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Natural History Museum Library



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BRITISH MUSEUM.

STATEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

RESPECTING

THE WANT OF SPACE

IN THAT INSTITUTION.

(Privately printed by order and for the exclusive use of the Trustees.)

EXTRACT FROM A REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL
LIBRARIAN.

October 8th, 1857.

“The consideration of the want of space, and
“of how space is to be provided, becomes daily
“more pressing ; and the Principal Librarian
“begs to invite the earnest attention of the
“Trustees to this subject.”

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE TRUSTEES.

AT A COMMITTEE.

10th October, 1857.

The Principal Librarian's Report of the 8th inst. urging the necessity of providing additional space, was read, and referred to the Sub-Committee on the Buildings, which was ordered to be summoned for Monday, the 19th inst., at twelve o'clock.

AT A SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE BUILDINGS.

October 19th, 1857.

Read,

Report of the Principal Librarian, dated the 8th inst., announcing the arrival of antiquities from Budrum and Carthage, as well as the temporary arrangement of some of them, and the further increase of antiquities that may be expected from the same quarters. The Principal Librarian urged the Trustees to take into consideration the want of space for displaying the Museum collections, and the question how space is to be provided.

Ordered,

That the Principal Librarian do furnish this Sub-Committee with detailed information and explanations on the following points:—

1. A statement of the space allotted to the different departments at present.
2. Of the deficiency of space complained of in any department.
3. Whether any limitation can properly be put on any of the collections; and if so,
4. The amount of accommodation likely to be obtained by such limitation.
5. Supposing sufficient room cannot thus be obtained, then in what way would it best be procured?

6. Is there any space vacant in the ground now belonging to the Trustees which may yet be built upon?

7. Are there sites contiguous to the Museum which may be purchased by the Trustees for the purpose of enlarging the Museum buildings?

8. What would be the probable expense of purchasing?

The Principal Librarian is hereby requested to add to his Report on the above points such general observations as he may deem of sufficient importance for the consideration of the Trustees; the Report to be submitted to this Sub-Committee at their next meeting.

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN.

Nov. 10th, 1857.

In obedience to the Minute of the Sub-Committee on the Buildings passed on the 19th day of last October, the Principal Librarian has the honor to report as follows:—

1. *As to the space allotted to the several departments*, the Principal Librarian begs to refer the Sub-Committee to the following memoranda of Mr. Smirke.

“British Museum, superficial area occupied by the several departments. Nov. 1857.

"Antiquities.

Ground floor . . .	39,334 feet super.	
Upper floor . . .	21,532	„
	<hr/>	
Exclusive of basement,	60,866	„
	<hr/>	

"Printed Books.

Ground floor, Main Building . . .	} 37,955	„
New buildings, in quadrangle . . .		
	} 45,793	„
	<hr/>	
	83,748	„
	<hr/>	

"Manuscripts.

Ground floor . . .	12,968	„
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"Zoology.

Ground floor . . .	1,550	„
Upper floor . . .	28,357	„
	<hr/>	
	29,907	„
	<hr/>	

"Mineralogy.

Upper floor . . .	16,836	„
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"Botany.

Upper floor . . .	3,249	„
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“Prints.”

Upper floor . . . 1,550 feet super.

SYDNEY SMIRKE.

“Nov. 7, 1857.”

Superficial area occupied by the several Departments in the Basement floor of the Museum.

Antiquities . . .	33,861	feet	super.
Printed Books . . .	33,998		,,
Manuscripts . . .	210		,,
Zoology . . .	7,593		,,
Mineralogy . . .	2,580		,,
Botany . . .	990		,,

SYDNEY SMIRKE.

“Nov. 20, 1857.”

2. “Of the deficiency of space complained of in any department.”

Deficiency of space is complained of in all departments except that of Printed Books, in which, if any very large portion of the volumes now in the British Museum be not removed into the new library, there is room for many years' additions. The Principal Librarian thinks that as to the Department of Manuscripts there is sufficient accommodation, if proper use be made of the space now allotted to that department; and there will be little difficulty in adding to it. The room,

known as the waiting room,^a on the south-east of the entrance-hall, which was temporarily lent to the Department of Printed Books, is now being placed at the disposal of the Department of Manuscripts, to which it properly belongs. About one-third of the long room on the east side of the King's Library, viz. that portion of it which extends from the south end of the central division of that Library to the study now occupied by the assistant-keeper of the MSS.,^b may be taken from the Department of Printed Books and given up to the Department of Manuscripts; and the study^c removed to the north end of the part thus transferred. This would afford accommodation for several thousand volumes of MSS., as well as for students, assistants, and attendants.

The collection of MSS. increases at a smaller rate than the other Museum collections. It may be safely assumed that the average increase will not exceed five hundred volumes per annum.

The specimens in the Department of Geology are overcrowded, not only to the inconvenience of students and scientific men, but to that of the public generally. If the scheme be carried out, of walling up the windows on the north side of the north gallery in the upper floor,^d and

^a Plan II., 59.

^b Plan II., 55.

^c Plan II., 57.

^d Plan III., 31, &c.

making the wall-surface available for the display of specimens, the space thus gained will prove of advantage for some time to come, provided no large fossil remains be added to the collection. The wall-space so obtained cannot, however, be all spared for new additions. At the north end of the large tables in those rooms there are smaller tables, which will have to be removed, if presses be put up against the north wall: and room for the contents of those tables must be provided in the presses which are to be substituted.

As to the Mineralogical Collection, valuable space may be obtained by fitting all the under part of the show-tables with drawers, which might contain such specimens as are kept for the use of students and scientific men, to whom they are exhibited on application. Some of the cases are already so fitted up. The same advantage may be derived from the space under the tables containing geological specimens. This, to some extent, is already done for small specimens; but it cannot be done for any of a large size. In conclusion, it may be said that although want of room will be less felt, and more easily provided against, in this department of Natural History, it does not seem that the additional space to be gained by all the above-mentioned expedients will satisfy the wants even of the Mineralogical and Geological Departments for more than seven years at the

utmost. The north side of the upper floor being the only one now provided with windows, the ventilation of all the public apartments on that floor depends in a great measure on those windows. Provision, therefore, will have to be made, before they are closed up, for securing the ventilation throughout the whole of the upper floor.

This seems to be the proper place to notice the scheme of building studies, not only for the officers, but for the assistants also in the Geological and Mineralogical Departments. On this subject, the Principal Librarian begs to refer the Trustees to a letter of Mr. Smirke to Sir H. Ellis, dated the 14th of February, 1852. That letter, inserted in a subsequent part of this report, was laid before Parliament on the 30th of June, 1852.

It has been represented that the new Keeper of Mineralogy will require facilities for submitting minerals to some chemical tests and analyses. If so, special provision must be made for affording to that officer this additional accommodation.

In connection with the subject of space it may be important to consider how room is to be provided, should it be decided that lectures be delivered at the British Museum. The delivery of lectures is a duty imposed on the Superintendent of the Department of Natural History, who, last year, delivered a course at the Museum of Practical Geology in Jermyn Street. The question

whether lectures are or are not likely to be delivered, and by what officers, in the British Museum, affects the question of the space which may be required for each department, as was observed by the Superintendent of the Natural History Departments in his report of the 12th of June, 1856, with respect to those departments only.

With respect to the Zoological Department the case is more difficult to be dealt with. Any one walking through it can see how much the specimens are crowded in the presses as well as in the table-cases, and how inconveniently they are necessarily placed for the purpose of exhibition. No one specimen can be scientifically examined without displacing two or three others. The Osteological Collections, as well as many of the specimens preserved in spirit, being placed in the basement, are withdrawn altogether from public exhibition, and their existence is known only to scientific men, who see them and study them on special application alone, and at great personal inconvenience. The collection of insects is kept in a gloomy room ten feet high, crowded with presses, tables, assistants, officers, and visitors,^a to which access is obtained through a door leading abruptly down several steps to a narrow, low, dark passage,^b like the entrance to a cellar. It is

^a Plan II., 30.

^b Plan II., 29.

also through that door and passage that admittance is gained to the studies of the Keeper of that department, and of his first assistant,^a who are thus removed to the greatest possible distance from the main body of the collection under their care. Placing a gallery all round the upper part of the Ornithological Room^b will, in the opinion of the Officers of that department, give them space for seven years at the very utmost. But it may be assumed that that gallery will not be completed in less than three years from this time; and as the advantage to be derived from such a gallery will apply only to small objects, the Osteological Collection^c must continue in the basement. Even now the Collection of Mammalia is greatly deficient, because there is no room to place the specimens which it would be desirable to add to it. Many such specimens would have been accepted as presents, but have been declined for this reason. For objects of this class the intended gallery will afford no relief. The opinion of the Officers is that the Zoological Collection now in the Museum, in order to be arranged and displayed as it ought to be, requires twice as much space as that which it occupies at present; and that such a collection, to be worthy of an Institution like the British Museum, ought to

^a Plan II., 28.

^b Plan III., 35 to 39.

^c Plan I., 20.

consist of twice as many objects as it now contains.^a

In the Department of Prints and Drawings the want of room, even to lodge the portfolios containing the collection, is sufficiently shown by the placing of presses in the narrow passage^b leading from the landing to the Print Room.^c The display of some of the best prints and drawings has often been entertained by the Trustees, who felt how important it was that this should be done, but who never could carry their intention into effect for want of room. The Kouyunjik Room, by the side of the north-western portion of the Egyptian Saloon,^d had been built for the purpose of such an exhibition, when the influx of Assyrian Antiquities forced the Trustees to devote that Room to their display, adjourning to an indefinite period the exhibition of the objects for which it was originally intended.

^a The Keeper of the Department of Zoology concludes a report, dated the 22nd of October, 1857, with the following words:—"Dr. Gray considers it his duty to state, that, at the present time, more than half of the collection is hidden from the public view, indeed he might almost say two-thirds, when the annulose animals are included; and that the part of the collection that is exhibited, ought to have at least twice its present space for its proper exhibition." The Superintendent of the Departments of Natural History concurs in these views.

^b Plan III., 19.

^c Plan III., 20.

^d Plan II., 24.

But in no department of the British Museum is the want of accommodation for the collections so striking as in that of Antiquities. Any one entering the Roman Room,^a immediately to the left of the Entrance Hall, must regret that objects are placed on its south side, where the light is very deficient, whilst on the opposite side busts and other objects are overcrowded; the statues and busts at the south end of the Egyptian Saloon (first Græco-Roman Room)^b are also badly placed, both on account of want of space and of suitable light; the same may be said as to the inconvenient crowding of the objects placed in the third Græco-Roman Room.^c At the end of that room a staircase leads to a part of the basement,^d whence visitors are forced to return the way they have gone down. In other parts of the basement,^e not yet open to the public, are objects of Antiquity, to which access is obtained by another narrow staircase,^f which gives the only means of ingress and regress to and from dark rooms, in some of which it is utterly impossible to see many of the objects there kept.^g Owing to the removal of the remains of the pediment of the Parthenon from the second^h to the first Elgin Room, the frieze and metopes are now seen to much

^a Plan II., 3.

^c Plan II., 10.

^e Plan I., 4, 7.

^g Plan I., 7.

^b Plan II., 8.

^d Plan I., 1.

^f Plan II., 20.

^h Plan II., 18.

greater advantage; but the Room into which the statues of the pediment have been removed ^a is hardly large enough to enable the spectator to see to proper advantage these splendid objects of heroic art. Large fragments of the sculptures are still on the floor of the Room containing the collections from Lycia,^b it being impossible to find an unobjectionable spot, in which they may be fixed in the room itself.

If every room in the Department of Antiquities were to be examined in the same manner, the same observations would apply, with the exception of those reserved for British and Mediæval Antiquities,^c for which more than adequate space is provided, whilst the Townley Terracottas have not been exhibited for years past; and the collections of gems, of Etruscan and even British gold ornaments, and of many other instructive, interesting and tasteful objects, are in a room^d from which the general public are excluded, and worse off than was the case when the old Townley Gallery and Medal Room were in existence.

As to the Medal Room itself^e the cabinets are inconveniently arranged, owing to want of space; it is now proposed that a portion, at least, of the books of reference collected for the use of the department, and kept in that room, be removed to

^a Plan II., 14.

^b Plan II., 13.

^c Plan III., 9.

^d Plan III., 4.

^e Plan III., 8.

the narrow passage^a through which access is given both to the Medal and Ornament Rooms; this must cause inconvenience to officers, visitors, and scholars, who have occasion to attend those rooms. And it is owing to want of space that the public at large are debarred from gratifying their laudable curiosity, and improving their historical knowledge, as well as their taste for fine art, by the inspection of medals and coins. As there is no exhibition of such objects, or even of casts or electrotypes of them, a medal or coin, which finds its way into the British Museum, is actually shut up from the public at large.

The above observations, however, apply only to the collections already displayed; the want of room for such additional Antiquities as have been recently received, especially from Halicarnassus and Carthage, has so lately been under the consideration of the Trustees that no more is here required than to mention what measures have been taken, merely to stow away these objects for the present. In the first place, the space hitherto occupied by the Newspapers, in the basement of the north-side of the Museum,^b has been appropriated as a store-room, in which the boxes filled with the smaller fragments of Antiquities from Budrum have been deposited and the contents of most of them taken out and placed on the

^aPlan III., 5.

^bPlan I., 14.

shelves on which the volumes of Newspapers originally stood. Secondly, the basement in the Department of Antiquities, hitherto occupied by the *Formatore*, has been applied to the reception of Antiquities from Carthage.^a The removal of the casts and moulds, the hiring of a building out of the premises of the Museum to which they have been transferred, and the arrangements entered into for the making of moulds and supplying of casts in future, have occasioned an outlay, which will, in part, be annual, so long as no accommodation for these objects can be found on the Museum premises. Adequate space is also required in the Museum for making new moulds,^b for preserving a perfect copy of each cast, as well as for putting in order the moulds of medals already in the possession of the Trustees, and for arranging casts from them.^c Thirdly, the larger objects from Halicarnassus have been placed under the west portion of the front colonnade,^d where they will be protected from rain, snow, and cold, be to some extent seen, and their repairs carried on. There is no other space where any portion of these objects could

^a Plan I., 11. No. 12 is now filled with Halicarnassian Antiquities.

^b Plan I., 10. This room might be adapted to the use mentioned in the text of the Report.

^c Plan I., 13, might be fitted up for the purpose.

^d Plan II., 1. . .

be even temporarily deposited, still less repaired and displayed: the temporary arrangements above mentioned occasion, of course, considerable expense, which is owing to want of space.

3. *“ Whether any limitation can properly be put on any of the collections ; and, if so,*

4. *“ The amount of accommodation likely to be obtained by such limitation.”*

The answer to the second of these questions (No. 4) depends so entirely on the answer to the first (No. 3), that both will be here considered together.

It seems to the Principal Librarian that, in the case of Antiquities, such a limitation as that contemplated in the question might take place with great advantage to the Museum and to the public. The Principal Librarian assumes that the word “ limitation ” implies the adoption of a principle affecting not only the future, but the past. The crowding into one Institution many collections, even belonging, generally, to the same class of learning, interferes with the full development of each of them. A Museum of Mediæval Antiquities, for instance, can be made more complete, and be better arranged, if alone, than if it is to share both funds and space with another class of objects of Antiquity. The several collections will be in the way of each other ; and, in the opinion of the Principal Librarian, there is nothing

more injurious to the progress of learning, and to the proper growth of a public Institution, than that it should be inordinately and indiscriminately increased, merely with a view to its being a huge receptacle for all kinds of objects, the visitors of which are distracted and bewildered. It is as inconvenient and equally to be avoided, on the other hand, that objects, so to speak, homogeneous should be dispersed in separate repositories. A majolica plate, with a date, or the name of the painter or artist, ought not to be in one public Institution, whilst many other plates of the same epoch, and of the same style, which might be illustrated and made infinitely more interesting or instructive, if side by side with the former, are in another.

By limiting the British Museum Collections of Antiquities to Classical or Pagan art, as was in a great measure the case a few years ago, space might at once be found to display to the public view a selection of medals, the gems, and the gold ornaments, the Townley Terracottas, &c. All that space which is now occupied by Mediæval Antiquities, by what are called British or Irish Antiquities, and by the Ethnological Collection,* might thus be turned to better account. It does not seem right that such valuable space should be taken up by Esquimaux dresses, canoes, and hideous feather

* Plan III., 3.

idols, broken flints, called rude knives, and so on, to the exclusion of such objects as have been just before mentioned.

But, after all, the elimination here suggested would be quite inefficient in providing adequate space even for the Department of Antiquities. And with respect to the Departments of Printed Books, Manuscripts, and Prints, there is no possibility of properly putting a limitation to any of them. In regard to the several departments of Natural History, the Principal Librarian is precluded from giving an opinion, having been especially charged not to speculate on the possibility of the Natural History collections being ever detached from the rest of the Museum. To limit any of the collections is tantamount to excluding parts of them from the Museum.

5. *“Supposing sufficient room cannot thus be obtained, then in what way would it best be procured?”*

The Principal Librarian being of opinion that a limitation put to the collections, in the above restricted manner, however expedient in itself, would prove inadequate as to space, even for one department, will now consider in what way room could be best procured, without either building on any vacant space belonging to the Trustees, or purchasing land to build upon contiguous to the Museum. These two means

of increasing the room wanted will have to be considered hereafter.

Space for exhibiting the collections, without extending the site of the building, can be gained only by changing the appropriation of the rooms, or improving their internal arrangement, or by adding another story to the whole or to a large part of the present building. No additional space can be obtained on the ground-floor for large antiquities, and it is on that floor alone that they can be well placed, without removing from their present localities the Collections of Printed Books and Manuscripts, at a very great cost of time and money. This change would eventually render other changes necessary in the whole building. For, supposing these two collections, of Printed Books and Manuscripts, were to be located, at great inconvenience, in the new central building, further room would, in about twenty years, be wanted for the additions even to them.^a The

^a The removal of all the Collections of Printed Books and Manuscripts from their present localities seems liable, for the present at least, to insurmountable objections. The scheme which promises considerable advantages, and appears open to fewer objections, is that of removing the Printed Books from the lower shelves of the north portion of the north side of the main building (Plan II., 34, 35, 39, 40, 42, 44), leaving those books which now occupy the Cracherode Room (Plan II., 37), the recesses in a line with it on the south side of the Central Room (Plan II., 41), and the Banksian Room where they are (Plan II., 43).

alterations in the internal arrangements can never be so extensive as to affect the question of increased space to any considerable degree. And on the other hand, the limited accommodation that may be thus gained, may greatly interfere with the appropriation of other parts of the building, and render more useful changes impossible.

The upper portion of the western end of the north side (Plan II., 33) might, perhaps, and according to circumstances, be transferred to the Department of Prints and Drawings, whilst the whole length of the ground-floor on that side might be available for Antiquities. These suggestions are submitted to invite discussion. It may be objected—1st. That the lower presses here alluded to would have to be broken up. 2nd. That alterations would be required in that part of the main-building for the admission of additional light. 3rd. That by removing the books before specified into the new building, less space would remain for future additions. With respect to this point, it may be observed that by leaving the books in the *galleries* of the North Rooms, the removal of the volumes below might be easily accomplished; that not only that portion of the walls which is above the galleries would be utilized, but that the space over the upper presses, now lost, might at any future time be also occupied by octavo or smaller volumes, whilst all the presses in the new building can receive books of various large sizes. Again: the presses in the galleries might easily be made two or three inches deeper, as has been done in the Department of MSS.; in which case they would admit quartos and even small folios. The space, now wasted, above the upper shelves in the Department of MSS., might, when wanted, be also made available.

By removing the principal staircase,^a and erecting two large staircases one on each side of the entrance from the hall into the new Reading Room,^b the Building would be improved, the convenience of the visitors better consulted, and two very excellent rooms with a north light, one of them on the ground-floor, would be gained for the Department of Antiquities.

It has been suggested to apply the Officers' houses to the reception and exhibition of the collections. The whole of those houses would have to be almost rebuilt, the space gained would not be extensive, and the Officers, if no longer dwelling in the Museum, would cease to form, as they do at present, an integral part of the establishment. Nothing but a case of well-proved necessity would seem to justify the adoption of such a suggestion.

“6. Is there any space in the ground now belonging to the Trustees which may yet be built upon?”

The only two vacant spaces in the ground belonging to the Trustees, outside the main-building, which may yet be built upon, are, 1st, the space between the south side of the Lycian Room and the corridor leading to Mr. Carpenter's house.^c

^a Plan II., 69.

^b Plan II., 80.

^c Plan II., 11.

How much of that space might be built upon without depriving of air and light the surrounding rooms, and especially the Board Room; as well as the rooms of the Principal Librarian and of the Clerks,^a will require great deliberation. It will, probably, be found that the inconveniences which must result from occupying even the smallest part of that space with building will more than counterbalance the comparatively trifling amount of accommodation which such a building might afford.

The second piece of ground which may yet be built upon is between the south end of the Print Room and the north end of the second Elgin Room.^b With reference to this ground, and the uses to which it might be converted, as well as with reference to the objections to them, the Principal Librarian begs to refer the Trustees to Mr. Smirke's letter, above mentioned, and which is as follows:—

“ Dear Sir,—In compliance with the desire of
 “ the Trustees expressed at their meeting of the
 “ 7th instant, I have read the reports of Mr.
 “ Gray and of Mr. Carpenter, and have commu-
 “ nicated with those gentlemen as to the additional
 “ rooms required by them, and have especially
 “ considered how far such additional rooms can
 “ be obtained at the north-western corner of the

^a Plan II., 4, 6, 7.

^b Plan II.. 31.

“Museum premises. The subject is one of much
 “greater difficulty than might have been expected,
 “but I have not failed to give it every considera-
 “tion in my power. There appear to me to be
 “two plans capable of adoption.

“1.—To build a new Room for prints, &c.,
 “on the vacant ground north of the Elgin
 “Room, and on the same level therewith. To
 “leave the present Print Room (with the Insect
 “Room under it) as it is, but devoting it to the
 “public exhibition of prints, &c., leaving also
 “Mr. Gray’s and Mr. Carpenter’s studies as
 “they are.”^a

“2.—To build a new gallery for prints, &c.,
 “as in Plan VII. To lower the floors of the
 “present Print Room and studies to the general
 “level of the ground-floor, thereby destroying
 “the present Insect Room and Zoological studies,
 “and bringing the whole department to one
 “level. To build new rooms for the Entomo-
 “logical and Osteological Collections over the
 “Print Department, with access from the Minera-
 “logical Department.”^b

“I am quite aware that both of these plans
 “are open to many objections. No. VII. does not
 “meet the want of space for the Osteological Col-
 “lection, and No. VIII. only meets it imperfectly;
 “for, the present specimens of recent osteology,
 “now kept in the basement, would alone far more
 “than fill all the space that this plan would

^a Plan VII.

^b Plan VIII.

"afford. Neither plan obviates the objection
 "to the present position of the Insect Room and
 "Zoological studies, disconnected as they are
 "from the rest of Zoology. No. VII. retains
 "the present irregularity in the floor levels, and
 "No. VIII. whilst it remedies that defect, gives
 "a very bad entrance for the public to the Print
 "Department; it moreover precludes the possi-
 "bility of extending the Mineralogical studies,
 "which Mr. Waterhouse represents to me as of
 "great importance. It is probable, also, that
 "No. VIII. would somewhat diminish the light in
 "the north portion of the Egyptian Saloon.
 "Still these two plans comprise the best scheme
 "that can be devised at the north-west corner of
 "the Museum."

"There is no doubt whatever that the only per-
 "fectly satisfactory project would be one that would
 "devote the whole of this north-west corner to
 "the Antiquities Department, and would remove
 "the Zoological Collections, as well as the prints
 "and drawings, to the new east wing that has
 "long been contemplated by the Trustees. Ento-
 "mology and Osteology would then combine with
 "the other branches of natural history, whilst the
 "prints and drawings would be adjacent to the
 "Department of Manuscripts where they for-
 "merly were, and to which they seem naturally
 "to appertain.

"But in making these latter observations I

“fear I am exceeding the limits assigned by the
“terms of the reference to me of the 7th instant.”

“I am, &c.,

“SYDNEY SMIRKE.”

“P. S.—I hope that the limited time that has
“been allowed for the consideration of the sub-
“ject will be regarded as an excuse for my sub-
“mitting a paragraph which it appears to me
“desirable to add to my Report.

“A very large and commodious gallery for
“osteology might be obtained, consistently with
“Plan VII., by building over the whole area
“west of the Assyrian Room, lighted of course
“by skylights, the roof ranging with the roof of
“the Assyrian Room, and the floor being level
“with the general floor line of the Museum.

“There are, no doubt, objections of more or less
“weight to this plan; but provided always there
“be no probability of extending the limits of the
“Museum ground, this seems to me to offer the
“least objectionable way of adding considerably
“to the accommodation of the Zoological Depart-
“ment. If there be a probability of extending
“the Museum ground, then I would suggest the
“adoption of Plan VII., without the large low
“room above described.”

“Feb. 14, 1852.”

“S. SMIRKE.”

During last summer the Principal Librarian,
considering the great want of accommodation on

the ground-floor, thought that use might be made of a large space—which is now apparently thrown away—namely the space between the new Library and the walls of the main building which surround it.^a The Principal Librarian suggested to the Trustees the expediency of covering over that space with skylights, and making it available for Antiquities, and the suggestion was favourably received. But, on further consideration, the Principal Librarian is obliged to confess that the objections to this suggestion are stronger than he at first deemed them to be, and that the proposal ought not to be entertained. The air of this inner quadrangle would never be changed, the surrounding basement rooms would lose a large supply of light which they can ill spare, there would be no external approach to the new Reading Room and Libraries, and the atmosphere in the space covered over, as suggested, would be almost unfit to breathe, especially when a large number of visitors passed through it in summer.

7. “*Are there sites contiguous to the Museum which may be purchased by the Trustees for the purpose of enlarging the Museum Buildings?*”

8. “*What would the probable expense be of purchasing?*”

^a Plan II., 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79.

Contiguous to the Museum there are the houses and gardens on the east side of Bedford Square, on the south side of Montague Place, and on the west side of Montague Street; which might be built upon for the purpose of enlarging the Museum building. The Trustees submitted many years ago, the purchase of ground contiguous to the Museum, and the amount of the requisite outlay, to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury; and in the letter of Mr. Forshall to their Lordships, dated the 20th of March, 1848, the following words occur:—"It is not within the province of the Trustees to determine on the policy of incurring the expenditure which would be required." That letter was laid before Parliament, together with the one of Mr. Smirke, above quoted, dated the 14th of February, 1852.

In a letter recently addressed to the Principal Librarian, and dated the 9th November, 1857, Mr. Smirke suggests the purchase of sixteen houses on the south side of Montague Place; and there is no doubt that that would be the most desirable site to build upon of all the sites contiguous to the Museum. Mr. Smirke estimates the expense at £170,000, for the whole site and building, as will appear from his letter, which is as follows:—

"Feeling very averse to the idea of dismembering the Museum, and believing that, so far

“from its having become an overgrown establish-
 “ment, it is by no means even yet commensurate
 “with the greatness of the country; yet seeing
 “that there may be financial reasons against that
 “very great enlargement which has, by some, been
 “contemplated, I have thought that the Trustees
 “would permit me to suggest a middle course,
 “whereby the requirements of the two Depart-
 “ments which alone need any considerable exten-
 “sion, may, without immediate expense, be amply
 “provided for for a great number of years.

“My suggestion is to build a north wing on the
 site of the houses which form the south side of
 Montague Place.^a

“The purchase of the sixteen houses would be
 “effected for about £50,000 or £60,000.

“A plain, but suitable, building^b could be
 “built in four years at a cost, if by contract, of
 “about £110,000.

“Thus by an expenditure of about £34,000 per
 “annum for five years, galleries would be obtained,
 “affording an area of 55,000 feet superficial, ex-
 “clusive of space on the basement story.

“These new rooms would join on at the west
 “end to the Antiquities and at the east end to
 “the Natural History Departments.

“The lighting of these rooms would be good,
 “as the northerly aspect affords the most uniform
 “and convenient light.

^a Plan IV.

^b Plan V.

“No existing lights would be interfered with,
 “as the new buildings would be about 115 feet to
 “the north of the present buildings : thus leaving
 “a clear interval equal to about the width of
 “Portland Place.

“I beg leave to add that, should it be deemed
 “inexpedient to undertake the whole of this plan,
 “it would admit of being readily divided : one por-
 “tion being carried out now, and the remainder
 “at some future time.

“By such a plan 15,000 feet superficial would
 “be obtained (exclusive of the basement story) at
 “a cost of about £40,000, including the purchase
 “of four houses.

“9th Nov. 1857. SYDNEY SMIRKE.”

Some years ago one of the Trustees suggested to his colleagues that the block of houses opposite the Museum on the south side of Great Russell Street, extending back to Little Russell Street, and bounded on the east by Bury Street, and on the west by Museum Street, should be purchased, a special building erected thereon for some one of the large departments of the Museum, with a façade in keeping with the present building, and which would in turn be advantageously placed with the present Museum quadrangle opposite to it. The inconvenience of having the Museum cut into two by a broad street passing between the two buildings, the

additional number of servants which that circumstance would render necessary, and many other reasons, seem decidedly to militate against the adoption of this proposal.

In conclusion, the Principal Librarian begs to observe that in his opinion the time is come when the question of space requires the full and mature consideration of the Trustees, not merely with the view of providing for the immediate wants of any particular collection, but for the purpose of devising some comprehensive plan, by which the want of space might be provided against for the general advantage of the Institution, and in a manner worthy of it. To do this the limitation or extension not merely of the other collections, but of the natural history collections also, and not only with reference to each other, but with reference to the whole Museum, must be eventually considered. Supposing that, as Mr. Forshall said in 1848, the Trustees do not think it their province to determine on the policy of incurring a large expenditure in the purchase of ground, they might possibly think it right to learn the views of the Government before assuming that such expenditure would or would not be sanctioned, and they would then act accordingly.

A. PANIZZI.

The foregoing report was in type when the Principal Librarian received from Mr. Smirke the following letter :—

“ Grosvenor Street,
“ Dec. 3rd, 1857.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Since the delivery of my report of the
“ 9th ultimo, suggesting a plan for extending
“ the Museum northwards, your proposal of
“ extending the west boundary line of the Mu-
“ seum premises, as shown by the dotted lines
“ *a a.* in Plan IV., by purchasing a small por-
“ tion of the gardens in the rear of five houses
“ in Bedford Square, has induced me to submit
“ for the consideration of the Trustees a second
“ plan, by which great additional accommodation
“ will be gained at much less than a proportionate
“ expense.^a

“ By this plan, 14,000 feet superficial of ex-
“ hibition rooms are obtained (in addition to
“ the area stated in my former report), and the
“ cost, including the purchase of the garden
“ ground, I estimate at about £36,000.

“ Upon the above plan, I also show a suggestion
“ for obtaining at moderate cost a fine hall, about
“ 240 feet long, by 60 feet wide,^b and 28 feet high,
“ on the basement level, lighted by skylights.

“ The probable cost of such a building would
“ be about £22,000.

^a Plan VI.

^b Plan VI. *ee.*

“ It will be observed that no existing lights
 “ would be interfered with by this building, as
 “ its roof would be below the sills of the ground-
 “ floor windows, exactly as in the case of the new
 “ Assyrian Gallery.

“ I beg leave to suggest that these plans may
 “ be regarded as mere sketches, made to enable
 “ the Trustees more readily to understand my
 “ suggestions, rather than as deliberately consi-
 “ dered designs.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ SYDNEY SMIRKE.”

“ A. Panizzi, Esq.,

“ &c., &c., &c.”

The Principal Librarian ventures to recom-
 mend the above suggestions to the favourable
 consideration of the Trustees, should the pro-
 posed extension of the Museum be approved.

A. P.

British Museum, Dec. 4, 1857.

4 MAY 1920



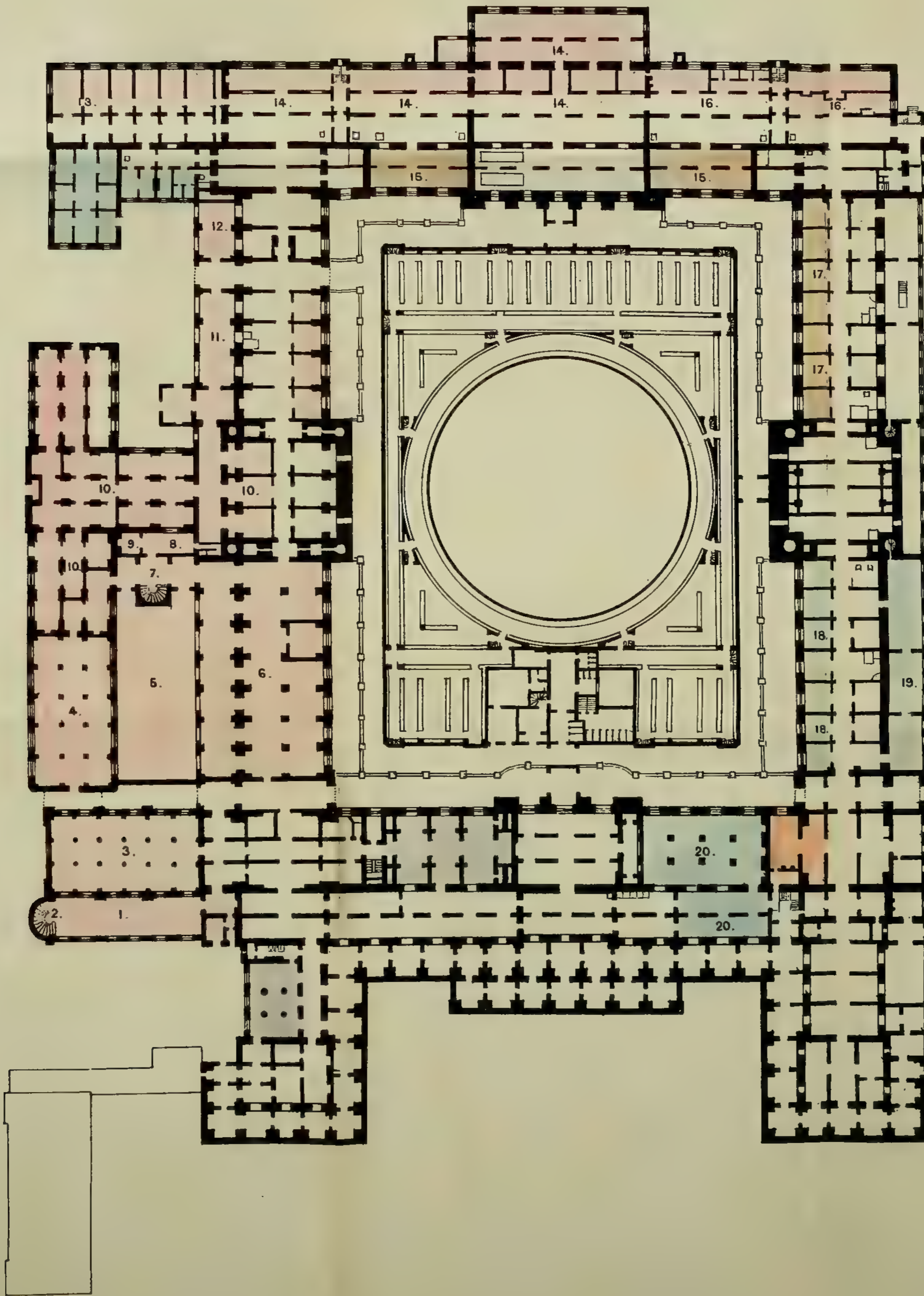


TABLE OF REFERENCES.

1. *Græco Roman Basement Room.*
2. *Staircase.*
3. *Store and Repairs Room.*
4. *Temporary Assyrian Room.*
5. *Assyrian Basement Room.*
6. *Sepulchral Basement Room.*
7. *Passage and Staircase.*
8. *Students' Room.*
9. *Attendants' Room.*
10. *Cast Room.*
11. *Temporary Carthaginian Room.*
12. *Store Room.*
13. *Proposed Cast Moulds.*
14. *Store Rooms for Halicarnassian Antiquities.*
15. *Geological Store & Work Rooms.*
16. *Proposed Store Rooms.*
17. *Store Rooms for Minerals & Fossils.*
18. *Zoological Store Rooms.*
19. *Spirit Room.*
20. *Skeleton Room.*

The Secretary's department is defined by a Purple Tint
 Manuscripts Green
 Printed Books Yellow

BRITISH MUSEUM.

PLAN OF THE BASEMENT FLOOR.

The departments of Mineralogy is defined by a Brown Tint
 Zoology Blue
 Botany Red
 Antiquities Purple

MUSEUM

HISTORY

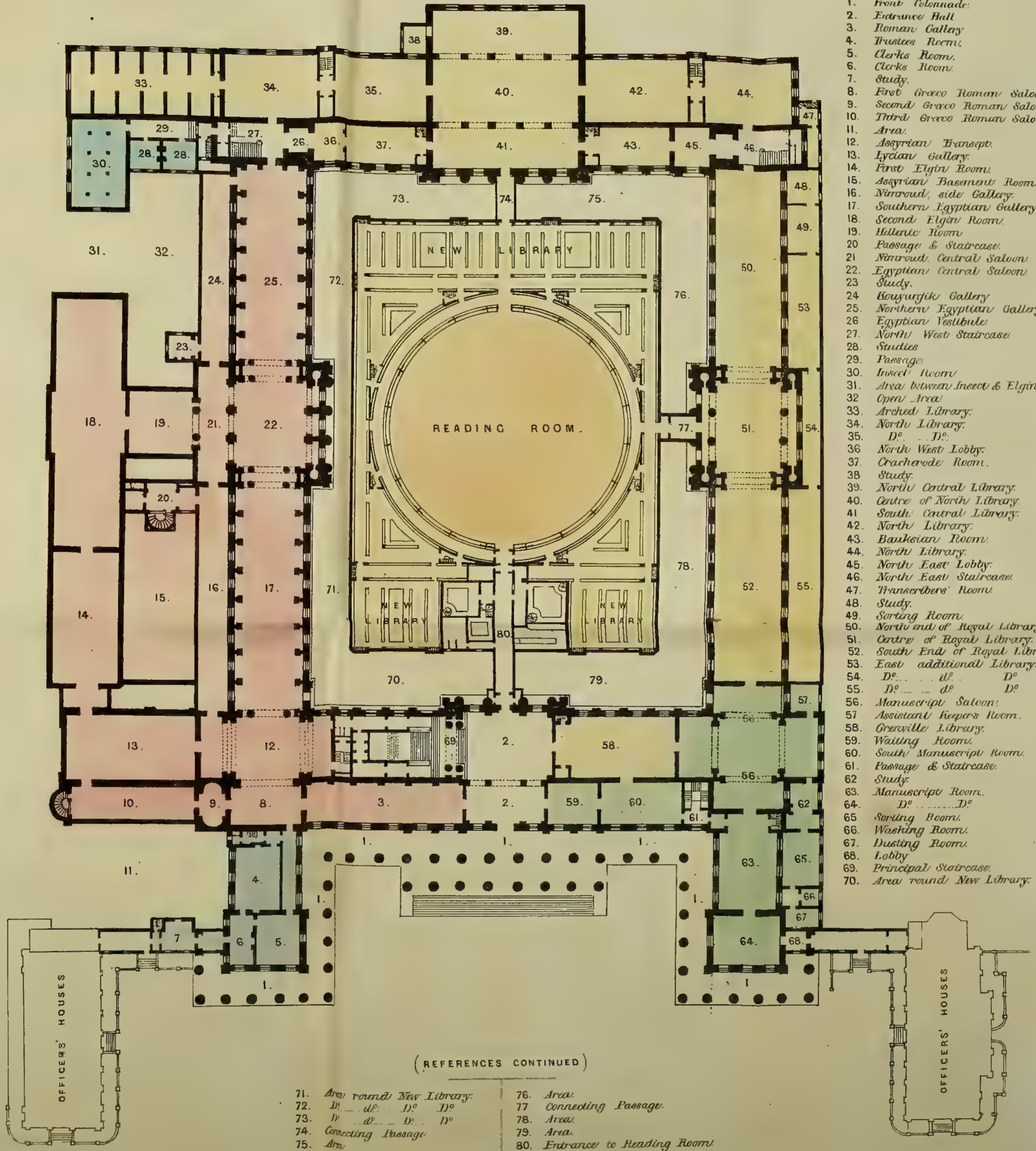
RUS



HIS

TABLE OF REFERENCES.

1. Front Colonnade.
2. Entrance Hall.
3. Roman Gallery.
4. Trustees Room.
5. Clerks Room.
6. Clerks Room.
7. Study.
8. First Græco Roman Saloon.
9. Second Græco Roman Saloon.
10. Third Græco Roman Saloon.
11. Area.
12. Assyrian Transept.
13. Lycian Gallery.
14. First Elgin Room.
15. Assyrian Basement Room.
16. Ninnoud, side Gallery.
17. Southern Egyptian Gallery.
18. Second Elgin Room.
19. Hellenic Room.
20. Passage & Staircase.
21. Ninnoud, Central Saloon.
22. Egyptian Central Saloon.
23. Study.
24. Kouyuzjik Gallery.
25. Northern Egyptian Gallery.
26. Egyptian Vestibule.
27. North West Staircase.
28. Studies.
29. Passage.
30. Insect Room.
31. Area between Insect & Elgin Rooms.
32. Open Area.
33. Arched Library.
34. North Library.
35. D° - D°.
36. North West Lobby.
37. Cracherode Room.
38. Study.
39. North Central Library.
40. Centre of North Library.
41. South Central Library.
42. North Library.
43. Banksian Room.
44. North Library.
45. North East Lobby.
46. North East Staircase.
47. Transcribers' Room.
48. Study.
49. Sorting Room.
50. North end of Royal Library.
51. Centre of Royal Library.
52. South End of Royal Library.
53. East additional Library.
54. D° - D° - D°.
55. D° - D° - D°.
56. Manuscript Saloon.
57. Assistant Keepers Room.
58. Grenville Library.
59. Waiting Room.
60. South Manuscript Room.
61. Passage & Staircase.
62. Study.
63. Manuscript Room.
64. D° - D° - D°.
65. Sorting Room.
66. Washing Room.
67. Dusting Room.
68. Lobby.
69. Principal Staircase.
70. Area round New Library.



(REFERENCES CONTINUED)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 71. Area round New Library. | 76. Area. |
| 72. D° - D° - D° - D° | 77. Connecting Passage. |
| 73. D° - D° - D° - D° | 78. Area. |
| 74. Connecting Passage | 79. Area. |
| 75. Area. | 80. Entrance to Reading Room. |

The Secretary's department is defined by a Purple Line.
 Manuscript - Green
 Printed Book - Yellow
 Reading Rooms - Orange

BRITISH MUSEUM.

PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR.

The department of Mineralogy is defined by a Brown Line
 Zoology - Blue
 Botany - Red
 Antiquities - Pink
 Prints - Grey

MUSEUM
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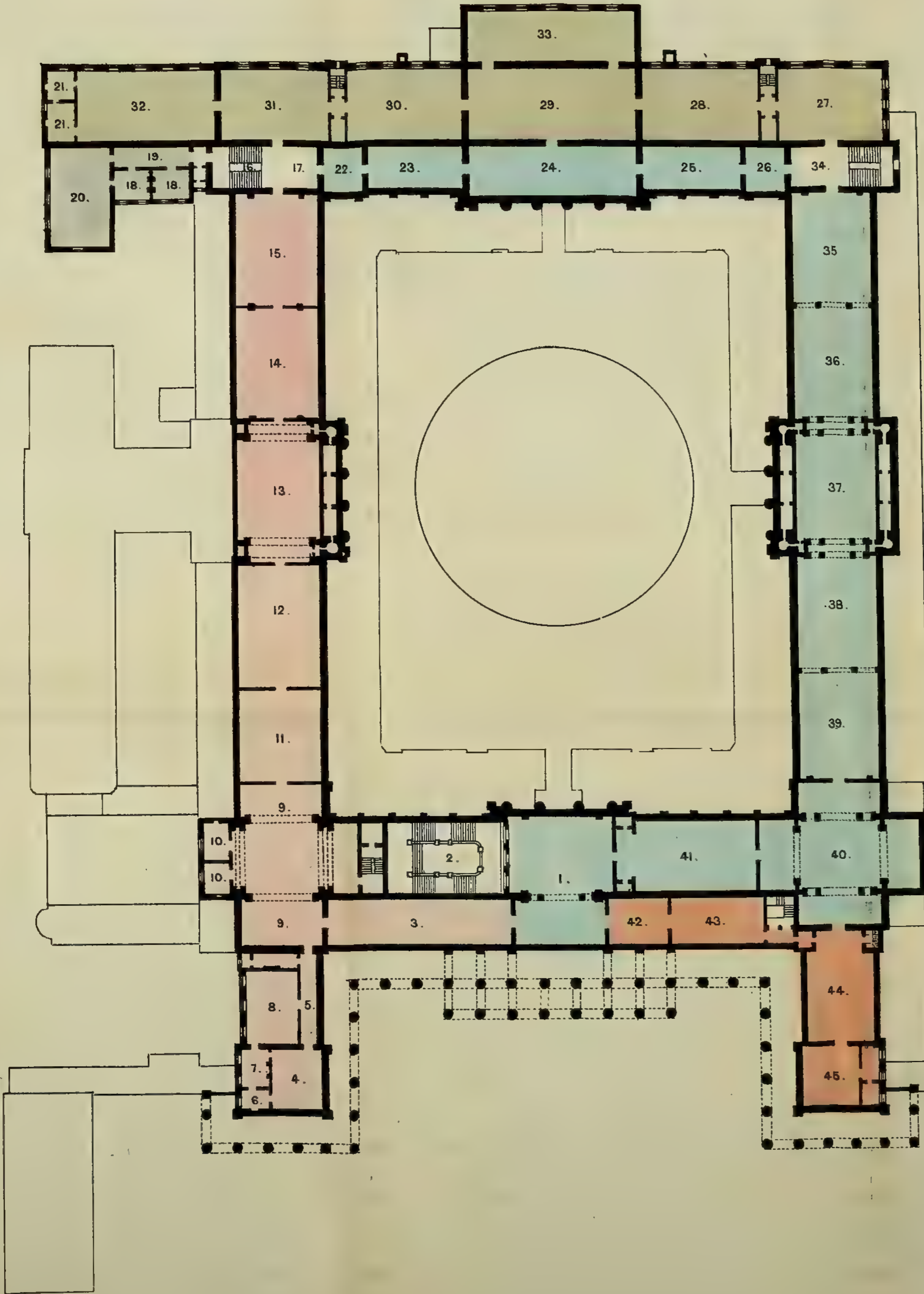


TABLE OF REFERENCE.

- Nº 1. *Central Saloon.*
- 2. *Principal Stairs.*
- 3. *Ethnographical Rooms.*
- 4. *Ornament Room.*
- 5. *Passage.*
- 6. *Study.*
- 7. *D^o.*
- 8. *Medal Room.*
- 9. *British & Medieval Rooms.*
- 10. *Studies.*
- 11. *Bronze Room.*
- 12. *2nd Vase Room.*
- 13. *1st D^o D^o*
- 14. *2nd Egyptian Room.*
- 15. *1st D^o D^o*
- 16. *N. W. Staircase.*
- 17. *Staircase landing.*
- 18. *Studies.*
- 19. *Passage.*
- 20. *Print Room.*
- 21. *Studies.*
- 22. *Zoological Rooms, — Nº 1.*
- 23. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 2.*
- 24. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 3.*
- 25. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 4.*
- 26. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 5.*
- 27. *Mineral Gallery..... Nº 1.*
- 28. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 2.*
- 29. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 3.*
- 30. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 4.*
- 31. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 5.*
- 32. *..... D^o..... D^o..... Nº 6.*
- 33. *North Central Room.*
- 34. *North East Staircase.*
- 35. *Eastern Zoological Gallery.*
- 36. *..... D^o..... D^o..... D^o*
- 37. *..... D^o..... D^o..... D^o*
- 38. *..... D^o..... D^o..... D^o*
- 39. *..... D^o..... D^o..... D^o*
- 40. *Marmaria Saloon.*
- 41. *Southern Zoological Gallery.*
- 42. *Botanical Room.*
- 43. *..... D^o..... D^o*
- 44. *..... D^o..... D^o*
- 45. *..... D^o..... D^o*

BRITISH MUSEUM.

PLAN OF THE UPPER FLOOR.

The department of Antiquities is defined by a Pink Tint.
 Zoological ————— Blue

The department of Mineralogy is defined by a Brown Tint.
 Botany ————— Red
 Prints ————— Grey



RUS



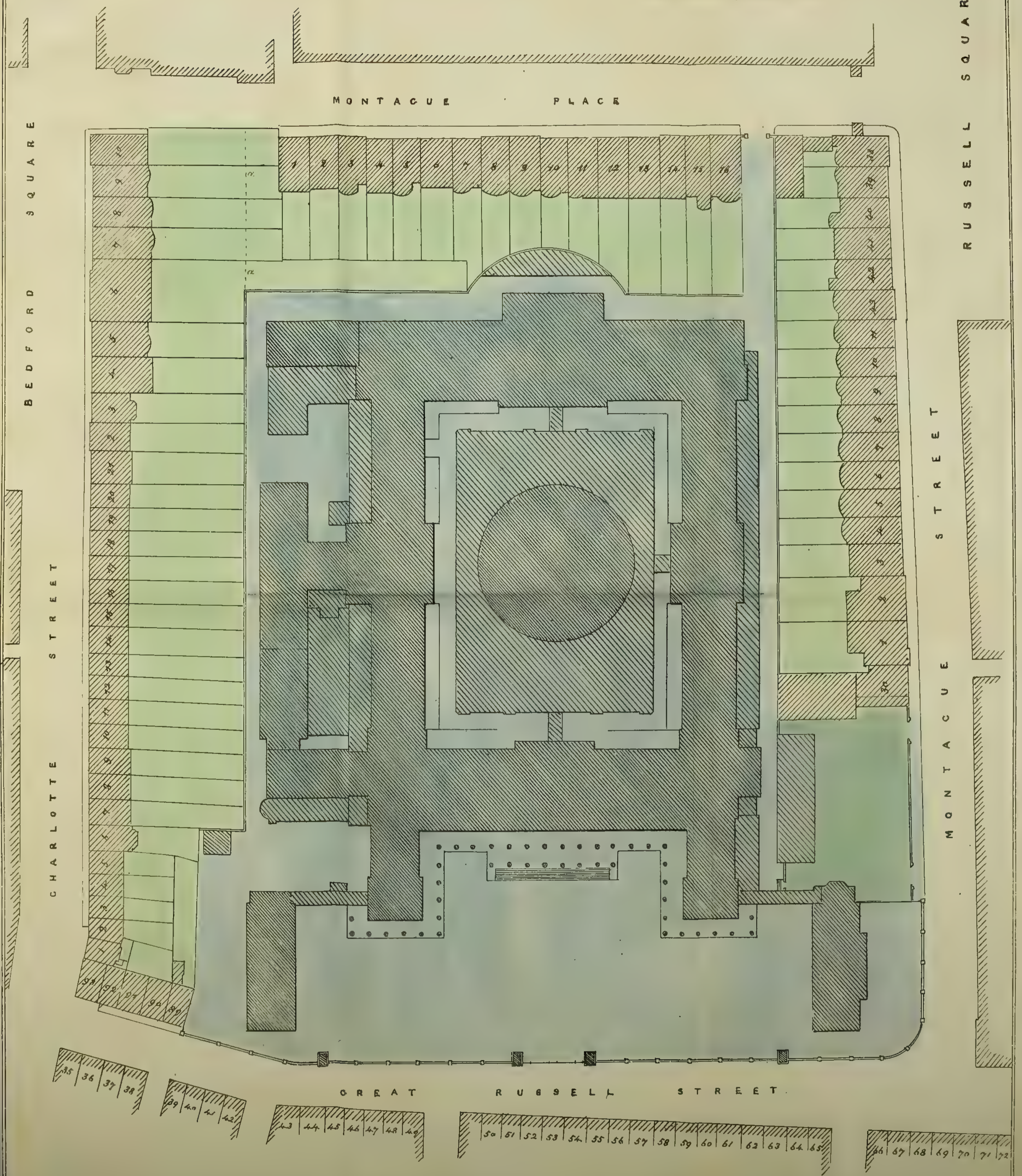
MUSEUM



BRITISH MUSEUM .

Nº IV.

The Purple tint shows the present limits of the Museum premises.



MONTAGUE PLACE

BEDFORD SQUARE

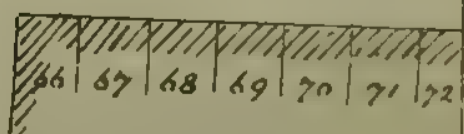
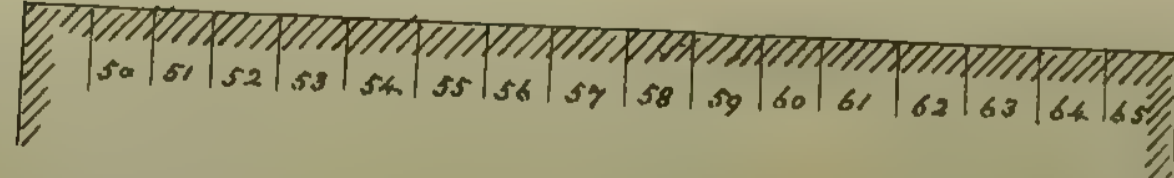
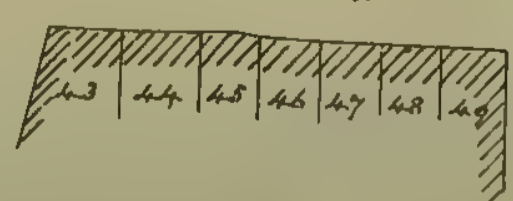
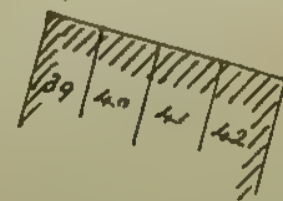
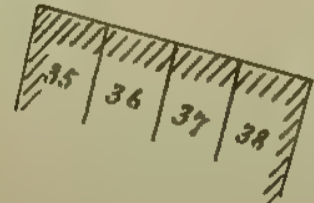
RUSSELL SQUARE

CHARLOTTE STREET

STREET

MONTAGUE

GREAT RUSSELL STREET



Scale of 100 200 300 400 Feet.

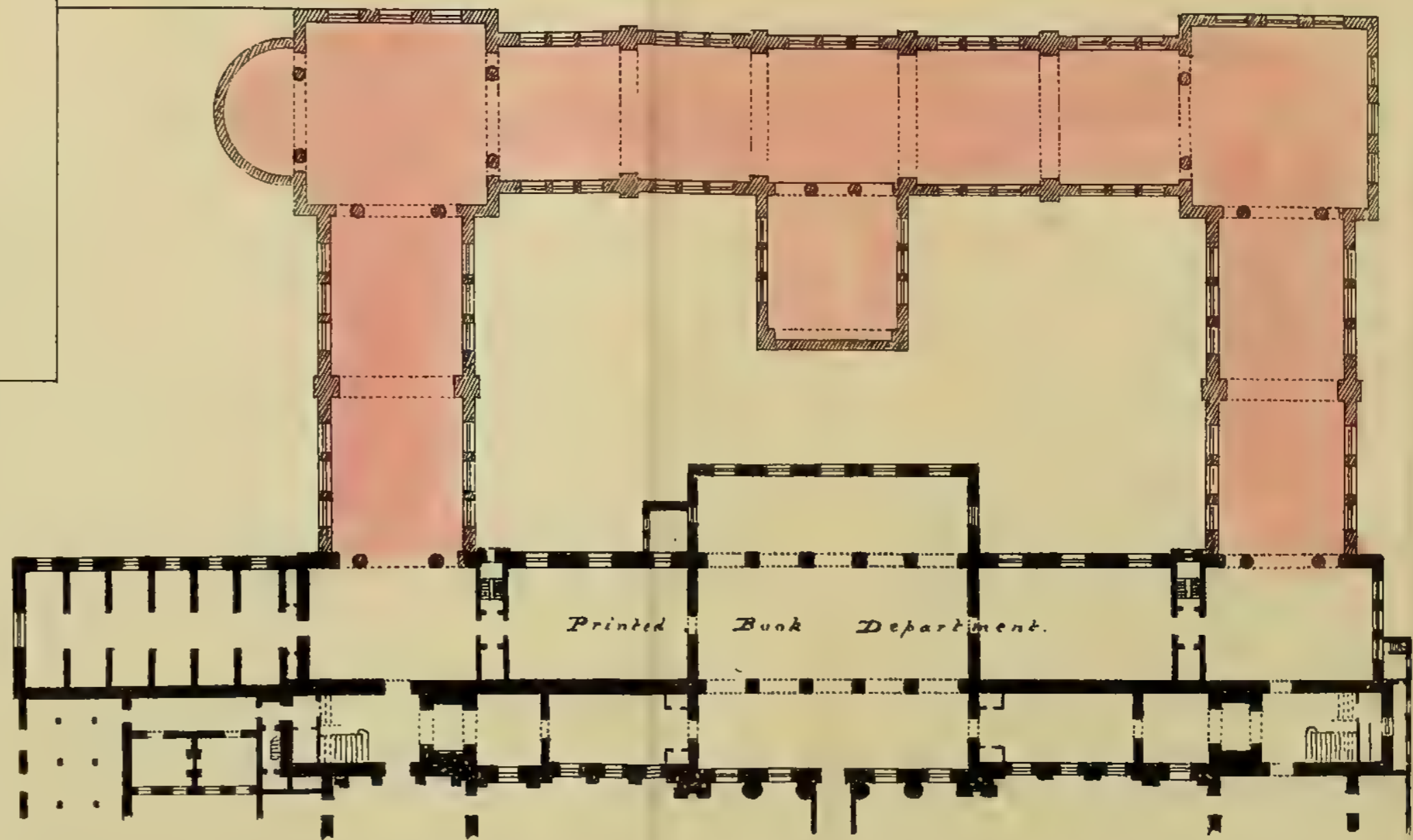
Nov. 9th 1857.



BRITISH MUSEUM.

Nº V.

MONTAGUE PLACE .



Nov 9th 1857.

Scale of 100 Feet.

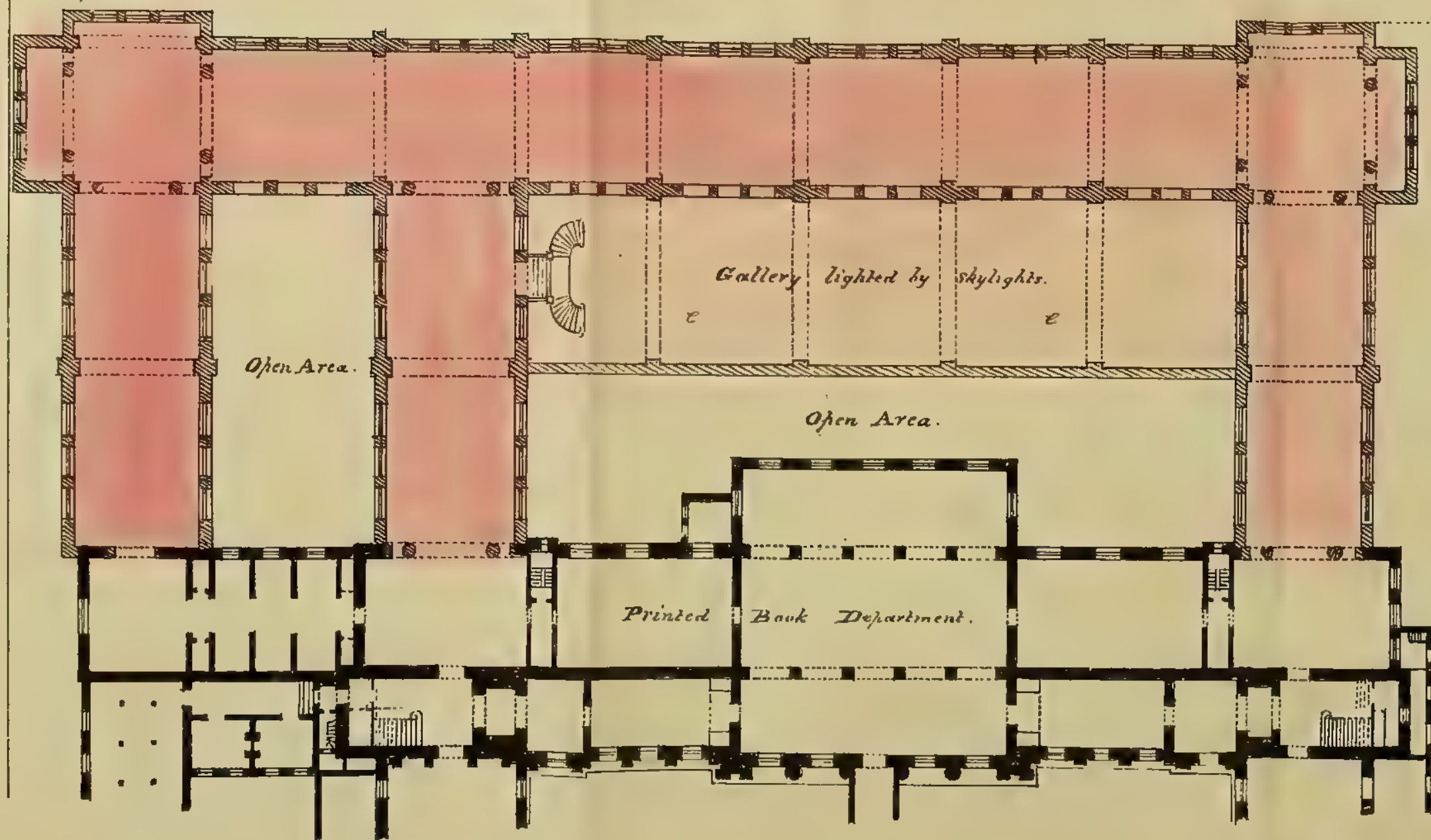
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Nº VI.

MONTAGUE

PLACE



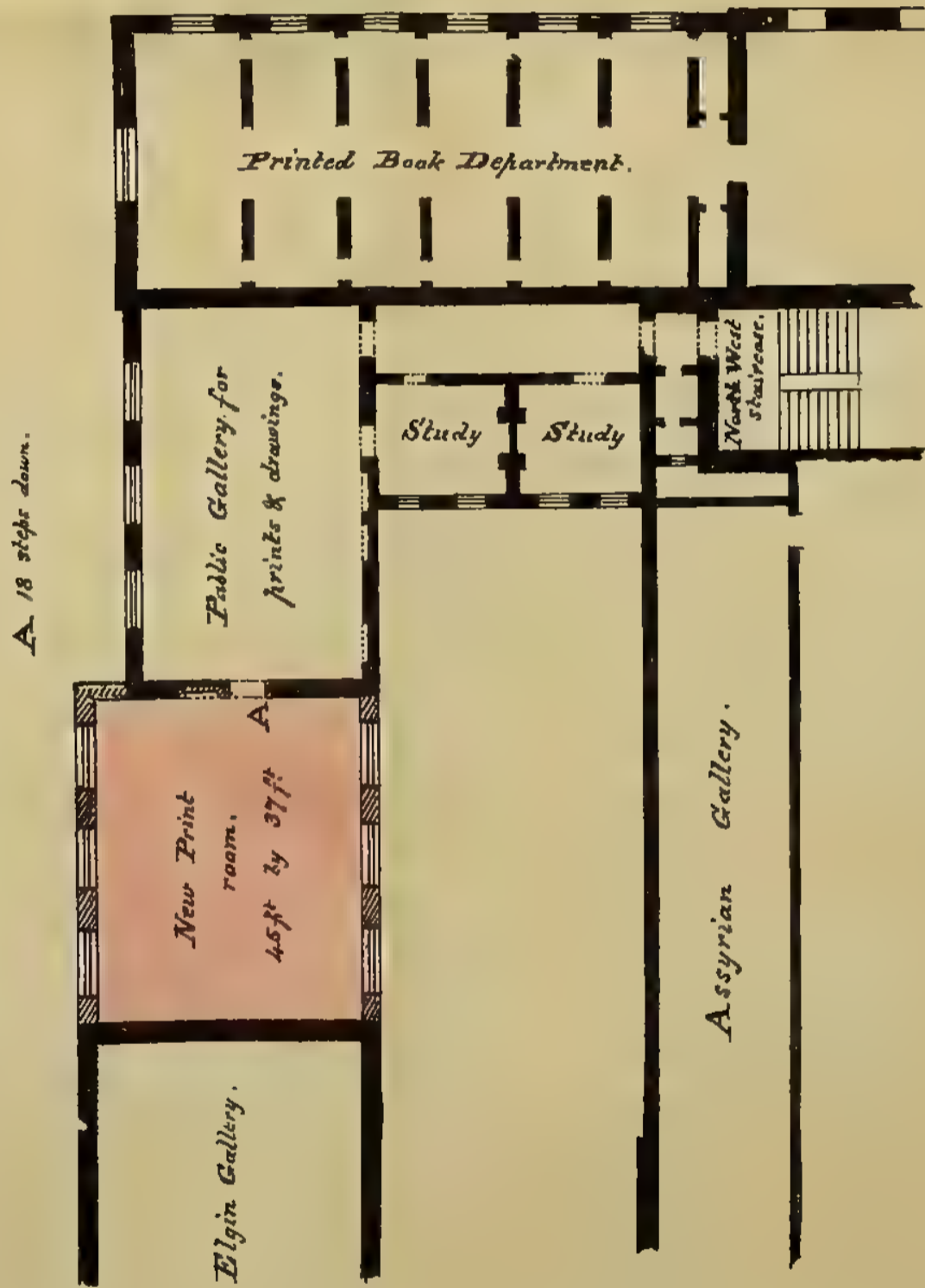
Dec: 3rd 1857.

Scale of $\frac{1}{100}$ 50 100 Feet.

MUSEUM
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BRITISH MUSEUM.

Nº VII.



Feb 7 14th 1852.

Scale of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch = 1 foot. 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Feet.

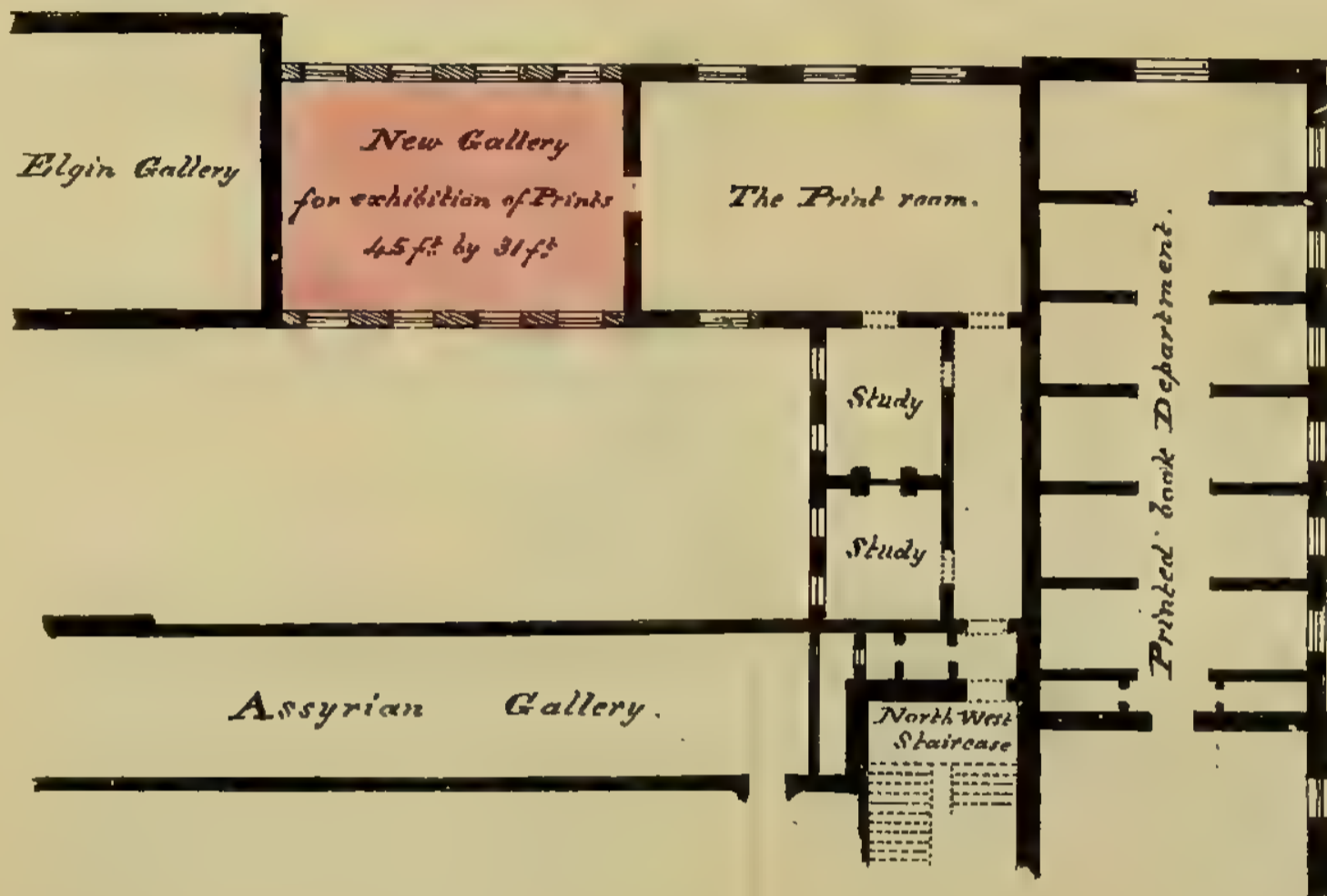


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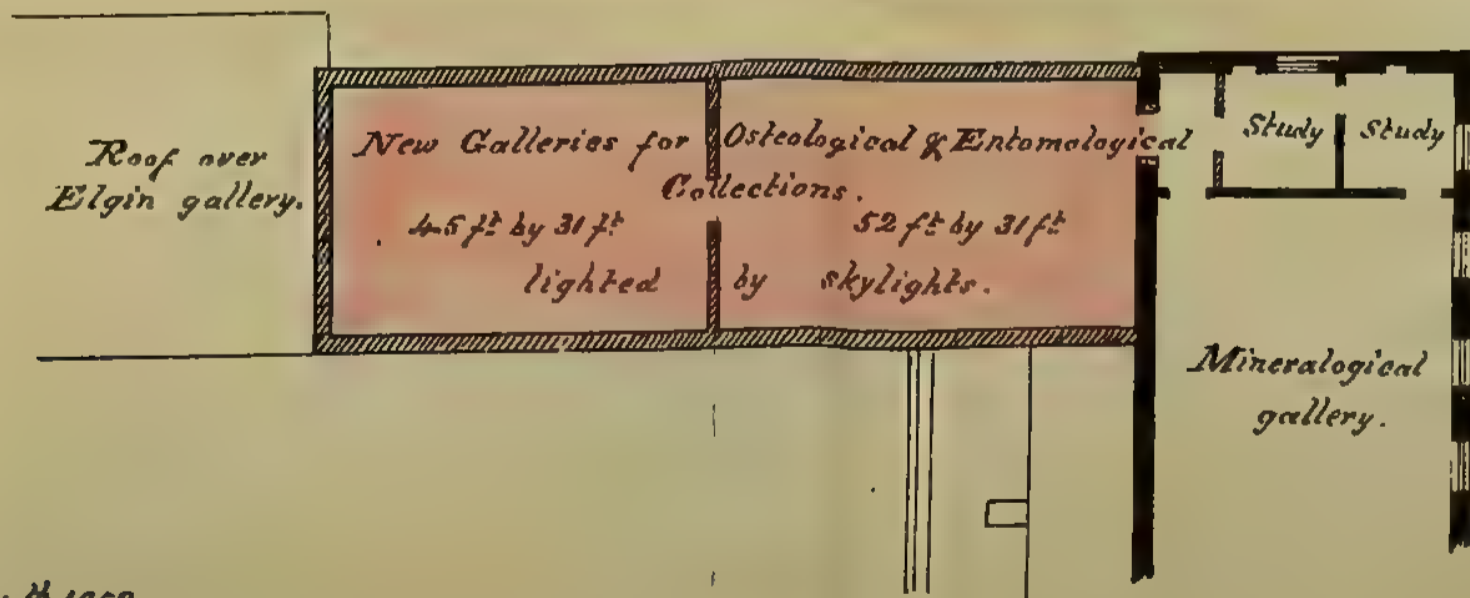
BRITISH MUSEUM .

N^o VIII.

Plan at the general level of the Ground floor .



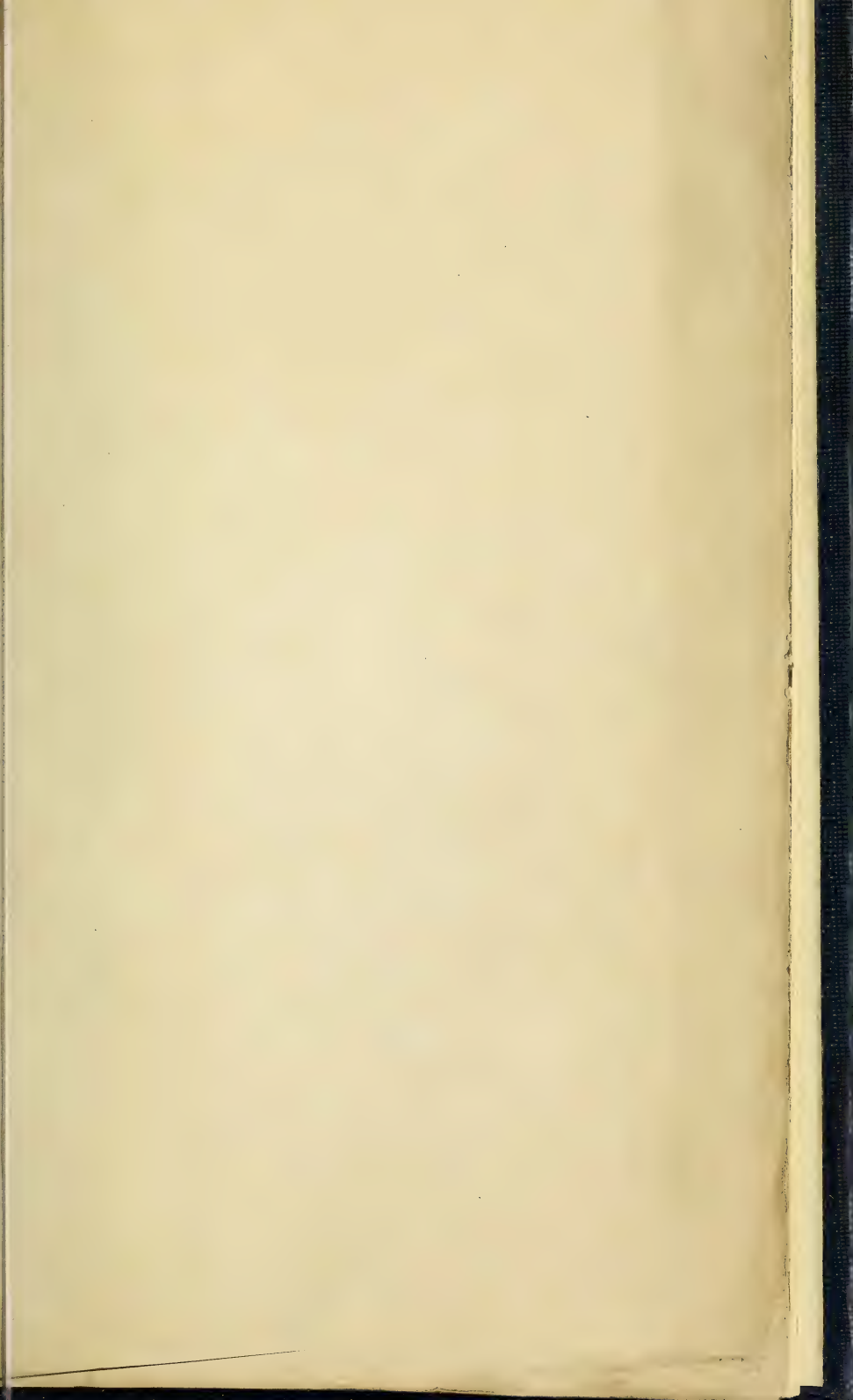
Plan at the general level of the Upper floor.



Feb^y 14th 1852.

Scale of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch = 10 Feet.

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11



20 1844



