by images of the speakers and photographs from the museum's collection, some of which have been subtly animated (figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6 - The Blitz display © Museum of London

Although the finished film is very close to the written brief, Day describes a central dispute during its production about the way the film was populated. Although the museum insisted on using its oral history recordings, Elbow were keen that the oral history words were repeated by actors, who they felt would be able to put more emotion into the words. These discussions went on for some time, but Day reports that they stuck with their convictions and won round the film specialists (Annette Day, interview, 18th July 2010).

Day described some of the factors that were important in her decision-making process during the editing of the oral history extracts. Working from a long-list of extracts, the film began with oral histories and only when these had been chosen did it then move towards including images. On one or two occasions the images led this process, and although I'm not sure I would be able to deduce which these were, Day feels the voice-led segments of the film were the most effective. The selections and editing were carried out by Day at the museum, as was the picture research. Elbow researched the moving footage and it was their job to put the components together with some music. The length of the extracts was crucial, as pace was important to the editing. As an exhibit that dominated a space, the film needed to

flow differently from the headphone extracts more often used to present oral history in the museum, and needed to be quick. As Day explains: "All of the extracts are quite short. If we'd done it on headphones we would have had a minute or a minute and a half between extracts" (Annette Day, interview, 18th July 2011).

In the editing process the museum sought to include very vivid recollections. Day explains that during the editing process she:

> "Tried to include memories when people said 'I think about it everyday' or 'I can still hear the screaming' or 'when I smell building sites dust it takes me back'. We're trying, quite deliberately, to show that people are still living with these memories, because I think it seems very distant to a lot of people"
>
> (Annette Day, interview, 18th July 2011)

Using oral history gave the museum the ability to argue that the memories are ongoing, that these events have a degree of currency to the people who lived through them. This would be harder to convey without using the actual oral history recordings. The remembered stories are acts of telling that take place in the twenty-first century, and are commanding because of their immediacy. This part of the museum deliberately encouraged an emotional and reflective response from visitors, using oral history accounts that demonstrate the ongoing emotional effects of the conflict.

Day used the word 'weaving' several times when she discussed how she edited the extracts, to describe the process. Through this 'woven' editing, the museum integrated the different voices, as it had set out its plans to do in the Gallery Brief in 2004, discussed in Chapter 4. This corresponded with Ross's technique of 'dealing with hard truths' by presenting them 'through people, delivering the messages of cause and effect through personal stories' (Ross, 2006: 43). Day described her intention during the editing was "not to tell a single narrative but show the variety of experiences" (Day, interview, 18th July 2011). This recalls McIntyre's aims for the museum to present multiple, rather than single voices. The individual voices are only heard briefly but the scale of the display means that the voices confront visitors, and the juxtapositions of different voices suggests a kind of dialogue

between them. Weaving together a whole meant bringing all the reflections together, in one whole experience.

World City

The World City section of the Galleries of Modern London discussed London's more recent history, from the post-war period to the present day. As with the previous two case studies, peopling the collections was a way of bringing collections into the public and to make the past seem more immediate. With this third example, the telling of the Brixton riots, the peopling of the story was perhaps more essential, because the museum had little material evidence of the riots, and what it had was not especially evocative or visually interesting. The zone's project assistant working on the Galleries of Modern London discussed how the museum had to: "think again, just because we didn't get any objects. People had photos but what kind of objects can you think to get from a riot? You know, a bit of rubble?" (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2009). Scott expressed that the museum's material needed to tell a balanced story: "You're talking about the riots, but if you just have a policeman's helmet and not the other side of the story told in an object it can seem one-sided" (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2009). The absence of material testimony meant the museum needed to find alternative ways to discuss the riots.

As figure 6.7 shows, eventually the policeman's helmet was installed, and the museum was able to use some paintings from its collection to give the story some visual representation. The small portraits mounted on the plinths are one of the outcomes of a social reporting project run by the museum. Like the *London Beneath* project, the Brixton project got underway during 2008. The museum worked with a group of young people living around Brixton, most of whom were unemployed at the time. The focus of the project was on social reporting, and involved giving the participants training in carrying out interviews, using recording equipment and using editing software to produce oral history accounts of other people's memories of the riots. The project participants interviewed people in Brixton in 2008, and also people who had been involved, seen the riots or lived in

Brixton in April 1981. The project participants blogged about their experiences, and they themselves were interviewed by the *Guardian* and *Time Out*.

Figure 6.7 - View of the Brixton riot 'island' in Zone 3

Despite the successful outcomes of the project, the audio material they collected was not displayed in the galleries. The project leader suggests that this was because there was not money available to include the audio clips, and stresses that she would like to have fought harder for their inclusion (Lucie Fitton, interview, 18th July 2011). Although they are available online, and in the Sackler Hall section of the Galleries, without gallery representation the project seems unfulfilled with only the photographic portraits and brief quotations included. Although much civic engagement and participation writing focusses on the less tangible benefits of the work, projects like these present a real potential benefit to the museum. Had this project been designed into the galleries sooner, the cost of the audio equipment could perhaps have been accommodated and the museum would have included a relatively high-profile civic engagement project, and engaging oral histories of what it was like during the time of the riots.

Elsewhere in zone 3 there had been more ideas for community exhibits. Project Assistant Liz Scott explains:

> "The initial idea was to have three costumes that represented diversity in London. So one from the gay community, like a gay pride outfit, a Chinese dragon for the Chinese community and then a Notting Hill Carnival dress for the Afro-Caribbean community. And then people thought, obviously, that's just three groups in the whole of diverse London. Plus they're kind of stereotypical images as well... that idea had always been in the works until really quite recently, when we decided to have it so that every sort of one, two three years we change it, so we work with a different community group each time and then that work gets displayed"
>
> (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2010).

To mitigate the museum's ideas and provide more creative input the museum often opted to work "in conjunction with artists as well. So it's more like an artwork than 'a Chinese dragon which represents China'" (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2010).

Community engagement was designed into the Galleries of Modern London with the intention that it could be altered and updated. This museum work is built into "pods or islands amongst the galleries, to make it easier to update" (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2010). However, this also reflects the organization of production. Specialist staff contacted and established links with the Chinese community organizations to set up meetings for the community artwork in zone 3. Curatorial staff attended a handful of these meetings to share information, but remained a secondary point of contact, which was managed by another member of staff, so community work took on complex layers of meaning. This kind of bounded participation can be prescriptive, but not necessarily as controlling as Lynch believes (Lynch, 2011). The museum's commissions are, as a Project Assistant reflects, remarkably open-ended: "We're just telling them that we want something made by you, about you living in London and no other guidance really, apart from it has to be this tall" (Liz Scott, interview, 24th February 2010). Consequently, the clichéd idea of a Chinese dragon, attacked by Hemming in

analysis of a 1990s community project at the Geffrye Museum, evolved into a sculpture of a phoenix emerging from a fire, atop a representation of a wishing well (Hemming, 1997)**.**

Authority and agency

The community projects that the museum carried out for the Galleries of Modern London were an example of the museum experimenting with new ways of working in order to produce new kinds of display. One aspect of this was how the museum began to develop the traditional model of museum authority and agency.

In cultural geographer Mike Crang's description of Skansen, an open-air museum in Stockholm, he reflects on the representation of 'a Sweden conceived a mosaic of local cultures... a mythic space where in the space of an afternoon the diversity of Swedish culture could be encompassed' (Crang, 2003: 6). The Museum of London explored ways of representing the city's people in a different way to Skansen's mosaic approach. Annette Day argued against the approach Crang has described at Skansen, stressing that: "actually in London that doesn't make sense. Because actually London is so diverse that we need to find other ways of reflecting that and being inclusive. Otherwise it would never end, but never actually say very much." (Annette Day, interview, 18th July 2011).

Narratives about conflict, riots and protests run through the galleries, and stories of disparity, displacement and diasporas are all integrated into the gallery narrative. Like the vision of the galleries submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the galleries are peopled; populated with reflection, argument and analysis from a range of perspectives. The Galleries of Modern London argue for the professional curatorial organization of individuals' voices, just as Ross argued in 2005: 'We must reclaim the perhaps slightly old fashioned role for the museum as the place which delivers an authoritative public history' (Ross, 2006: 43). In 2005 Ross explained that the museum aimed to present an authoritative history, but aim to 'tell stories with rather than to' its audience (Ross, 2006: 44).

The museum has been criticized in a report published by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for the extent to which these stories are controlled by the museum, and for defining the terms of engagement. Lynch's report argues that:

> ''Consultation' is evidently the manageable limit of the offer made by the Museum [of London], with a frank acknowledgement by a senior member of staff that the museum would not be moving to a level of collaboration in any real sense with communities... Community engagement is largely 'contained' and always on the museum's terms. It is defended as a level that is 'manageable' by the institution in terms of its scheduling, planning and funding priorities'
> (Lynch, 2011: 22).

Here the Museum of London was criticised for its control and containment of the community voices it engages. Lynch argued that the museum has not reached a point of equal exchange with the communities it has consulted and implies that because of this, the museum's efforts are inadequate. Writing during the preparation of the galleries, Cathy Ross described how the Galleries of Modern London would use multiple voices in its dispays:

> "One way, of course, of dealing with hard truths is to present them through people, delivering the messages of cause and effect through personal stories. Presenting history through eye-witnesses is an enormously helpful strategy for museums. It disguises the institutional voice and authenticates the stories we tell – history through witnesses somehow seems more 'real'."
> (Ross, 2006: 43).

Chapter 4 showed how this approach was used in the museum's funding bid, and this style of presentation was drawn upon repeatedly throughout the Galleries of Modern London, not just for hard truths. The Galleries of Modern London experimented with a new model of authority by consulting other people, but in employing these community voices to bolster its own authority the museum faced criticism.

Approaches to representation

The projects in the Galleries of Modern London have experimented with different forms of collectives, by grouping people in different ways. Through the projects in

the Galleries of Modern London, the museum has questioned the meaningfulness of the term 'community' in a megacity like London. By inviting local young people to explore Brixton's recent past, the museum has used geographical proximity as a means to bring people together. With *London Beneath*, the group was brought together from across the city through their specific personal circumstances. The voices linked in the Blitz oral histories are united in some of their experiences but not all. The experiences they share occasionally overlap and sometimes contradict. These voices were recruited individually and edited to suggest diversity rather than consensus.

In *London Beneath*, the objects and their mode of display is so effective that the group's work is only apparent to visitors who read the case's caption. With the war oral histories, the participants' voices are elevated to the top level of the narrative, and given prominence and space, consequently displaying a strong sense of authority. In the Brixton display the project itself has prominence and its findings are less evident, and the copper pheonix the museum installed is perhaps too abstract to represent that it is a community contribution at all. The Museum of London has adopted several approaches and all of these are within separate packages. Depending on your definitions, these are perhaps unevenly effective.

The gallery outcomes are only one of the products of the work that took place at the museum. Producing the galleries brought the organization forward, challenging its ways of working and prompting internal reflection. This internal questioning can be very robust and several people have expressed their frustration and disappointment at how much more could have been done. Although Lynch's report presented some criticisms of community involvement within the Galleries of Modern London, the most rigorous critiques were from within the organization:

> "I think there's one big area that looking back when we open I think we'll say 'we could have done that a lot better', and that is representing multiple viewpoints within the stories and how we have involved communities and individuals outside the organisation in collecting, acknowledging and building in those perspectives."
>
> (Frazer Swift, interview, 6th November 2009).

The Galleries are at their strongest dealing with individuals and the oral histories and individual testimonies used in the galleries are especially powerful. London can be bewildering and its diversity is astounding. In representing the city's diversity the Museum of London had to strike a balance between evoking a city that we can recognize as immense and unknowable, and simultaneously explain and interpret the same place. To do this, the museum has sought to guide visitors through the voices of the city's complicated history. It presents contrasting opinions, debates and discourse, in order to show how people have continued to change the city through time. The definition of community is problematic in many of the texts calling for community engagement, and some writers call for further analysis of the model (Buntinx and Karp, 2006). Subsequent work at the Museum of London broadened its scope for collaboration. The community collaboration and inclusion strategy, released internally at the museum in 2010, acknowledged that community is a contested term, and laid out the museum's new approach to working with communities. With the development of the Junction Youth Panel, and the Stories of the World project, the museum has subsequently developed ways of collaborating with communities that are less restricted than the projects that fed into the Galleries of Modern London.

Chapter 7: Pleasure Gardens

It is dark, it is quiet, and it is cut off from the rest of the museum. Although they were clearly defined from outside, the edges of the room look ambiguous from inside. Some of the walls are obscured with mirrors and the others are decorated with life-size film projections. The room has benches and seclusion, so it is a useful place to hide out and make some notes. This is the Museum of London, in Spring, in 2010. I have taken a few minutes away from working on the gallery installation to spend writing my research diary, so I'm sitting quietly in the Pleasure Garden part of the as-yet-unfinished Galleries of Modern London. The Pleasure Gardens are separated from the rest of the museum and they are a good place to sit and write for a few minutes. The cases are still empty, the projected film is out of sync, the mannequin stands are bare without their costumed components. In a few weeks these strangely-walled pretend Gardens will be complete and will be open to the public. Using the position I had in the museum, this chapter will discuss how and why the Gardens were re-made for display.

This chapter shows how the ideas for one part of the Galleries of Modern London were developed, discussing how and why these ideas became part of the display whilst others did not develop into displays. This enables the chapter to contribute to the thesis in three key ways. Firstly, the chapter shows how the museum was part of a particular intellectual context. Secondly the chapter builds on the theme running through the thesis about the museum's materiality. This chapter shows how the museum's sensory hierarchy influenced the galleries' development, and how curators managed the museum's material constraints with their theoretical aims. The third contribution this chapter makes to the thesis is to show the creative work of the city museum.

Throughout the chapter I deliberately refer to the Pleasure Gardens display as re-making, because the Pleasure Gardens are not reconstructed at the Museum of London. The museum has undertaken a symbolic interpretation of the gardens, rather than a straightforward recreation, and the term re-making implies a more creative process. The gardens at the museum remain ambiguous and nonspecific, and Alex Werner describes their source material as "70-80% Vauxhall" (Alex

Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). Calling this a process of re-making is intended to highlight the creativity of the activity, leaving enough linguistic space to accommodate the fact this is neither a restoration nor a straightforward reconstruction. This terminology remains a compromise, intended to acknowledge the hybridity of historical research and creative interpretation in the display.

Figure 7.1 – General view of the Pleasure Gardens from its entrance. Image © Museum of London

Revisiting the Gardens

> Once again I am making notes from the bench in the gardens, except this time the gardens are properly populated. It's a Tuesday morning, just before the summer holidays, and the Galleries of Modern London have been open to the public for just more than a year. The trees and benches are here so I sit where I sat before, although it's different now. Sitting here I am secluded from the rest of the Galleries, but now I'm not alone: the mannequins have been installed; visitors are visiting; the characters in the film talk; and the replica costumes seem to peer over my shoulder as I make my notes. As I sit and write, the gardens roll through their sequence, a twenty-five minute

snapshot that takes me from afternoon to night in London's Pleasure Gardens.

During the first phase of the garden's sequence the two costume cases are lit. In the centre of the room, columns hold up a section of painted sky. The sky-dome is lit to shed mock daylight into the room. As I am taking my notes, visitors come and pose for photographs beneath its slice of light. Most of the visitors I watch follow the pebbled path as it leads anti-clockwise around the room. The path's curvature does not suggest the overwhelmingly perpendicular pattern of walks familiar from illustrations of Vauxhall. Visitors follow the path past a case of costume, a long wall of film projection and down a slope to the costumes cased in the other corner. A film is being projected along the long wall, it shows a table being laid.

The room is lit as daylight for these few minutes, during which time the costumes are most illuminated. As well as those inhabiting the cases, a handful more costumes are spread throughout the room. All of the mannequins are dark grey, with faces and elaborate wigs made from metal wire. Most wear hats, which match the colours of their clothing but which look more modern. Peering into the mannequins' faces reveals that some of them are wearing lace masks. Inside the cases the costumes are ornate. The figures outside the cases are more distinctive: one wears a turban with a fur-edged robe, one is dressed as a harlequin, one is on its head in an acrobat's clothes, one is in masquerade costume. A playful touch at the edge of the first case; a child mannequin stretches out its hand to a child mannequin on the other side of the glass.

… One case holds nine figures and the other contains seven. The cases' glass fronts are decorated with painted leaves, and the backs of the cases are mirrored. The mirrors create kaleidoscopic corners, reflecting the room into itself again and again. The ambient sounds are of birdsong and of a female voice singing, and then of a carriage pulling up on gravel which pauses with the noise of someone getting out. As the sound of the carriage pulls away the lights in the room dim a little, music begins and in the film the

characters arrive for an afternoon in the gardens. The action continues on both walls throughout, although the sound alternates between phases, like a piece of promenade theatre…

Figure 7.2 – One of the costume cases in the Pleasure Garden. Image © Museum of London

This phase of the display deals with the gardens' afternoon. The birdsong continues in the background and piano music replaces the singing. The characters on the small wall talk first, and then the speech switches to speakers above the longer wall. The play alternates between screens: on the small wall we see a young girl question her father about how many people are in the gardens, but he is distracted, arranging a liaison for later. Next the film switches to the other wall, where a man complains about the cost of his meal with each bite of it. Light dapples through the false ceiling of cut-out-leaves. The trees and furniture in the film match the bench I am sitting on; the film room is an extension of the museum.

Once again characters' conversation fades away as the music becomes louder. Lighting levels are lowered for Evening, and the sound of crowds

milling through the gardens fills the space with the noise of murmurs, laughter and footfall. Although a few museum visitors quietly discuss the costumes, they contribute little to the sound of the gardens. The gardens' benches are a good spot for visitors to sit in a system of galleries with relatively few seats. The benches are placed at an awkward angle, making it tricky to watch films on each wall. Some visitors turn with a start when they hear the sound moving from one wall to another, other visitors seem oblivious. I realize I am ostentatiously, (ridiculously) switching my attention between screens with the film, in a passive bid to demonstrate to the room's other occupants which characters are talking. The Turkish Ambassador appears in the film, although his elaborate costume stands next to where I am sitting. The costumes on open display around the room are illuminated, and so as the 'evening' wears on I shuffle closer to the light to make my notes. The resolution of the projection doesn't match the furs, stitches, and colours standing at my side. My attention is suddenly drawn back to the film by a raised voice. 'Draw your sword if you are so gallant – you little Macaroni' a man says, lunging at a female character dressed in masculine clothing.

After the altercation there is a crackle, and tiny lights in coloured glass lanterns flicker on in the film and in the room. The sound of fireworks begins above my head, and a child visiting the museum gasps as a few dozen LED lights simulate firework explosions above the canopy of MDF leaves. When the fireworks finish the ceiling is spotted with stars through the leafy cut-outs. The glass cases, and the mirrors behind them, reflect the movement of characters in the film, so it feels like the static mannequins are part of a bustling crowd. The mirrors multiply the population, and looking into the case I momentarily glimpse myself reflected amongst the throng. The eerie effect is amplified when other visitors, standing still to watch the film, start to move around. In the dark they are stopped still like the mannequins, when they move there is a tiny moment when it seems the mannequins could have moved too. The mannequins' poses and outfits seem characterful, and I realize I still harbour a slightly fanciful mistrust towards

some of them: even the ones I have seen assembled, and then wheeled into the Gardens.

The lights darken again, and it's hard to see to write even though now I have sidled up close to the Turkish Ambassador's illuminated costume. The film ends and music plays as two characters leave the projected space hand in hand. In the pause between evening and afternoon some visitors move on, and it feels more peaceful without them as the film comes to a close. Then the daylight dome lights up, and the costume cases are illuminated as the cycle begins again.
(research diary, 5th July 2011).

Figure 7.3 – Another view of the Pleasure Gardens. Image © Museum of London

Re-Making the Gardens

The Museum of London, and its sister site the Museum of London Docklands have both experimented with immersive displays in the past. *Victorian Walk* and *Sailortown* are theatrical displays that the visitor can walk through like film-sets.

The Pleasure Gardens could have been another display in this canon of recreations, but the museum has chosen to do something slightly different with this exhibit. There are obvious technical distinctions to be made between the displays: the Pleasure Gardens use film, mannequins, sound and a lighting sequence, which aren't features in the older displays. The Pleasure Gardens are not the same simulacra as the other galleries; rather than a re-construction, the gardens are more symbolic. These mechanical differences belie a broader conceptual distinction. The older *Victorian Walk* and *Sailortown* galleries invite visitors to walk around mocked-up high streets, but the Pleasure Gardens use a wider range of techniques to evoke the characteristics of a place, and are more artful than 'authentic'.

The Pleasure Gardens emerged from the combination of an academic discourse interested in pleasure and a museum agenda that sought to create sensation. The Museum of London's 2004 HLF bid stipulated that 'the overall design approach for the gallery will be to create a series of dramatic, vibrant, and rich environments that engage the visitor emotionally as well as intellectually' (Museum of London, 2004b: 6). The desire to create a vibrant environment for emotional engagement reflected visitor studies models used by specialist companies who supply museums with visitor research data as well as in the work of visitor studies theorists (see Falk, 2009). Visitor research companies, such as Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, have developed taxonomies which categorize emotional engagement – an imaginative or affecting response to the museum – as more meaningful form of engagement than that achieved by visitors who come to the museum for a social experience or as part of an intellectual enquiry (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, n.d.).

Alongside the interest in sensation came an interest in representing pleasure at the museum. In 2008 Jack Lohman, the then-director of the Museum of London argued that the story of a city was one of 'pleasure', which city museums should reflect (Lohman, 2008b: 65). Georgian London's burgeoning economy of leisure and indulgence provided the opportunity for the museum to present an exhibit that evoked that sense of pleasure. A multitude of attractions opened around the time of the Pleasure Gardens: museums, zoos, horse displays, circuses, spas, and various panoramas were all popular attractions during the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens' lifespan, with the Great Exhibition opening two years after Vauxhall finally closed

(Altick, 1978). The Pleasure Gardens gave the museum the opportunity to create a playful, evocative space, drawing on the gardens' tradition of display and indulgence at a time when such topics appealed to the museum's own agenda.

The Pleasure Gardens were a feature of the museum's design sketches early on in the project. Alex Werner notes that in the early stages of the project he had imagined another immersive exhibit about London's coffeehouses (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). Readers who have visited the museum will recognize that the coffeehouse display was not realized. This chapter will now consider some of the reasons that the coffeehouse display was not pursued, to illustrate by contrast the preferred qualities of the Pleasure Garden. Looking at the displays in this way is a conceit of the chapter: the displays were not an either/or proposition during the museum's work.

The history of the coffeehouse has been closely associated with the development of the modern public sphere in European culture, most notably in the work of Jurgen Habermas. For Habermas, coffeehouses like London's provided a new site for discussion, and constituted the manifestation of the new public sphere, marking a significant turning point in modernity (Habermas, 1962). Elsewhere in the gallery plans the museum reflected these ideas about communication and public debate: for example where a printing press is displayed prominently with projected animations, which suggests the power of the printed word in public space (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8). Historical geographer Miles Ogborn discussed Habermas' ideas of the public sphere in relation to pavements, and also made gardens one of his case studies in his impressive examination of the spaces of modernity (Ogborn, 1998). Discussing the Pleasure Gardens and the figure of the Macaroni, Ogborn considered how the Gardens represented the development of a public sphere that was very different from the 'supposedly more worthy' arenas of discursive debate, populated by characters who challenged conservative notions about gender roles and conspicuous consumption (Ogborn, 1998). Curators at the Museum of London cited Ogborn's approach as influential, but were quick to stress the limits of Ogborn's influence, explaining that Ogborn's ideas contributed to "the top-level for the gallery: to show what made London a special place; what made it different and what was new. He didn't inform what went into the display, he

informed the concept and how things are part of the modern city" (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). The Pleasure Garden could be a way to convey the social life of the city and take a new approach in the museum.

The coffeehouse display envisioned by Werner included "a glass table, and underneath it clay pipes and coffee stuff with a touch-screen set into the table" (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). This display offered the museum interesting possibilities for integrating the museum's *Collections Online* digitization project with objects themselves (see chapter 8 for a discussion of *Collections Online*). However the Pleasure Gardens also offered the chance to create a spectacular space, combining projections and real objects. Whilst Habermas' model of the coffeehouse focussed on a public realm of politics and debate, the Pleasure Gardens display looked at a public realm of pleasure, passion and transgression, evoking the experience suggested by the playful nature of the Pleasure Gardens. The fact that the museum created the latter has a good deal to do with practical considerations, but also suited the museum director's assertion that the museum should 'convey the sheer pleasure of populousness' (Lohman, 2008b: 65).

One of the factors that went against the coffeehouse display was the sheer sensory significance of coffee to the experience. Werner felt that the coffee was an essential element of the way that people came together, and as conservation principles would make the inclusion of real coffee problematic, the display would lack a crucial element (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). By contrast, at the Pleasure Gardens the act of purchasing food and drink was paramount, and the museum would be able to represent the act of purchasing food without disrupting its own strict sensory hierarchy (Ogborn, 1998). The museum is a means of communication, and like other methods of communications it has certain parameters and predispositions. As Alpers has argued museums usually convey the visual qualities of objects above other material qualities, and the limitations of museums' sensory hierarchy were disruptive to the coffehouse planning (Alpers,1991). Werner argued that "to experience a coffee house you really needed the smell of the coffee and the drink" and without any sense of the smell, warmth and flavour of coffee any recreation of the coffeehouse would have been unsuccessful (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011).

A second practical limitation of the coffeehouse display concerned the fact that the museum planned to place its own coffee shop close to the space Werner considered for the coffeehouse. Having the coffee house display close to the museum's coffee shop undermined the novelty of coffee in London, as Werner explained: "it didn't seem right to have the cafe round the corner" (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). With a nearby coffee shop and conservation requirements to consider Werner felt it too difficult for the museum to represent London's coffeehouses through an immersive display. Although both would have presented interesting displays, the Pleasure Gardens' connections to display and ostentation were well suited to the museum as a medium of communication. The Pleasure Gardens' visual, spectacular and symbolic qualities were easier to integrate into the museum's material register.

Once the coffeehouse display idea was abandoned curators at the museum began to develop the possibilities for creating a large, immersive Pleasure Garden display, and the ideas became ambitious and theatrical. 'The idea was that rather than telling someone what the pleasure gardens were about, we wanted you to experience what it was like to be there', explains the Museum of London's senior curator of fashion and decorative arts, Beatrice Behlen (Behlen, 2010). This agenda borrows from the exhibition efforts seen in science museums and centres, such as the Science Museum's Launchpad gallery, where interactive galleries promote a physical style of learning in which 'the body itself is a source of knowledge' (Silverstone, 2002: 162). This model of engagement has been effectively executed at science museums and centres, often using hands-on interactive gallery materials with tasks and activities that demonstrate scientific principles (Allen, 2004). Creating an experiential historic display needed to provide an equivalent kind of stimulation for the visitor. Trying to do this would mean overcoming a sense of familiarity in the museum's visitors, in order to emphasize the Pleasure Gardens as part of a changing society, rather than leaving visitors with the impression of an inevitably outdated, antiquated ritual.

Part of the rationale for describing the museum's work as 're-making' is that the gardens on display are a creative invention. Rather than being a recreation of an individual pleasure garden, the museum's display is a composite, generic garden

which incorporates researched elements from several pleasure- and tea-gardens (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). Macdonald has described the museum as 'a creative agency, as well as a 'contested terrain'' (Macdonald, 1996: 4). The process of creating the Pleasure Garden display certainly supports this assertion: the number of elements to be combined and the decision to include a newly-commissioned film is ambitious as well as creative. The list of influences for the space reflects Macdonald's argument for the creative museum. 'The National Trust and English Heritage often employ artists to do installations transforming particular houses' Behlen argued in a free public lecture at the museum (Behlen, 2010). By describing how the Pleasure Gardens were also partly inspired by the work of video installation artists like Pipilotti Rist who combine spectacular installations with traditional exhibition displays, Behlen set the museum's role in a specific creative context (Behlen, 2010). Behlen's examples include some highly creative interpretation techniques for museum and heritage sites. The National Trust and English Heritage each brought in artists from the outside world to work in their galleries, instead of taking the creative role on themselves, so the Pleasure Gardens are a distinctively different example of this process. Although the Museum of London brought in external expertise for specific elements of the gardens, (the film, the hats and wigs) the overall composition was created in-house. This may not be as significant for visitors as the fact that although installations are 'something quite normal in Modern Art Galleries', the Pleasure Gardens are 'quite different from the rest of the Galleries [of Modern London]' in context and register (Behlen, 2010).

The Pleasure Gardens display includes an array of display elements:

> 'Display cases, mannequins wearing original costume, accessories from museum's collection, new metal stylized wigs and contemporary hats by the milliner Philip Treacy. Real tree trunks, tea lights, replica benches, replica costumed figures, small pleasure dome/ temple, gradual ramp, sculpture of Thomson the poet on arrival, pick-up guide, ceiling with fibre optic lighting, three digital projectors, speakers, directional lighting.'
>
> (Werner, 2010, personal correspondence [Modalities talk notes]).

This section of the chapter looks in more detail at a handful of these elements: the mannequins; the Philip Treacy hats; the Yasemen Hussein wigs and the creation of

the film to give a greater understanding of the way that the different elements of display were produced and how they were all brought together.

The Pleasure Gardens contain twenty-two costumed mannequins, sixteen of which are clothed in material from the museum's fashion and dress collection. Whether historic clothing inside the cases or the six replica items on open display, all of the costume is displayed on a distinctive style of mannequin, developed especially for use in the Pleasure Gardens (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010). Elsewhere in the Galleries of Modern London clothes have been shown on cut-out mannequins, which give a shape to the garments but are trimmed around the outlines of the costume for discretion (Davidson, 2012). Behlen describes how the museum's costume curators argued that the standard style would be less evocative in the immersive style of the Gardens and a more expressive style would be more powerful (Behlen, 2012). Early on in the project each of the mannequins was given a name and they also acquired some characteristics (Behlen, 2010). It was intended at one stage that an audio track of the characters discussing the gardens would play as they were illuminated in sequence in-between sections of the film (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010). Although the recording and light sequence was not produced the poses held and accessories worn by each of the mannequins bears a lively trace of their quiet characters.

In a talk at a conference that she organized at the Museum of London in 2012, Behlen described the kinds of mannequins that influenced the development of those in the Pleasure Gardens (Behlen, 2012). Behlen's aim was that the mannequins should appear 'personable' as well as abstract. (Behlen 2012). Behlen cited the influence of the stylized mannequins of the Kyoto Costume Institute, and the Bonaveri-made mannequins at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York both of which she admired (Behlen, 2010; 2012). In order to reflect the style of Georgian London, the faces needed to model the fashionable face shapes of the time rather than the high-cheekboned face shape that was celebrated later (Behlen 2010). The female faces were modelled on the young Queen Victoria's softer features (Behlen, 2012). The colour of the mannequins was also important to consider. Flesh tones were ruled out, as they retain connotations of shop mannequins and waxworks.

Black and white were both considered too harsh, but as figure 7.4 shows, a dark grey tone provided the solution (Behlen, 2010).

Figure 7.4 – More detail of a mannequin in the Pleasure Garden. Image © Museum of London

To give variety and interest to the mannequins' faces, the curators looked into the possibility of giving them all masks. Behlen's inspirations included the light lace masks worn by Kirstin Dunst in Sofia Coppola's 'Marie Antoinette', as well as the images of Isabella Blow wearing a lacquered lace mask designed by Philip Treacy (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010). The hats from the time in the museum's collection were too delicate to go on display, so when Treacy expressed an interest in the project, having been approached about the mask, the museum were especially keen (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010). Rather than creating replica hats, the museum asked Treacy to produce hats that weren't in a particular period style, for the mannequins inside the cases to wear (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010; Behlen 2010; 2012). Treacy's hats were intended to bring the display to life to visitors, in Behlen's words to remind visitors that the costumes were "not just old", that they had once been fashionable and treasured (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April, 2010). Treacy's involvement also

suggested something about the spaces in which his hats are worn nowadays, making links to ostentatious dress through the years. Combining contemporary hats with historic costume is a bold move and although Behlen was certain modern hats would bring the display to life, the decision prompted some concern amongst those within the museum who believed that it would be too confusing for the public (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 28th May, 2010).

One of the Pleasure Gardens' most distinctive elements are the wigs worn by the characters. When the museum sought a wig-maker for the mannequins, Treacy suggested the work of sculptor Yasemen Hussein, who made 'hair' pieces out of wire (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 28th May, 2010). Having worked together before Hussein and Treacy were keen to collaborate for the project and Hussein produced spectacular metal 'wigs' for all the figures in the Pleasure Gardens (Behlen 2010; 2012). Hussein produced a range of sized pieces, from a beard to the macaroni-like bouffant crest worn by a waiter, to the elaborate antler piece worn by a mannequin dressed for a masquerade ball, seen in the foreground of figure 7.4.

The Pleasure Gardens display included six replica costumes, including the Turkish Ambassador, which were presented on mannequnis on open display. The museum used replica costumes because, as Behlen argues, the material evidence had not survived (Behlen, 2010). Laurajane Smith has highlighted the shortcomings of using material objects to discuss identities. Smith argues that:

> 'The heritage gaze constructs, regulates and authorizes a range of identities and values by filtering that gaze onto the inanimate material heritage... a material objective reality is constructed and subjectivities that exist outside or in opposition to that are rendered invisible or marginal, or simply less 'real''
>
> (Smith, 2006: 53).

Because subjectivities without a material presence are rendered 'invisible' in the context of museums, the museum's use of replica objects, such as masquerade costume and the Turkish Ambassador's costume, allows for a visual telling of stories that did not leave a trace as material evidence. Although the museum did not have this range of costumes at its disposal, it did have a record of a such costumes, through its collections of printed portraits and satirical prints (Behlen, 2010). Had

the museum chosen only to display these prints, Smith's argument shows that the heritage gaze would have rendered them much more marginal. By creating a material reality for the purposes of display, the museum reconstructed subjects that would otherwise have been marginalized by the conventional formalities of the heritage gaze. Although the positioning of these objects outside cases suggests that the subjects remain on an unequal footing with those with encased 'authentic' costume displays, the museum has been able to grant these narratives a visibility they would not otherwise have been afforded.

Conveying a vision of the Pleasure Gardens as a site of change, rather than a static vision of how the city had been, would mean showing visitors the uncertainties and excitement of a visit. The museum did this by presenting a film, in which several of the reproduction costumes are worn by actors. The film shows the Pleasure Gardens as more than a site of pleasure; during the film there are moments of frustration, flirtation, aggression, threat and menace. The film was one of the ways the museum was able to provide this narrative. Telling the story of a handful of characters' visits to the Gardens, the museum drew on Georgian sources to inform the characters and plot, and several lines from the film can be recognized as references to particular accounts of the gardens (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011).

The film was made by the museum in collaboration with Elbow Productions, an external agency who as Chapter 8 shows, the museum worked with throughout the Galleries of Modern London. The film was shot at the Albany theatre, in Deptford, as their stage is in the round style, and could be dressed to look like the pleasure garden room in the museum. Projected onto the walls life-size, the film becomes something like an extension of the room.

The choice of which music to play was also taken carefully, and although popular music scores illustrated with Vauxhall scenes were included in the research materials gathered for the gallery, the final decision was taken on the basis of several criteria. Firstly, music was sought on the basis that it was actually played at the gardens: for example Handel's Dead March was reportedly played every night in Vauxhall. Other pieces were chosen because, as Werner argued, they "would be quite close to the sound you would have heard in the gardens" this meant music

which satisfied several requirements: music played by not too big an orchestra, avoiding too much harpsichord which the curator argued would have reflected music played in assembly rooms rather than in Pleasure Gardens (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). Curators also took care not to pick any music that would be too well known now, as it would seem too familiar. For music with vocals, the curators faced a different challenge altogether:

> "I think if you listen to some of the music that would have been sung I think visitors would have found a bit uncomfortable. It is a sound from the past and it is a little bit difficult to listen to as it's from a different time and tradition."
>
> (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011)

The music was chosen to be subtle, to be something which would have been heard in the gardens and also not jarring for either being too familiar or too alien.

The Pleasure Gardens display required an ambitious combination of objects and display technologies, such as film, object reproductions and sounds. As a whole, the Galleries of Modern London can be read as an argument for a new relationship between museum objects and digital interpretative museum content, argument developed in the next chapter. Although many commentators work from an assumption of objects and display technology as oppositional, the Galleries of Modern London have suggested extensive ways that museum objects and digital projections can be used together, developing techniques also used at other sites such as the Roman Baths, in Bath. These combinations are not as problematic as the binary distinction in museum theory might suggest. Werner argues "I love objects; I love the materiality of things. But that doesn't mean to say I don't warm to the interactive element as well, how that can give you different kinds of contexts, meanings, emotions" (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). This attitude is echoed by Behlen, who also described the museum's Pleasure Garden display without division between objects and display technology:

> "It makes [the costumes] look like they were really fashionable and they were really chic at some point - and not just old. And beautiful, but I think you could see that someone would have really liked wearing them and putting some nice stuff with them, so I think that's what I quite like, but I'm sure some people won't"

(Beatrice Behlen, interview, 28th May 2010).

This quotation reveals a commitment to the evocative space as a whole, reflecting the process of object selection discussed in Chapter 4, and the ways in which display technologies can enhance objects. Describing the Pleasure Garden, Behlen celebrates the use of display technologies because of what they mean for the museum's objects. Behlen isn't interested in the environment for its own sake; she identifies the powerful link between display technologies and the objects from the collection. Behlen's intention, that the costumes look 'not just old', also shows the need to enliven objects, to transform the visitor's recognition of the clothing from something as pure art to something that was once exciting, personally-owned and part of the excitement of the new.

Conclusion

The galleries are intended to show how London was changing, as opposed to providing static simulacra of how it had been. Ogborn's reading of the Pleasure Garden offered a spectacular and indulgent case study, and its visual qualities lent themselves to the medium of museum display. The Pleasure Gardens offer the museum a space with which to explore the development of urban modernity, perfectly suited to the medium of the museum visit. When Ogborn argues that the gardens were a site for social renegotiation through commodity, it is not difficult to see why the gardens were a tempting choice for curators using the museum's collection to create an exhibit reflecting the ways the city changed (Ogborn, 1998: 156). Ogborn's account of the gardens and their population even quotes one satirist who describes the Macaronis themselves as 'a museum of everything that has not yet been imagined or worn before the year 1772' (Ogborn, 1998: 156). This quotation identifies the link between the act of personal adornment and the act of display, situating these personal projects in a historic moment, and hinting that the moment marks a kind of change. This quote can show some of the ways the Pleasure Gardens – and the visitors to the gardens – suited several of the museum's requirements. By discussing the Pleasure Gardens, the museum would be able to say something unfamiliar about the city, as the topic had not been covered there in detail before. Following Ogborn's arguments, it would represent a moment of change, rather than a stable moment of history. Furthermore, responding to

Ogborn's specific points about the use of material wealth in the changing phase of history, the museum would be able to use parts of its own collection to illustrate the argument. Ogborn's work discussed the role of vision and the gaze (Ogborn, 1998). The Gardens' spectacular visual wealth would offer the museum, an institution with its own conceptual inheritance regarding ways of seeing, a means to experiment with dramatic immersive spaces (Alpers, 1991; Smith, 2006). The use of personal and ostentatious consumption also draws parallels with concerns in contemporary popular discourse. The emphasis on pleasure corresponded with the museum director's stated commitment to showing the pleasure of the city is demonstrated in the Pleasure Gardens (Lohman, 2008b: 64).

An understanding of the gardens as a space of novelty reflected the museum's commitment to tell a story about change, rather than about historic episodes. The sense of historical progress, of social change and London's development suited the museum's commitment to tell a new and continuous story of the city. Ogborn's lively discussion of the gardens and its visitors provides a sense of historic social change as experimental rather than inevitable, offering the museum an opportunity to convey this to its visitors (Ogborn, 1998). Ogborn evokes the push and pull of negotiation, drawing on the playfulness of the Macaronis, the anxieties of conservative commentators, the occasional physical violence, the gardens as a cultural battleground, and the Macaroni as a synecdoche of the era (Ogborn, 1998). The spectacularly costumed Macaronis themselves were compared with museums, and they offered an actual museum a fantastic example of a way to use material culture to show how society changed. The macaroni offered cartoonists a visual motif of the age and their material symbolism continues to link the intangible with the tangible at the Museum of London.

This chapter has demonstrated the kinds of creativity evident in city museums, and the freedom city museums have in the absence of a dominant convention for representing the city. Borrowing from other models of urban display, the Museum of London was able to develop a playful theatrical display using a different register from the rest of the galleries. This chapter also discussed how the museum's material context limited the kinds of sensory experience curators could present, and the coffeehouse display, which required the senses of smell and perhaps even taste,

was a victim of the museum's sensory hierarchy. Elsewhere, this chapter has shown how the museum's dependence on material culture has resulted in scope for a creative response. The limitations of the material record prompted the adoption of two creative components to the Pleasure Garden display. The fragile material condition of the museum's hat collection provided the scope for Treacy's work, and the absence of surviving material evidence of acrobats, harlequins and Turkish Ambassadors prompted the creation of replica costumes.

In a case near to the Pleasure Gardens is a concertina paper peep-show of the Rotherhithe Tunnel. It is like a shoebox theatre; when you put your eye to the hole the miniaturized space is revealed. The Pleasure Gardens remind me of those little, peepable worlds where as you look, the careful layers of artifice fill your vision. The Pleasure Gardens at the Museum of London recall the sensation of viewing the paper peer show, rather than being in the gardens themselves.

The Pleasure Gardens used to host city spectaculars, including recreations of 'Old London' and the Great Fire of 1666 (Altick, 1978). Chapter 3 showed how these kinds of attraction influenced the origins of the city museum, and commercial visitor attractions have continued to inform the work of the Museum of London. Alex Werner argues that the Pleasure Gardens display was informed by techniques developed for "theme park type things, using different sorts of technologies, light and sound and shadows and a filmic experience as well" (Alex Werner, interview, 13th April 2011). Chapter 3 referred to Bennett's argument that museums are always trying to extricate themselves from 'commercial exhibitions of natural and articificial wonders' (Bennett, 1995; 3). The Museum of London has re-made the Pleasure Gardens by developing ways that objects, immersive environments, replicas and technology work together, happily borrowing techniques from the kinds of evocative attraction that Bennett inists museums reject. The representation of the city comes full circle in the Pleasure Garden display at the Museum of London, as the museum replicates firework displays that were once used to represent the Great Fire of London in the Pleasure Gardens (Altick, 1978).

Chapter 8: Digital display technologies at the city museum

Digital technological developments have profound consequences for museums, because as Macdonald argued as early as 1996, the web makes it possible to 'dip in electronically to different collections around the world and effectively construct your own museum on screen' (Macdonald, 1996: 2). In her early analysis of museums on the web, Macdonald suggested that the significance of place is diminished. City museums are museums of place, and in them the idea of movement retains a particular significance. The Museum of London presents a broadly chronological history of London for visitors to walk through, and is a good example of what have been called the 'perambulatory rhetorics and narratives' of museum space (Silverstone, 2002: 173). The idea of movement through time has prompted discussion around the idea of the museum as a time machine, and Robert Lumley explored this in detail, in the edited edition *The Museum Time Machine* (1988). As a built environment the museum offers distinctive characteristics to the prospective time traveller. Rather than exploring by proxy through characters and narratives as in books or films, the museum time-traveller is able to physically move through time, their own motion reflecting the passage of time. The growing popularity and significance of the mobile web and GPS-enabled smartphones offers distinctive possibilities to city museums.

In Macdonald's interpretation, the web reduces the significance of place, but place can also play a more significant role in online museums. Digitization projects that make collections accessible online can be combined with geo-location sites like *Historypin*, or smartphone apps that link digitized objects with location data, allowing the digital city museum to reach beyond its own walls. Describing the use of plaques and other physical heritage interpretation, Hetherington has argued that 'the city has become museumified' (Hetherington, 2006: 602). Given the city museum's exploration of digital territory it is now tempting to interpret Hetherington's quote in a more digital sense.

The Museum of London's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund stressed the need to 'wire up the building for the digital age' (Museum of London, 2004b: 5). This aim articulated a pragmatic need for the museum to adapt its infrastructure, but it also

expressed the museum's ambitious intention to develop its relationship with digital technology. This chapter explores three of the museum's visitor-facing digital initiatives in the Galleries of Modern London project, to discuss the ways in which digital technologies available to city museums have affected the stories they are able to tell. Firstly, the chapter looks at digital interactive exhibits in the Galleries of Modern London themselves. The second example this chapter explores is *Collections Online*, in a section that looks at the digital dissemination of the objects displayed in the galleries. The third digital strand that the chapter discusses is a mobile app the museum developed to promote the Galleries of Modern London.

McTavish argues that museums' digital work represents a means to see the museum's ideal form of itself, by analyzing how they 'envision the "proper" role of the museum' (McTavish, 2006: 229). This chapter's first argument uses three examples of forms of digital work that accompanied the Galleries of Modern London to examine what they reveal about the museum's ideal form of itself, the proper role of the city museum. In doing so the chapter demonstrates another approach to display at the city museum, strengthening the thesis' argument that there are a variety of approaches to representing the city in museums. The chapter's third argument posits the Museum of London's digital projects as examples of museum work, and following on from Chapter 3, suggests that museum work is a series of negotiations between different approaches.

Interactive Exhibits

The term 'interactives' can be misleading, as in museums it can be used for interpretive audio-visual material, like gallery videos, as well as manual interactives like those used at the Science Museum's *Launchpad* galleries, and everything in between. Interactives, especially digital interactives, have been a source of some anxiety in museums over the last two decades, and this was felt keenly at the Museum of London under Simon Thurley's direction. Rather than seeing interactives as one element of a display combined of many elements, Thurley felt that interactives were displayed at the expense of objects from the museum's collection, and was highly critical of the 'blooming knobs and buttons'

approach of using digital interpretation in galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum (quoted in Gibbens, 2001).

Thurley was not alone in his opinion, as at the time digital interpretation was often described in opposition to other material, and a pervasive perception suggested that videos were shown 'at the expense of the objects themselves' (Silverstone, 2002: 172). David Fleming, then the Director of Tyne and Wear Museums argued in 1998 that 'museums will have to accept that, as evidence, objects have outlived their golden age' and anticipated that in future, museums 'will place less reliance on objects as transmitters of the past into the present, and rely more on images, films, re-creations and other virtual representations' (Fleming, 1998: 146; 145). Thurley's hostility towards interactives and digital interpretation was expressed in his commitment to conservative teaching methods at the museum: 'put a screen in front of a child and they will fiddle with it for three minutes. Good old-fashioned worksheets are the best thing, with a reward at the end' (Thurley quoted in quoted in Gibbens, 2001). Mike Wallace expressed the pervasive object/interactive dichotomy, summarizing the position with the dramatic warning that: 'cutting loose from objects might put an end to museums' (Wallace, 1995: 109). Monti's 2009 description of developing a gallery at the British Museum demonstrates the persistence of this attitude: 'The proposal to include the AV in the gallery was initially received with trepidation by the curator, who feared that the video might distract from the objects' (Monti, 2009: 99).

Silverstone's discussion of audio-visual material and interactives in the *Food for Thought* gallery of the Science Museum is illustrative of the extent of the perceived division between object from the collection and interpretive equipment. Silverstone describes the status of the gallery interactive exhibit as that of a 'non-object' (Silverstone, 2002: 164). In museum usage, the word 'object' usually refers specifically to accessioned items, either in the museum's own collection, or on loan. Suggesting display technologies are seen as 'non-objects' Silverstone highlights how the gallery interactive is frequently understood as the object's Other, defined in opposition. In doing so, such definitions deny the 'non-object' any scope for material qualities. Further objections to digital interpretation were concerned with the misplaced popularity of interactive elements. The growing

significance of interactive displays is also seen by some as a way of making museums into more of a consumer product, enabling 'the museum to forge a more 'economic' relation both with its visitors and with private industry' at the expense of providing a more educational function (Barry, 1999: 101).

Debates taking place "about the value of interactives and whether they were just a distraction from what the museums are really about or whether people were just playing or whether they were learning" were taking place at the museum when it began to plan the Galleries of Modern London (Frazer Swift, interview, 24th June, 2009). By 2005, when the Galleries of Modern London interactives began to be developed, writers were predicting a new phase of digital gallery components. For Parry and Sawyer the trend would move towards 'the next phase of the digital-supported gallery' where 'ICT becomes *innate* within the exhibition space… conceived of as another quality of the gallery… no longer something to be conceived of separately' (Parry and Sawyer, 2005: 46). It was this approach that the Museum of London had been developing, combining object and 'non-object' to create new kinds of display. Parry and Sawyer proved prescient in their prediction of attempts to make exhibits where 'the space you exist in the real world appears almost seamless with the space within the film' which aptly describes the attempted use of film in the museum's Pleasure Gardens exhibit, discussed in Chapter 7, and their other predictions would also prove to be relevant to the Galleries of Modern London (Parry and Sawyer, 2005: 47). The Galleries of Modern London developed new kinds of gallery interactives, such as the printing press interactive shown in figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 – The printing press in zone 1, Expanding City © Museum of London

The printing press in figure 8.1 is an example of an interactive where: 'rather than placing the digital media *into* a gallery environment, the solution was, in a sense, to place the gallery within a digital media environment. The exhibit was shaped, literally, as a digital medium' (Parry and Sawyer, 2005: 47). The multimedia brief for the display described the material as a 'multimedia 'attractor' installation' and the design concept argued that:

> 'The Museum requires a multimedia 'attractor' installation for the central space of Zone 1 of its Capital City galleries. The installation will act as an introduction to the gallery and needs to be visually and orally stunning. Visitors of all ages and abilities should be engaged by it. By watching it, they should discover the main messages of the gallery'
>
> (Alex Werner, 2010, personal correspondence [talk notes: 'Modalities'])

Just as Parry and Sawyer argued, the display is discussed in terms of the entire space, on digital terms. Werner describes the installation in talk notes from a session on 'modalities':

> 'As you enter the gallery, a large immersive sound and light show is in progress. The presentation is taken up on all sides and spreads out across the central area of the gallery. Everything moves at a rapid pace. Images and film are projected onto walls and ceiling. People are shown arriving and settling in the city coming from near and far. Sound helps to build the atmosphere of the presentation… Hopefully, as you stand at the beginning of the gallery, you'll sense that you have reached a key moment in the Museum's display. The changes that begin here will affect the history of London and the world for the next 300 years'.
>
> (Alex Werner, 2010, personal correspondence [talk notes: 'Modalities'])

The printing press installation is not interactive in the general sense of the word, as it is a sound and film installation around an object from the collection. As the zone's 'attractor' installation, the printing press is intended to set the tone of the zone, drawing visitors in and giving an impression of the significance of the press's ability to publish the written work cheaply. As an 'attractor' exhibit the press interactive is not designed with a substantial dwell time in mind, although some of the new wave of museum interactives were. In zone 2 the attractor exhibit is a

miniature cinema with film, showing movement of the city and the advent of cinematic communication. Zone 2 also has a touch-table interactive, which is combined with a water pump from the collection (figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 – The water pump interactive in zone 2 © Museum of London

The pump is enlivened by the touch table that encircles it. It enables visitors to select items floating in the water and learn about the effects of sanitation projects in the city. In this example, and others like it, the object and 'non-object' have become merged to form a new mode of display; and the innovation stems from the their combination of elements. The novelty of the display methods reflected a change behind the scenes of the museum:

> "It's a huge shift for this museum… the interactives and the multimedia approach; I mean we've got digital interactives, we've got mechanical interactives, we've got projections, you know, it's like a million miles away from where the museum was five years ago"
>
> (Frazer Swift, interview, 24th June, 2009).

Members of the musem's directorate were particularly enthusiastic about the new technology in the museum. McIntyre, the then director of public programmes, was less interested in the large 'attractor' displays, and was more enthusiastic about the

kinds of history that digital technology allowed the museum to present, enthusing that digital technology:

> "provides other layers of information that you won't be able to get across in terms of traditional text captions et cetera, and also allows us to provide more multiple voices. So if there is an exhibition you can use film footage or material that presents other views and other interpretations rather than just a single view which a lot of museums only present. So you get multiple perspectives, multiple narratives coming through"
>
> (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008)

The museum's approach to display techniques changed substantially between 2001 and 2010 when the Galleries of Modern London opened. Thurley's anxieties about 'gimmick' interactives were replaced by enthusiasm, as as key senior members of staff were able to advocate the potential for the museum to use digital technology to deliver the Galleries of Modern London's aims (discussed in Chapter 4) to integrate different voices into the museum, and present London's diversity.

Collections Online

The HLF bid had two ambitious digital aims: firstly to use electronic interactives in a new way, and secondly to publish more information online. Following Giddens' 1990 theories of space-time distanciation, the spatial effects of digital and electronic media were another source of anxiety for museum researchers and practitioners suspicious of digital technology (Silverstone, 2002: 172). Museums' web presence represented a source of tension in museum theory: 'why would anyone bother to visit a museum' several publications joke, 'when the objects are online?' ironically suggesting: 'why not just stay home and plug into an information grid?' (see Wallace, 1995: 109; McTavish, 2006: 227; Bayne et al, 2009: 114). Other researchers were more optimistic, and believed that the digital publication of object information 'will be of benefit to all groups and the generation of new knowledge. The general public, who are the paymasters of museums, should also benefit from new technologies' (Fahy, 1995: 89).

The launch of the Galleries of Modern London was intended to coincide with the publication of the Museum of London's *Collections Online* website. *Collections*

Online, which was due to launch in May 2010, sought to publish online records of each of the objects in the galleries. The project aimed to complement the gallery work, providing another layer of interpretation and information for visitors about the objects on display. Each object record was designed to have at least one photograph of the object, with a caption and data drawn from the museum's database, including information about the object's measurements and materials.

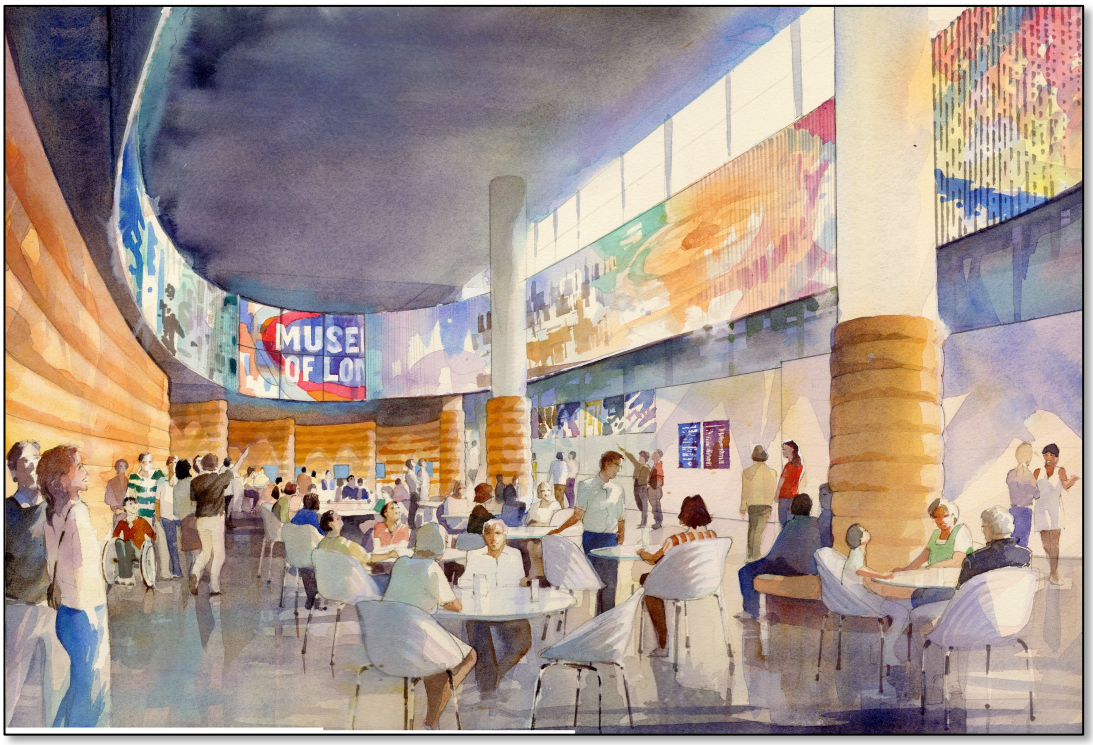

Figure 8.3 – Early design for the information zone and coffee point © Museum of London

Tellingly, the HLF bid described this new digitization project as something visitors would encounter during a traditional museum visit:

> 'The information zone and coffee point are integral to the reconfigured lower floor. Both will increase the length and enjoyment of visitors' stay in the building. The zone is an informal learning space which will serve as the main point of public access to further information about the Museum's collections and about London… The information zone will provide public computer terminals with access to a large variety of electronic information such as catalogues, web links, exhibition multimedia and CD ROMs.'
> (Museum of London, 2004b: 6)

Rather than dipping into the collection from anywhere in the world, as Macdonald's earlier argument stressed, the Museum of London described its digitization project in geographically specific terms, sidestepping the anxieties of commentators anxious that the museum visit be replaced by online access to collections (figure 8.3).

Figure 8.4 – An object record on the *Ceramics and Glass* microsite

Collections Online was not the first time the Museum of London had digitized parts of its collection to put online, and the bid also stressed that the information zone's 'content will initially draw on past and present digitization projects… it will also exploit new and future digitization carried out as part of this project or through other funding programmes' (Museum of London headline document: 6). Previous projects, like *Ceramics and Glass* had published object data and images on a microsite for the museum (figure 8.4). *Collections Online* was differed from previous efforts, because it was focused on objects on display instead of objects in storage. Previous projects had sought to publish records for objects that could not be displayed elsewhere, but *Collections Online* was designed to be referred to before, during or after a visit to the Galleries of Modern London, to provide

supplementary information rather than to replace a visit to the galleries. Curators often relied on *Collections Online* as a way of reassuring themselves that they were providing sufficient information about the objects in the gallery captions (see figure 8.5). For instance Behlen expresses how she experienced the relationship between text in the galleries and online captions when discussing the absence of captions in the Pleasure Gardens display discussed in the previous chapter: "there isn't much you could say in the Pleasure Gardens' guidebook, but I guess you've got collections online for that" (Beatrice Behlen, interview, 30th April 2010).

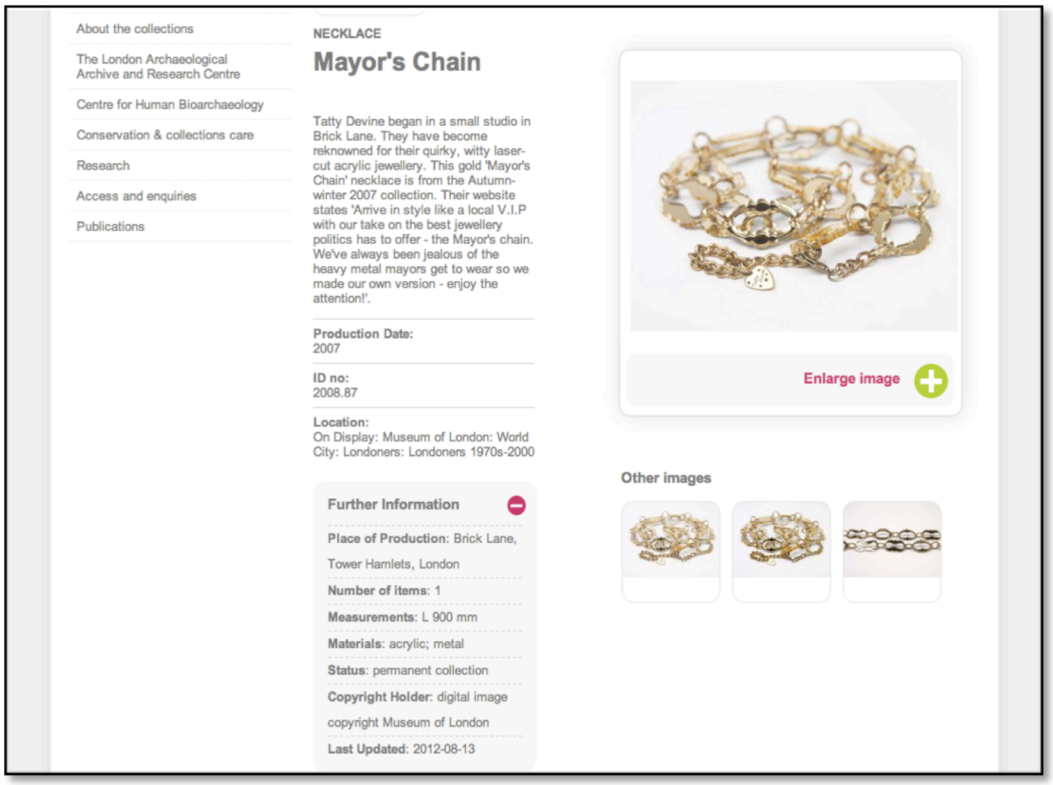

Figure 8.5 - *Collections Online* website showing object 2008.87, 2013

Hetherington and McTavish have both drawn on Quatremere de Quincy's early analysis of museums' ability to remove objects from the contexts, and replace their historic contextual meaning with the context of collection (see de Quincy in Hetherington, 2006: 597 and McTavish, 2006: 232). McTavish draws parallels between digitized museums collections and commercial sales websites, citing similarities between the Virtual Museum of Canada and amazon.com (McTavish, 2006: 241). There are distinct similarities between *Collections Online* and online

fashion retailers like asos.com as online object presentation conventions become established (figure 8.6).

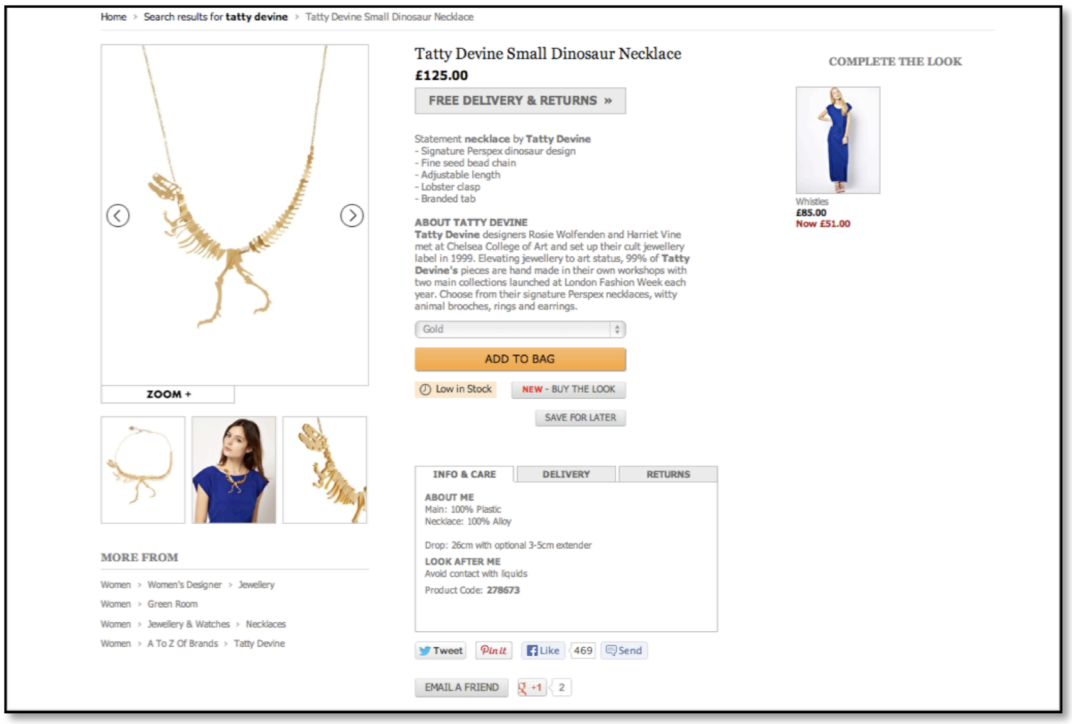

Figure 8.6 – Item for sale through the online retailer asos.com, 2013

Looking at *Collections Online* it's easy to see this de-contextualision happening with digitized collections, a tendency exacerbated by the singular level the collection is presented at (figure 8.5). The museum sought to present objects at a granular level, presenting individual objects wherever possible, rather than as groups of objects made up of components. This was so that the data generated in the project could be extracted for different applications in future, but it presents museum objects in a contextual void. It is the absence of context that Benjamin bemoans in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, stressing that such reproductions 'can place the copy of the original in situations beyond the reach of the original itself' (Benjamin, 1936: 6). The publication of individual object records through the *Collections Online* website has the effect of rendering collections that appear somewhat archaic. McTavish argues 'when digitized the museum is revealed as a non-discursive and random collection of objects' and by searching *Collections Online* via theme or location the museum's collection certainly looks esoteric (McTavish, 2006: 240; figures 8.7 and 8.8).

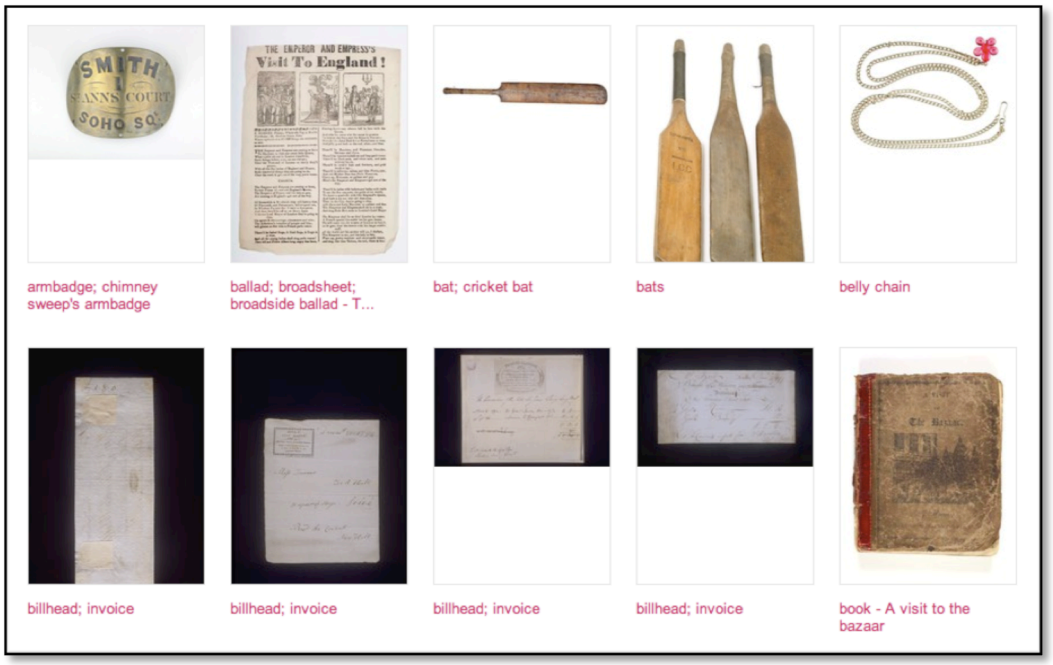

Figure 8.7 – Screengrab of collections online search results for 'soho'

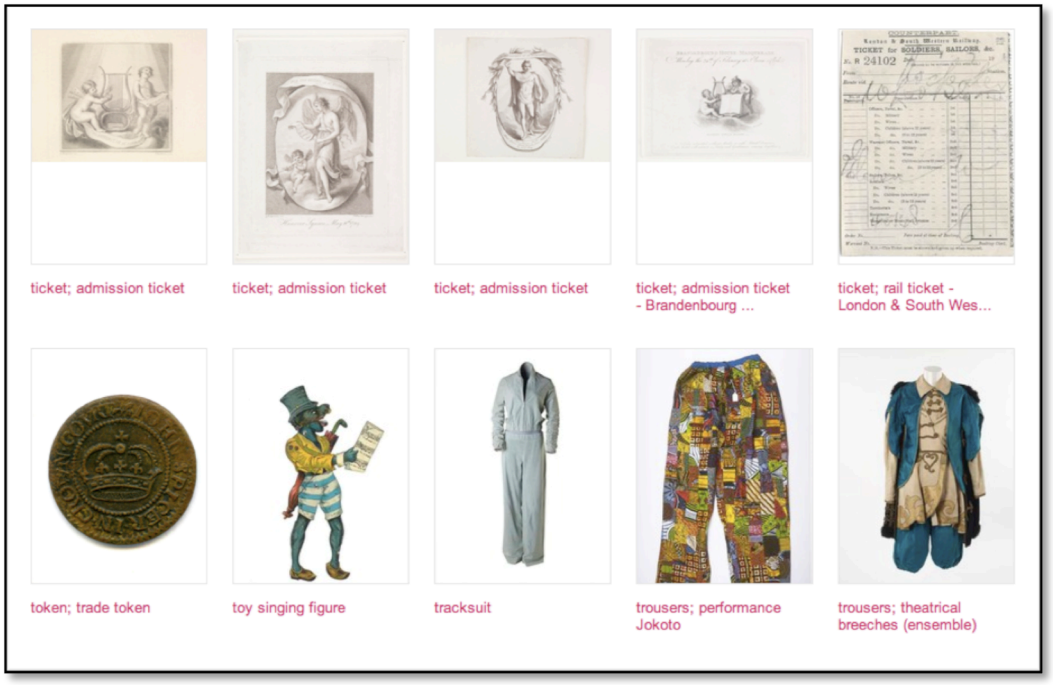

Figure 8.8 – Screengrab of collections online search results for 'Music'

The Museum of London sought to publish object records once they had adhered to a particular standard, and this meant that the production of the Galleries of Modern London was accompanied by a large cataloguing project, to ensure each object's documentation matched the standard. Documentation took place within the

museum's internal database, in MIMSY XG software, so *Collections Online* generated data, as well as publishing it.

Collections Online was intended to extend the museum visit, where it was accessible at the museum's 'information zone' as well as through the website. During the making of the Galleries of Modern London curators used it as a means to provide another layer of object information, given the brevity of gallery captions. The project's commitment to accesibility within the museum building is a response to anxieties over both the digital divide and the continued relevance of museums themselves. The project's focus on objects in the Galleries of Modern London is emblematic of the museum's combination of digital and physical components throughout its redevelopment.

StreetMuseum

The third digital initiative of this chapter, StreetMuseum, did not feature in the museum's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, but was eventually the most discussed of the museum's digital outputs. Developed with the firm Brothers and Sisters from January to May 2010, the app was created as a method of marketing the Galleries of Modern London, and so the release date was scheduled to promote the galleries. StreetMuseum was initially released by the Museum of London in May 2010, a week before the Galleries of Modern London opened to the public. Initially it was released for apple devices as a free download through the iTunes app store. Later a free version for the Android operating system was developed and released.

The app cost the Museum of London £20,000, substantially less than the commercial rate for app development, which was estimated to be nearer £50,000 (Pett, 2011: 1). In marketing terms the cost was roughly equivalent to having fifteen 48-sheet tube posters displayed for a fortnight (CBS outdoor, 2013). StreetMuseum was released as part of a sequence of events put together to build interest and generate coverage in the Galleries of Modern London. This schedule of events is laid out in figure 8.9:

Tom Hunter 'Flashback' exhibition in the museum's foyer.	May 2009

Clore Learning Centre opening	September 2009
Long lead-in media briefing	October 2009
Short story commission, *The Times*	January 2010
Launch of the Galleries of Modern London, to feature previews, launch party and opening weekend	Spring 2010

Figure 8.9 - Table of press events to launch the Galleries of Modern London, taken from research diary notes, 30th April 2009

The museum hoped for 5,000 downloads to promote the new galleries, but in its first month the app was downloaded 65,000 times, and by July 2011 had been downloaded 200,000 times (HLF, 2011: 48). As with *Collections Online*, which was described as part of an 'information zone and coffee point', *StreetMuseum* began with spatial restrictions, and was initially only available in the UK. It was only after a week of requests that the app was made available internationally. Inspired by StreetMuseum's success the Museum of London has subsequently released more apps including StreetMuseum Londinium; Soundtrack to London; and Dickens: Dark London, although none have had quite the same success.

The app is navigated from a map interface. The user may wish to use their phone's GPS facility to orient the map around their position or may simply browse around. The map is marked by 250 pins (figure 8.10). The user can select these to reveal a historic image of the city with a caption (figure 8.11). Some of the images are from paintings, hundreds of years old, others are far more recent: one photograph shows fans standing in Hyde Park to see the Rolling Stones. Much of the Museum of London's impressive collection of paintings and photographs is rarely seen thanks to a lack of hanging space, and this app allows a degree of display.

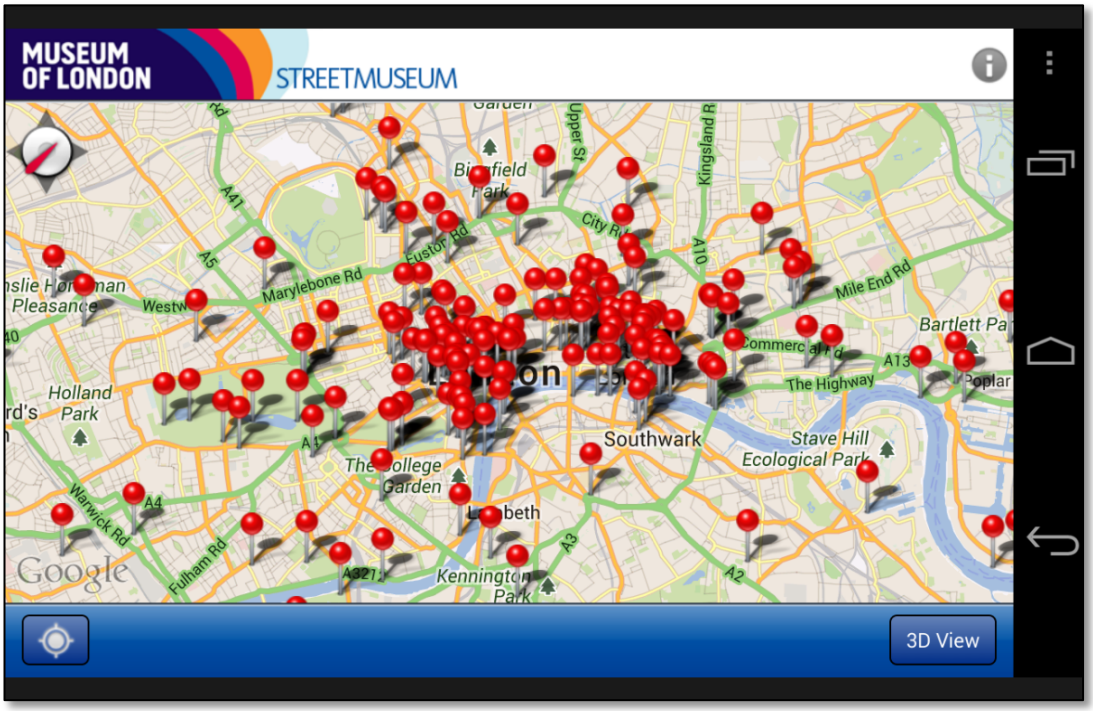

Figure 8.10 – The map interface of the StreetMuseum app

Figure 8.11 – Example of an object page available through the StreetMuseum app

People with capable handsets may choose to combine the historic image with footage from the camera in their phone. By selecting the '3d' setting, users can make the app to overlay the old image onto the feed from their camera. Their phone then positions the image over the camera feed and the resulting images produce something lively yet ghostly, showing how the London's streets have been used (figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12 – Example of image overlaid on camera in StreetMuseum app © Museum of London

The museum's emphasis on social history saw it take an approach that emphasized the peopling of the galleries, and a more spatial telling of London was rendered more prominently through the museum's the marketing efforts, which can be read as a kind of meta-exhibition. The Museum of London's promotional strategy focussed around the phrase 'You are here'. Like StreetMuseum, it emphasized the links between objects, paintings and photographs from the museum's collection with the places of the city itself. Some of the museum's marketing images were more readily recognizable than others, but taken in groups the images depict an unmistakably diverse past. This tube poster, photographed at Tottenham Court Road station, reminds me of the working of StreetMuseum (figure 8.13).

Figure 8.13 – 'You Are Here' Museum of London 48-sheet poster at Tottenham Court Road station, photographed on the 19th May 2010

StreetMuseum is not the first example of museums using their web presence to drive visits, as Bayne *et al* show, museums have used established a precedent for using digitized collections to attract visitors (Bayne *et al*, 1999: 115). StreetMuseum provided a remarkably effective example, generating coverage for the museum that continued for several years (ME:CA in The Guardian, 2013; Buzzfeed UK, 2013).

StreetMuseum offers the museum one method of getting its objects out from behind store walls and into the public arena. In this way, avatars of museum objects find their way out of the museum and back into the city itself. Like the gallery interactives that merge objects with digital interpretation to create new objects, StreetMuseum builds on this kind of enmeshing. The digitized objects published on *Collections Online* recall Benjamin's criticism of the reproduction of artworks: 'Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be'

(Benjamin, 1936: 5). Rather than juxtaposing reproduction with location, like the tube poster from earlier, StreetMuseum overlays the material to create something new, a merger of the present with the past, taking place in real-time. StreetMuseum allows the museum the re-connect these objects with a presence in space that Benjamin cited as significant.

Writing in 1947 Malraux anticipated a museum without walls, which used photography to convey 'modern experience's modernist cultural expression in the present by placing it in the context of the artistic styles of the past' (Hetherington, 2006: 597). Using a map navigation and employing the app user's own smartphone camera adds to this juxtaposition, emphasizing both that 'You are here' and that time has passed. Benjamin stresses the vitality of place, arguing that 'in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced' (Benjamin, 1936: 7). Just as museums prioritize the visual sense, StreetMuseum renders this re-activation visible through the lens of the smartphone camera. By encouraging users to re-photograph the images in the user's own surroundings the app simultaneously encouragers users to depict the process of re-activating the digital reproductions.

The dystopic future of objects and museums competing with virtual online museums and abstract digital interpretation did not occur in the manner critics feared it might, and to date museums' digital activities have remained more conservative than many writers suggested they might. StreetMuseum is typical of these new conservative digital exercises, with its intention to promote rather than replace the museum. There is a growing interest in museums and science centres, towards 'building relationships beyond the site, beyond the visit' (Lewis and Martin, 2006: 109). StreetMuseum offers the potential to do this. Graham Black has argued that the museum visit is not only the activity within the building or site, stressing that it begins far sooner (Black, 2005: 85). Rather than replacing the conventional visit, StreetMuseum is about supplementing the museum's output: prompting the visit, engaging people before and after their visit, and therefore changing the visit itself. StreetMuseum put the museum on the map, not only as a marketing exercise, but as a way of linking collection and place. Like *Collections Online*, StreetMuseum makes collection accessible from other locations, but what

StreetMuseum emphasizes is the important connection between the city and the collections. StreetMuseum re-instates these connections at exactly the time we might expect it to have left them behind in a haze of globalized access, illustrating the relevance of connection between digital material and physical place.

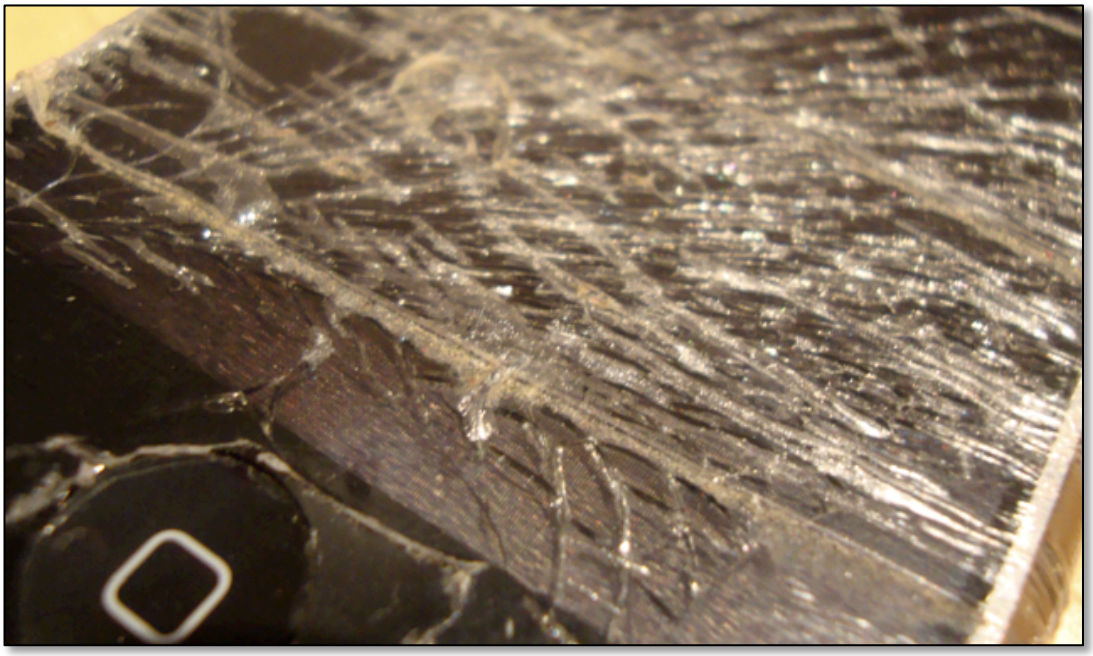

Figure 8.14 – Non-object

I was very excited about this radical retrenchment until the digital and the physical collided in an all-too literal sense (figure 8.14). Digital technology is not non-object: its material qualities are all too real. The shattered screen of my knackered handset reminded me that the StreetMuseum's images were behind glass, rendered as visual objects effectively in exactly the same way as the objects I had helped and seen installed in the cases of the museum's more traditional displays. However radical I might argue the re-trenchment of digitization is, it is carried out in a conservative manner: public history, encased in glass in programmes defined by the museum. The smashed phone reminded me why we still need the walled museums. The technology is object and it isn't open to all.

Figure 8.15 – The Museum of London's logo

Digital hybridity in city museums

In 2007 Parry argued that museums and the digital have begun to 'find their fit' and become less anxious about the 'authenticity' of digitized objects (Parry, 2007: 138). Digital activities have become even more important in museums over the last few years, as museums have undertaken more digital experimentation. There has been a massive increase in research and in visitors' expectations, and this has been matched to some extent by increased investment in museums' digital activities. These activities have seen museums' digital practice adapt, develop and change greatly since the Galleries of Modern London, *Collections Online* and StreetMuseum launched. This chapter has focused on research contemporary with the three initiatives, as much of today's contemporary research looks at the projects happening in museums more recently.

Hetherington suggested that the whole city has become museumified, but StreetMuseum is largely restricted within the reaches of a zone 1 London travelcard. However, StreetMuseum, which is now available all over the world after requests from the public, is just one of the circuits of museum narrative. I would propose an idea of the Museum of London as co-centric space: at its core is the built museum at London Wall, beyond that its sister site at Docklands and the storage site in Hackney; wrapped around that is StreetMuseum's larger locale and beyond StreetMuseum lies the museum's international circuits: its online presence, its books and publications, its travelling exhibitions and object loans. The museum's 2008-designed logo was partially inspired by the growth of the city, but perhaps also illustrates something of these waves of narrative circuits (figure 8.15).

In fact earlier marketing campaigns for the museum had speculated about the boundaries of the museum. The 2001 *London: World City* marketing campaign extended the museum frame around the city in a different way: by putting museum guides/guards next to famous historic parts of London, museumifying the city in a different way (figure 8.16).

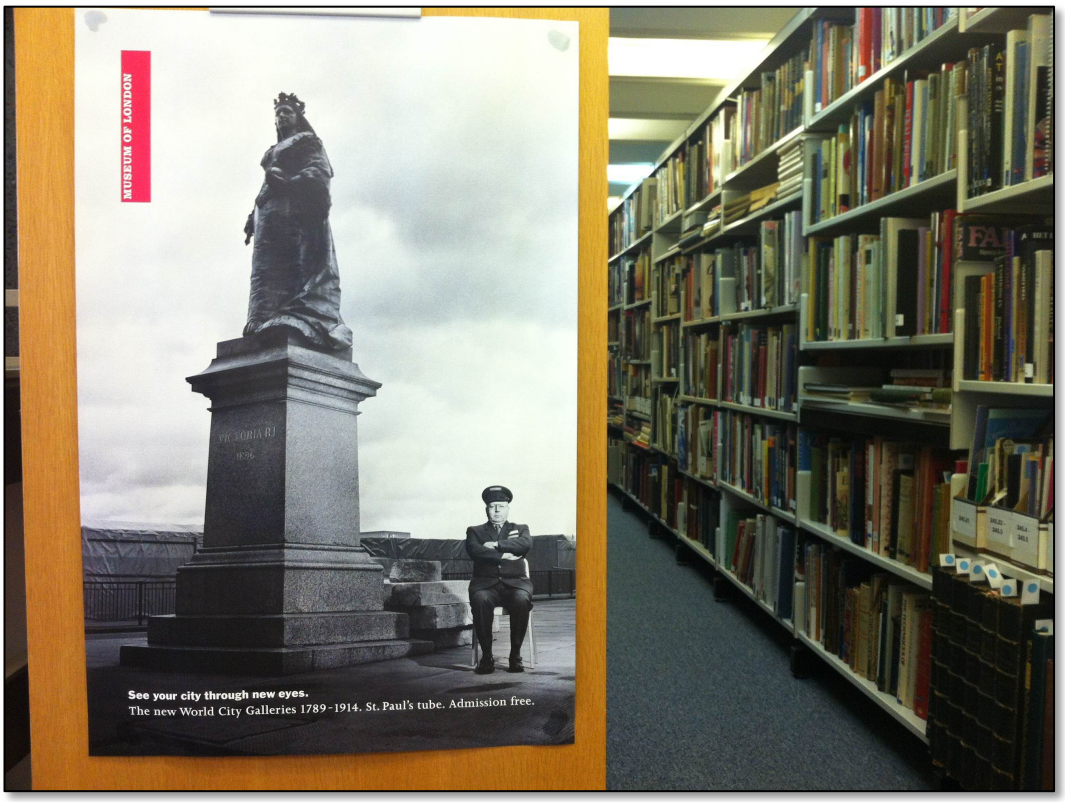

Figure 8.16 –Museum of London marketing campaign for *London World City*, 2001 © Jason Webber

The sense of continuity at the city museum is strong enough to carry over to digital initiatives. 'Virtual museums simultaneously undermine and reinforce the traditional boundaries of museums' argues McTavish, stressing that museums are not inherently altered by new technology (McTavish, 2006: 230.) Although McTavish was describing virtual recreations of museums, like the Rijkmuseum's 2005-6 website, which now finds echoes in the Google Art Project's work, this chapter has shown that her argument can be extended to encompass a broader range of digital museum activity. Digital provides new approaches to museums, but requires staff enthusiasm and funding if it is to be accepted and adopted. Just like

the interactives in the galleries, StreetMuseum and *Collections Online* work with the museum, integrated into its work. It isn't new versus old, or object versus non-object, and digital intiatives have strengthened the museum's commitment to its core collection. 'To communicate' Fahy suggests, museums 'must have something to say, some information we want to transmit, and to do this, we need to return to the heart and lifeblood of the museum, the object and its associated information' (Fahy, 1995: 94). Not only have recent digital projects seen museums re-connect their collections with different locations, but they have also drawn heavily for their outputs on the objects within their collections.

Digital technology was integrated into the Galleries of Modern London, in an innovative museological application. Looking at this in a favourable light allows the argument that 'the museum has always been an information communication technology' and 'if, as we argue, information communication technology is what museums do, the adoption of digital media should not require a conceptual leap' (Parry and Sawyer, 2005: 42). Bayne et al are critical of the extent to which museums perceive their digital activities as a means to an end, rather than a valuable end in itself:

> 'The starting point might be the [digitized] object, but the end point is the physical museum and the learning event which takes place in the presence of its 'real' counterpart. Such a stance leaves little space for consideration of the ways in which museums might engage in new and potentially disruptive forms of knowledge construction and learning from digital collections'
> (Bayne et al, 1999: 115)

The same concerns remain, as museums are now beginning to consider the digital on its own terms. During the Galleries of Modern London work, members of the Museum of London's directorate saw digital as a resource for the physical museum, and were enthusiastic about it as a resource for the physical museum, rather than entirely on its own terms.

This process had implications for the museum's sense of its own authority:

> "It's moved the museum on tremendously in terms of the organization, in terms of its creativity and its willingness to challenge itself and to break out of that traditional curatorial voice. Using technology to enable – no, forcing

the museum to reassess that curatorial perspective that traditionally you get."

(Fraser Swift, interview, 24th June, 2009)

Although one of the Galleries of Modern London's digital interactives recorded visitor responses to multiple-choice questions, the majority of these digital initiatives have not disrupted the museum's model of its own authority. Just as the Galleries of Modern London incorporated multiple perspectives to deliver and authoritative history of the city, the three digital projects in this chapter maintained the museum's authority. The digital museum is still recognizable from a 1992 quote which argued that:

> 'Many so-called interactive touch-screen computers, for example, simply allow the visitor to select from a predetermined set of options. Far from providing the possibilities for experimentation, such interactive devices may merely serve to create the illusion of choice.'
>
> (Strathern quoted in Barry, 1999: 105).

The three examples from this chapter all represent different functions: the gallery interactives represent aspirations towards an immersive, engaging museum environment that replicates some of the city's mixture of times and registers. *Collections Online* portrays a museum committed to public access, using ambitious internal working practices and adapting collections management procedures to provide a new public resource. StreetMuseum builds on the strengths of the public history and heritage projects, linking the museum with the city it cannot encase. The physical museumification that Hetherington and Sandweiss describe as making cities more like museums underpins StreetMuseum, which conveys the experience of being in a city like London (Hetherington, 2006: 602; Sandweiss, 2009: 41). These overlaid projects suggest a museum that envisions its role as representing the city in a structured version of its own venacular, still trying both to evoke and explain the city. The museum remains custodian, retaining authority and expertise, and although later digital projects would explore the collection and reception of digital objects, in 2010 the museum remained committed to public dissemination of narratives about London.

Through the three projects discussed in this chapter the Museum of London showed how digital practice could become part of city museum work. Neither wholly new nor old, the projects each showed a way to combine the digital and physical in a meaningful way, far removed from the concerns that circulated in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since the 1990s digital museum practice has developed in convergent ways. Digital hardware is now part of museum displays, this time collected as objects, like the Lord Mayor's Blackberry, displayed in the Galleries of Modern London (figure 8.17). Even intangible born-digital material is no longer considered non-object: the Museum of London now employs a Digital Curator, responsible for collecting born-digital objects about London, like digital video, installations, software and social media.

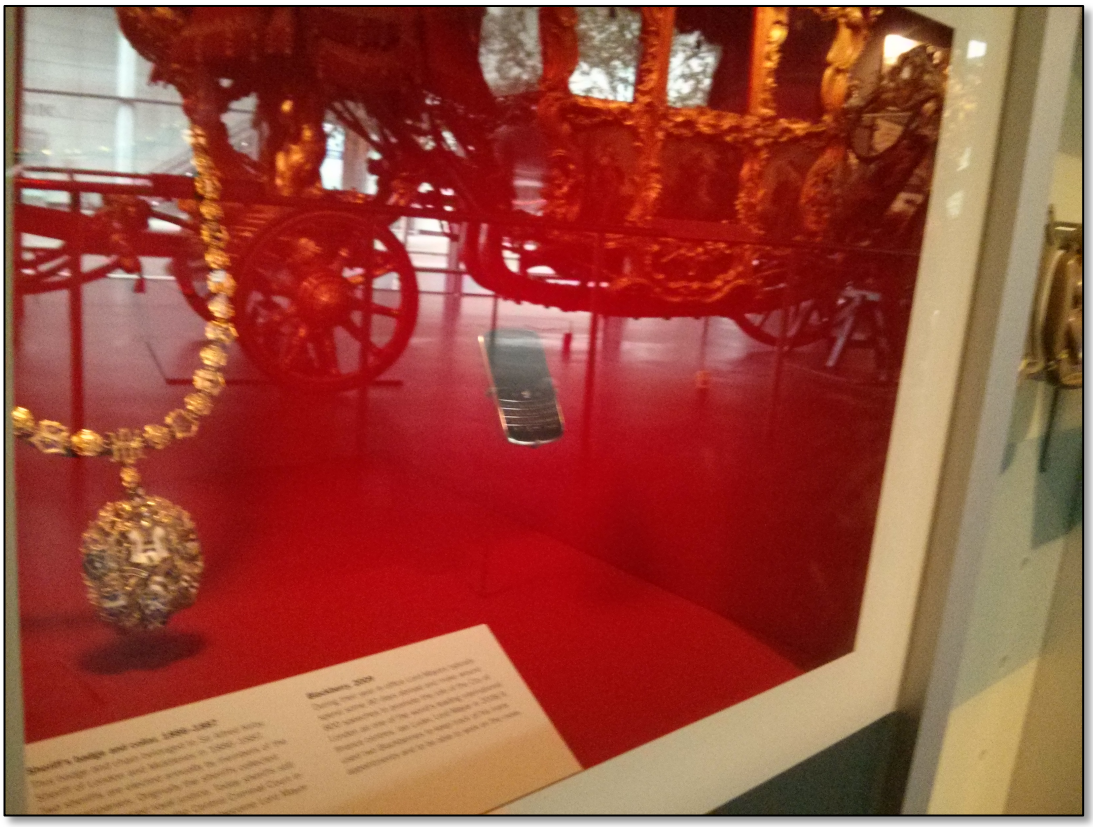

Figure 8.17 – The Lord Mayor's Blackberry in the Galleries of Modern London

When the Museum of London opened, in 1976, it was a new museum but made from the remains of two previous institutions: the Guildhall Museum in the city and the London Museum, in Kensington. The new museum offered innovative displays

like Victorian Walk, the re-created street scene. The scene was a palimpsest, it was full of objects inherited from pre-existing, parent institutions. When the Museum of London project was not granted a compulsory purchase order over the Ironmonger's Hall the shape of the museum was altered to accommodate the remaining building. The new does not always supersede the old in cities, old and new preservation and heritage projects co-exist alongside one another, and their assemblage creates new forms. Digital technologies propose a way to change how we think about the institutions, which themselves are always moving, time travellers, encased within their walls.

The 'proper form' of the city museum that was expressed by the digital museum work that accompanied the Galleries of Modern London showed the city museum as a hybrid institution. The digital projects created hybrid forms of the museum; through interactives, digitised objects and apps that stretched across the city the museum expressed a model of the city museum that occupied the digital and physical world silmultaneously. Given the history of city museums discussed in chapter 3, which stressed the city museum has always needed to balance its position as being both of and about the city, this hybridity is characteristic of the city museum. Analysis of the Galleries of Modern London's digital projects finds the Museum of London revelling in the same overlapping relationship between the city and the museum that Mumford had identified in the mid twentieth century; playing with the idea of the museum without walls and experimenting with its presence beyond its building (see Chapter 3). The city museum has always functioned with a degree of hybridity, making it the ideal site for adopting and experimenting with the relationship between the digital and physical aspects of museum work.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

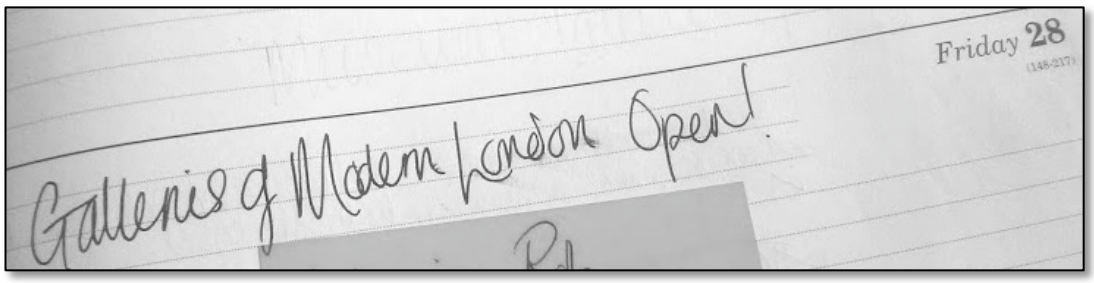

Figure 9.1 – Diary entry, 28th May 2010

The Galleries of Modern London opened to the public at 10am on the 28th May 2010, a month after the family and friends preview discussed in the prologue. By this point almost everything was in place: the objects were installed, the cases were closed, the interactives had been tested, the sound levels were set, the lighting had been adjusted, and the café in the Sackler Hall was stocked. At 6pm on the 27th May there was a grand opening of the galleries, and I spent the working day of the 27th observing the preparations and writing my research diary:

> I went down the galleries at half pest ten and it was a funny space to be in. There didn't feel like a panic. Equipment was still all around. No senior curators were around, apart from Beatrice who I helped out – she was putting a couple of mannequins into the tailors' shop in Victorian Walk.
>
> The team from Elbow was running through the interactives, and there were a couple of problems with the projections whilst they were working on them – these are resolved now and working fine. There were odds and ends of equipment that needed to be moved on; mats and ladders and the front was off a few cases. Conservators were dusting cases.
>
> London Look is the last open case: they have been replacing the caption rail to reflect Alexander McQueen's death. Right now temporary captions are being put up for the Rhinebeck Panorama, and since this morning temporary images have adorned the Brixton riots section.
>
> I've been trying to shadow people around as they work. Cathy and Alex were very quiet today and I haven't seen Beverley. I walked around with

Alex at about eleven o'clock as he did a final check. He was worried about doors and mats, and anxious that the Rhinebeck Panorama get a caption – "it's one of our most important objects".

At 3 o'clock I went around with Cathy - we met a team going round in another direction doing a final de-snag. The museum's tallest curator has been called in to dust the inside of the zone 2 costume case - easier than using a ladder inside the case. The cases really are so physical and awkward. I asked Cathy how she felt and she said she had a headache, perhaps because she was tense. Every now and again Cathy would say something like "it's coming together" or "it's looking good". She could still see where captions were missing. When I went round with Alex some of the caption fascias weren't installed over the backlights in the city gallery - literally a glaring absence. There are a great many more captions than there were on family and friends day, and more than there were on the staff thank-you event. I hadn't realised how many weren't up yet, which is in some ways a relief.

At about half four I went and walked around the galleries again. Whilst Sackler Hall was filled with people and activity and bustling florists and events staff and people coming to look at hiring the space and cleaners and bar staff and other people delivering and unpacking, the rest of the museum was quiet. Ladders had been removed, trolleys taken away. None of the last minute removing installation equipment we had on the family and friends launch. Zone 2 was so quiet. It struck me today how large zones 1 and 2 are, how much space there is in them. And how quiet they both were, how empty. They'll obviously never be as quiet as before the interactives were installed but they were calm. I felt sort of nostalgic when I stood there, knowing I wouldn't ever stand there alone again. It really is a museum now, and though there are things still to finish (capital concerns audio for one) I don't think that anyone will really notice. Downstairs a museum has been made and it's not that it has taken me by surprise exactly, but to get a calm moment there gave me time for it to hit me. It's strange this work.
(Research diary, 27th May 2010)

Figure 9.2 – Expanding City, Galleries of Modern London, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

Figure 9.3 – People's City, Galleries of Modern London, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

Figure 9.4 - World City, Galleries of Modern London, Museum of London, 2010 © Museum of London

Figure 9.5 - Early designs for what became the World City, 2004 © Museum of London

The finished galleries, presented to the public on the 28th May 2010 are shown in figures 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4. The key themes that the conclusion will now address reflect the questions established in the introduction to the thesis. The introduction outlined three central questions that run through the research. The first question was about the variety of ways that the compelling connections between cities and museums have been expressed, asking how is creativity expressed in the processes of making city museums? The second key question the introduction raised was the significance of understanding museums as a material environment. Would it be helpful to give greater prominence to an understanding of museums as being more than textual? The third question that the introduction raised was the process of producing, and reproducing, representations of the city in museums, to discuss how the concepts of agency and authority intersected. In what ways is authority is enacted and expressed in gallery redevelopment? To respond to these questions the conclusion will now discuss the interaction between concepts and practices in the making of the museum; the relationship between authority and agency; the 'agency' of the museum's collections and material context; the significance of the museum's built form and finally the relationship between the galleries and the digital. Having covered these the conclusion will then draw these points together to explore how the Museum of London curated the global city.

Concept and practice

The work that took place on the last day before the galleries is typical of much of the work occurring during the process of installation, with checking, adding material and changing captions. Small changes would continue on the galleries in the weeks after they opened, as captions were added and cases were adjusted. These small changes were occurring at the end of a long process, but serve to demonstrate one example of the ways that ideas continue to mutate as they are worked through during gallery production.

As well as the smaller changes, more substantial changes have also taken place during the museum's work. Figure 9.5 shows one early design for the 'World City'. Cathy Ross explains how the gallery was first imagined:

> "Instead of costume cases we were going to have what we called 'reactive exhibits'; in the 50s it was going to be a cafe interior, in the 60s it was going to be a market stall, and then a parade, none of which is there any more. The only thing sort of left of that is the Chinese community phoenix. The idea was we wanted to do something in the 80s and 90s about London coming out on the streets and not hiding diversity away, so we were doing Notting Hill Carnival, China Town, and Chinese dragons and all of that and it was going to be – a bit like with the war – an immersive space where you go in and you get lots of stuff."
>
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 19th February 2010).

Although the idea of a chronological progression remained, the mode of representation changed substantially during the making of the gallery.

The process of work altered the ideas, and the museum itself shaped what could be achieved:

> "When we were doing this it was all in abstract without really mapping it onto the space and once it was mapped onto the space it was just so clear that all these big things would have taken up the entire gallery... Basically at this stage we were doing a lot more on the years 1950 to 2000 and less about today. There was a whole bit on life chances as well which was all about the coming of the NHS, social housing, ministry of health housing manual, there was the Isledon House Kitchen, that would have been another walk-in. We would have had all of those but we just didn't have the time."
>
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 19th February 2010).

Figure 9.5 shows this walk through gallery, depicting the sequence that Ross described. The elements of sequence, of costume cases, and the idea of increasingly diverse Londoners not only being present in, but taking ownership of, public space remains. In 2012 Lohman argued that the Museum of London "is a museum of identity" and nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in World City, where clothing and costume stand in as representations of social and cultural change (Jack Lohman, interview, 13th February 2012). In the finished gallery this is less about the environment than the early ideas, and the narrative is represented primarily through costume. World City now shows a promenade of London styles; from a

child's coronation-print dress to a tracksuit Ms Dynamite wore to collect a Brit award. The museum never did collect Pete Doherty's hat.

By working through the early ideas about how the zone covering 1950-present day London would look, the museum's representation of the city changed. This thesis has discussed other examples of how museum work affects the museum's representation of city, such as in chapter 4, where the chapter discussed how the museum's decision to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding formalized and structured its planning process. Chapter 5 showed how decisions about specific objects were made, and how these decisions developed and changed, exploring the structures and kinds of agency that influenced the museum. In chapter 6 the thesis explored how the Galleries of Modern London were peopled, reflecting on how decisions about working with London's Chinese community and how this was mediated through museum work and the material qualities of the museum and its collection. Chapter 7 showed how the museum was influenced by strands of academic research and how this was expressed in the development of the Pleasure Garden display. Diverse processes of museum work shape the museum's representation of the city, and chapter 8 explored how digital projects in museums fit in this context of change. This thesis has discussed how ideas about how to represent London's history have changed and developed, and explored how this has been informed by the processes of museum work.

Agency and authority

A variety of types of museum work altered the museum's representation of London, and individuals exercised agency over this process in different ways. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 all discussed how individuals, from directors through to project participants, shaped and influenced the museum's approach to representing the city. Whilst Simon Thurley, the Museum of London's previous director, expressed forceful ideas about how the museum should represent the city, Lohman was quick to downplay his influence on the galleries. Lohman argued that he delegated responsibility to key staff:

> "The secret is that you charge people… I said do this and find out, be the expert – be the world expert on the subject matter – and if you've got

> brilliant staff they will make it happen. You guide them, you push them, remind them about the issues of representation, of equality, of equal partnerships et cetera and you allow them to do it."
>
> (Jack Lohman, interview, 13th February 2010)

Members of staff at the museum only mentioned Lohman's direct influence on the galleries in isolated examples, and did not express Lohman's broader vision for the city museum to me in interviews or conversations. Lohman's sporadic direct suggestions for exhibits were recognised by members of staff, who began using a colloquial name for these interventions within the museum, referring to them as "the Jack factor". This thesis has shown how Lohman's influence extended beyond the series of specific display suggestions. By 'guiding' 'pushing' and 'reminding' the staff working on the galleries Lohman was able to influence the creation of the Galleries of Modern London in line with his own agenda. In time Lohman expressed his vision for the city museum, in his 2008 article *The Prospect of the City Museum*. This thesis has shown how the ideas in the Galleries of Modern London correpospond with Lohman's ideas, suggesting ways that Lohman influenced the museum, and in some cases, where the process of making the galleries shaped Lohman's ideas.

Apart from Lohman, three people were frequently cited as having influenced the galleries: "The look and the approach [of the Galleries of Modern London] were shaped by three individuals, and they are Cathy [Ross], Fraser [Swift] and Gail [Symington]" (Alex Werner, interview, 25th September 2012). The three members of staff represented the collaboration of three aspects of museum work: "three-pronged ownership, of content, design and interpretation" as Swift argued, explaining that "we've been the consistent thing all the way through, shaping the whole project" (Swift, interview, 24th June 2009). It was within this overarching framework that individual curators were able to enact their own agency:

> "Individual curators were set 'this is the space' and… we worked with the teams and we were following the model we were given. And obviously some of the thematic elements are personal to us so that's why the galleries have turned out the way they have. Some of them have turned out because we had to investigate that theme, so it's a bit of the personal curators in the spaces but there's quite a lot of the overall form that was imposed."

(Alex Werner, interview, 25th September 2012)

Chapter 4 discussed how curators used the material in the collections in the process of constructing a narrative. The Galleries of Modern London's lead curators each took their own approach to this, with some working from the message to the objects, and some working from the collection to the narrative:

> "Alex very much starts from the message and then goes to see if there's something in the collection, whereas I start with seeing what we've got in the collection and create the message from the collections"
>
> (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008).

Both approaches raised discrepancies with the overall framework, and in Chapter 5 the thesis explored what happened when the individual curators' authority contradicted the overall form of structure and planning process. Curators undertook several kinds of negotiation with the overall form devised by Cathy, Gail and Fraser. Some of these negotiations were overt challenges, as when changes were requested, and some, like the addition of extra mannequins the day before opening, were covert expressions of curatorial agency.

Material agency

Aside from organisational and individual agency, the museum and its collections exercised an influence through its nature as a material context. During the making of the Galleries of Modern London the museum's building performed as a palimpsest, its spaces re-written for a new representation of London's history. Exploring the power of objects and aspects of curatorial play, this thesis examined the significance of the museum's materiality.

Chapter 5 explored how the museum's specific material context affects the objects in its collections, arguing that there is a significant symbolic change that occurs when objects are put into museum cases. These ideas were brought up again in chapter 6, which described the interaction and disruption of different forms of human and non-human agency on the installation of objects into zone 1's underfloor cases. Using my position as a participant, which I discussed in chapter 2, I explored the nature of the museum's materiality and the symbolic consequences of putting objects into their cases, in which they entered into the museum's sesnsory hierarchy and took on a new role in the museum's narrative.

The thesis explored the composition of these narratives in chapter 4. The objects themselves relied on a complex composition of surrounding signs, which were built into the museum's new spaces. Lohman understood the significance of the museum context in adding meaning to an object that might otherwise be rendered only visual: "very often objects, they say they're about storytelling but they're not they're just an object on display. Taken in the context of everything else there is a story, there is a narrative, but just on its own it's beautiful" (Jack Lohman, interview, 13th February 2010). The need to interpret objects for the public was key in the making of the Galleries of Modern London, in order to disrupt the museum's tendency only to convey an object's visual significance (Alpers, 1990: 30). Curators consciously worked to disrupt museums' aestheticizing processes, arguing that "if you want to get your message across then you have to interpret the objects. You can't just say 'this is a so-and-so, isn't it pretty?" (Beverley Cook, interview, 4th December 2008). The museum's new interpretative planning approach to the Galleries of Modern London shaped this work, prompting curators to collaborate with designers and the museum's learning team, and to "talk about learning and learning styles" in ways that hadn't happened at the museum before (Fraser Swift, interview, 24th June 2009). By studying how the museum produced its representation of London, this thesis has made the argument that museums can be discussed as a place and process. Following Lorimer's critique of non-representational theory, which stressed the usefulness of adopting terms that suggest the necessary expansion of theory, this thesis has argued that museums should be understood as 'more-than' textual (Lorimer, 2005: 84).

The significance of the building

The museum's building and infrastructure influenced the work that was undertaken for the Galleries of Modern London. As Cathy Ross argues, "with museums it's all about the building and the whole experience of what goes into places" (Cathy Ross, interview, 5th May 2010). Examining the museum work of producing the galleries within the museum's existing premesis enabled this research to explore the ways that the museum's building was re-written and how it contributed to a representation of London.

Describing his arrival at the museum, Lohman recalled that his "inheritance was a difficult building that didn't work physically" (Lohman, interview, 13th February 2012). Lohman was not the first Museum of London director unhappy with the building, and by the time of Lohman's appointment several schemes to alter the museum's London Wall building had already been developed, including the plan to make the lower-ground level floor of the museum into public galleries that Chapter 4 discussed. This sense of dysfunction had been anticipated by an architectural reviewer in 1977, who expressed his concern that: 'the building will remain relatively unchanged long after the exhibition layout has been drastically amended' (Brawne, 1977: 28). The building layout did not only remain the same, but influenced how the exhibition layout developed. Chapter 4 discussed how an entire redevelopment of the building was deemed too expensive, and explored how the museum planned the Galleries of Modern London into its existing building. This time the museum took the lead from the building when designing the new gallery structure, and in early bid documents the museum stressed to funders that: 'the shape of the story is in part determined by the physical shape of the building and the need to make maximum use of the World City infrastructure and the Victorian Walk' (GB: 20). The building provided the museum with the shape of the three zones, but it also provided a constraint, as designers came up against the difficulties of using the shapes of the space. The building required creativity in order to be re-worked, and this thesis has discussed how the agency of curators, designers and directors has been mediated by the boundaries of the building.

Looking forwards the building continues to present problems for the museum, and the Galleries of Modern London themselves embody part of this difficulty, as Alex Werner argues the galleries are expensive to make changes to: "because it's bespoke for the space, that's the problem" (Alex Werner, 25th September 2012). This thesis has explored the ways that the museum was able to work within and around its building, and chapter 8 explored the museum's movement into digital projects beyond its own walls. The StreetMuseum app allowed the museum scope to extend its representation of London beyond its building, suggesting ways that the museum might develop in the future.

The impact of the digital

Chapter 8 explored how the Museum of London's digital projects were connected with the 'perambulatory networks and narratives' of museum space (Silverstone, 2002: 173). The digital work of museums caused disquiet in the 1990s and early 2000s, but during the development of the Galleries of Modern London the prevalent attitude to digital museum projects became more positive.

The Galleries of Modern London embraced new digital display technology, combining digital installations with objects in the collection to produce new kinds of exhibit. Beyond the gallery the museum was also able to use the web to provide more information about exhibits:

> "Collections Online worked, because my brother said at one point 'oh that football programme – I've a complaint! You should tell us who won the game', so we went to collections online and to my joy there was actually quite a long caption on it"
>
> (Cathy Ross, interview, 5th May 2010)

The publication of digitized objects and captions online was used as a means to justify the brevity of gallery captions, and at the time Collections Online was linked with the objects on display. Since the galleries opened the museum has published a further 85,000 object records, but the initial site was focussed on the objects displayed in the Galleries. The museum's commitment to place during its digital activities extended to the app StreetMuseum, which overlaid historic objects into the urban landscape.

The digital projects that accompanied work on the Galleries of Modern London contribute to an understanding of the city museum as an hybrid institution. The museum's new digital projects are balanced between the physical and the digital, using traits from each in hybrid forms. This combination of elements is characteristic of city museums. Chapter 3 discussed a series of dichotomies that city museums have had to respond to throughout their history, for example where to strike a balance between whether to evoke or explain the city; and how to architecturally inhabit the place the city museum is meant to represent. The use and impact of digital, and how it is integrated with place and location, will perhaps add

to the list of dichotomies that city museums, as museums of place, will need to negotiate in future with the growing significance of the mobile web.

Curating the Global City in the Galleries of Modern London

In her influential 1994 essay, *A Global Sense of Place*, Massey argued that a 'sense of place, an understanding of 'its character'' could 'only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond. A progressive sense of place would recognize that, without being threatened by it. What we need, it seems to me, is a global sense of the local, a global sense of place' (Massey, 1994: 263). As a museum of place the Museum of London needed to move beyond the idea of London expressed by the Roman city wall, and express London's connections with other places, while retaining a sense of its local distinctiveness.

Under Lohman's leadership, the Museum of London's staff embraced a dynamic understanding of place that responded to models of place expressed by figures like Massey. Massey argued that place should be understood as having 'many identities (or its full identity is a complex mix of all these)' and suggested that 'looked at in this way, absolutely not introverted' (Massey, 1994: 262). In a talk in 2005, Ross reflected Massey's approach in her expression of the aims of the Galleries of Modern London, describing how: 'we want to look at London as a city looking outwards rather than inwards' (Ross, 2006: 40). This was a substantial shift for the Museum of London, as only five years before its director had espoused a more limited response to what Massey called 'the increasing uncertainty about what we mean by 'places' and how we relate to them' (Massey, 1994: 258). In his review of Ackroyd's London, Thurley explained that Ackroyd 'is not the first London writer to be confounded by a geographical definition of the metropolis' and used the opportunity to pose the Museum of London's approach under his leadership: 'The Museum of London does not attempt such a definition - sometimes we include Croydon in London, sometimes we do not' (Thurley, 2000).

In the Galleries of Modern London the Museum of London showed it had come a long way from the Guildhall Museum's early City of London remit, and even from Thurley's approach, but it did so with caution. In the headline document of the

museum's HLF bid, the museum set out its aim to 'build up a new family tree for London, one that enables present and future generations to see themselves in it and understand how the past has shaped the present' (Museum of London, HD, 2004b: 3). The bid stressed the need to reflect London's 'culturally diverse population', arguing that 'minority ethnic Londoners account for 29% of the population' (HD: 4). Massey had stressed 'places do not have single, unique identities; they are full of internal conflict' and suggested these multiple identities as a way of understanding place, but representing the city as a network of social relations raised questions for the museum (Massey, 1994: 263). When developing the Galleries of Modern London, Ross questioned how the museum's visitors might respond to such a representation: 'if visitors come expecting a familiar story about their own ancestors – say, poor families in the 19th-century East End, will they be upset to find a story about somebody else's ancestors – say, poor families in 1920s India?' (Ross, 2006: 41). The tensions between the local and the global were something the museum hoped to navigate whilst presenting a celebratory narrative of London's history, and like the other negotiations the museum balanced, its approach was shaped by the intellectual context and concerns of its moment in time.

City museums are contingent, and the Galleries of Modern London do much to reflect contemporary agendas and concerns. Looking at the work of producing the Galleries has made some of these relationships and influences clear. The Galleries of Modern London are of their time, reflecting the agency of the individuals who produced them, the technology they had at their disposal and something of the social and political climate in which they found funding.

All city museums work to represent their place, and in doing so represent their time, and the Museum of London's 2010 Galleries of Modern London are no different. The museum's commitments to displaying diversity, to linking the past and present, and to conveying London's social and cultural geographies were contingent on the project's broader political and intellectual context, as well as the museum's own previous experiments. The Galleries of Modern London adopted one of the key ideas of its time to do this, drawing on the contemporary intellectual interest in the processes of change to re-examine and re-display London's past.

The museum self-consciously set out to move away from the "chapter" based approach of the existing galleries (Darryl McIntyre, interview, 29th October 2008). This commitment to focusing on how the city changed, rather than presenting a series of historic cameos, was an approach of its moment, reflecting a directorate-level commitment to creating innovative and pleasurable displays. By focusing on how and why London changed, rather than evoking a series of historic set pieces, the Galleries of Modern London broke from the museum's previous representations such as the old iteration of *Victorian Walk*. The printing press and water pump interactives discussed in chapter 8 show how the museum sought to re-interpret parts of its collection, and highlight the impact these innovations had on London's historic geography. Drawing on material objects which expressed their own material agency to affect change in London, the museum's choices reflected its own nature as a material, rather than purely textual, narrative.

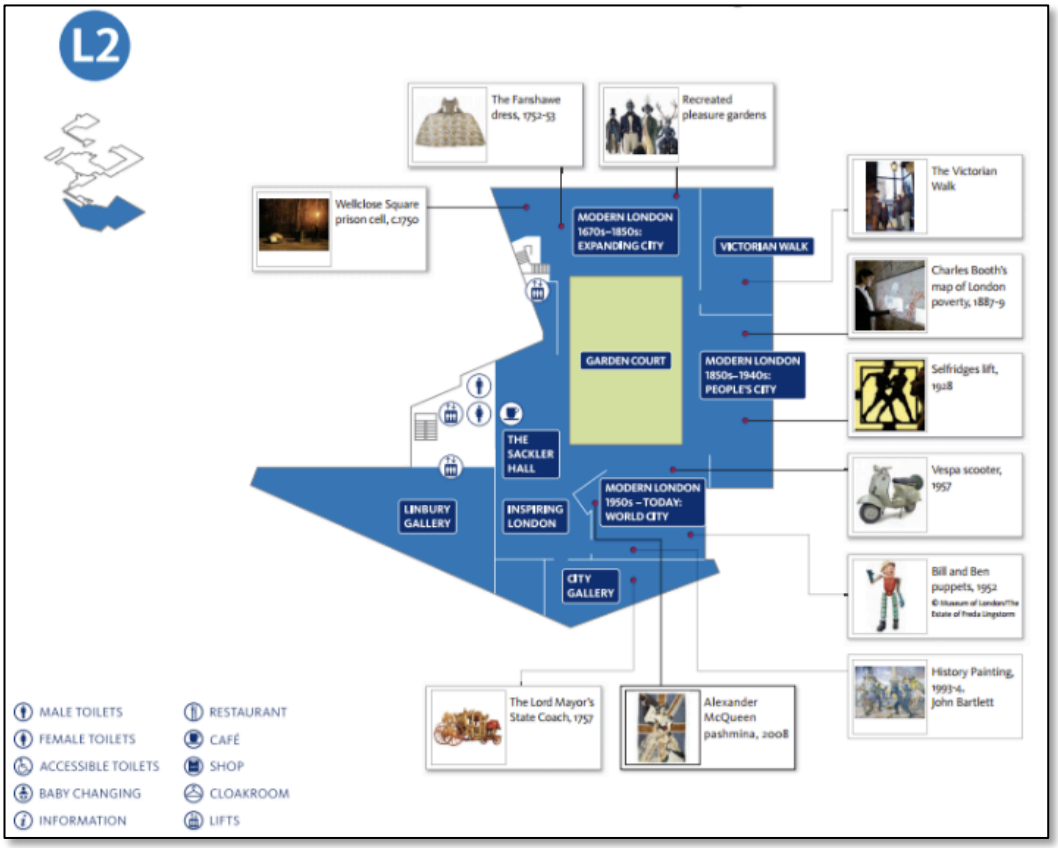

Figure 9.6 - Plan of lower galleries, 2010 © Museum of London

The museum's response to the challenges of representing London was a collective and complex one. Rather than analysing the galleries and deducing what the

museum might have intended to say about London, this research has explored museum work as a process. Studying the work of making the galleries changes the way that they are understood. Returning to the Gallery Plan at the end of the thesis brings new meaning to it, as it's possible to understand how the galleries that it represents were created, structured and organised and the kinds of human and nonhuman agency that shaped it (figure 9.6).

Without a set of generic conventions, city museums must be creative in their representations of urban history. With the city itself perpetually beyond their grasp and outside of their walls, city museums have needed creative ways to express their subject matter. This thesis has described this creative process, giving an account of the making of the galleries and the changing ideas that meant the museum's plans developed from those imagined in figure 9.5 to those photographed in figure 9.4. Studying the work of making a city museum provides a way to understand this creative process, and several chapters have explored the city museum's creativity in detail, both in specific parts of the museum and by looking at the use of different techniques. The thesis has explored how individuals were able to influence the museum's representation of London, and the ways that these voices made themselves heard.

The scope of museum work, and the kinds of authorial agency enacted during the making of the museum have defined the space that was produced. Exploring how meaning was written into the space, this thesis has analysed the production of the galleries, exploring the museum as more than a text. Using participatory methods, this thesis argues that museums compose, control and contradict sensory hierarchies, scripting narratives in place, across the length of the imagined visit. This thesis has discussed key phases of this work in detail, showing how ideas and concepts became a matrix of messages, and how these were expressed in decisions about the division of gallery space, and how decisions about individual objects are taken within this narrative context. This process was not always smooth, and this thesis has also reflected on moments and episodes of disruption, showing how authorial conflict was dealt with within the museum.

When the Galleries of Modern London opened the museum's photographers created a huge poster, which they hung in the museum's staff post room. It was made up of the photographs that they took of the Galleries in production, and showed a some examples of the kinds of work that took place to make the galleries. The poster is shown in figure 9.7.

Figure 9.7 – Montage of installation photos, produced by Museum of London photographers © Museum of London

Looking at the city museum as a process changes the way that we understand it, advocating an understanding of museums as more than texts. Studying museum

work has brought to light the lively, creative process of making the city within the museum, suggesting a model of city museum work that links objects, narratives, people, plans and place. The city museum is a hybrid, adopting elements of the city and the museum in its representation of place. The city museum represents the city through the process of negotiating key ideas. Working at the museum is working at the juncture between the global and the local London; the personal and collective memory of place; the intangible and the stubbornly material; the staff and the visitors; the museum and the university; and, crucially, the narrative and the object.

The controlling and ordering processes of the city museum should be understood as a complex negotiation, rather than the imposition of a singular authoritative narrative. In making the Galleries of Modern London the Museum of London curated the global city through a complex, disruptive and creative process of 'museum work'.

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