

What was the impact of World War II?

Lesson 1, Presentation

Supported by:



Developed in partnership with:

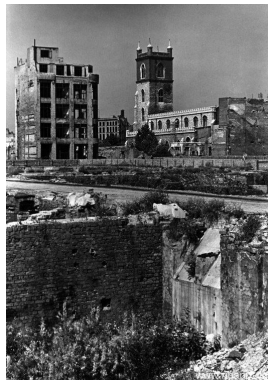


The Building Exploratory



RIBA  Trust

What was the impact of World War II on London?





Lambeth Palace, London: the remains of the chapel after bomb damage, 1950's

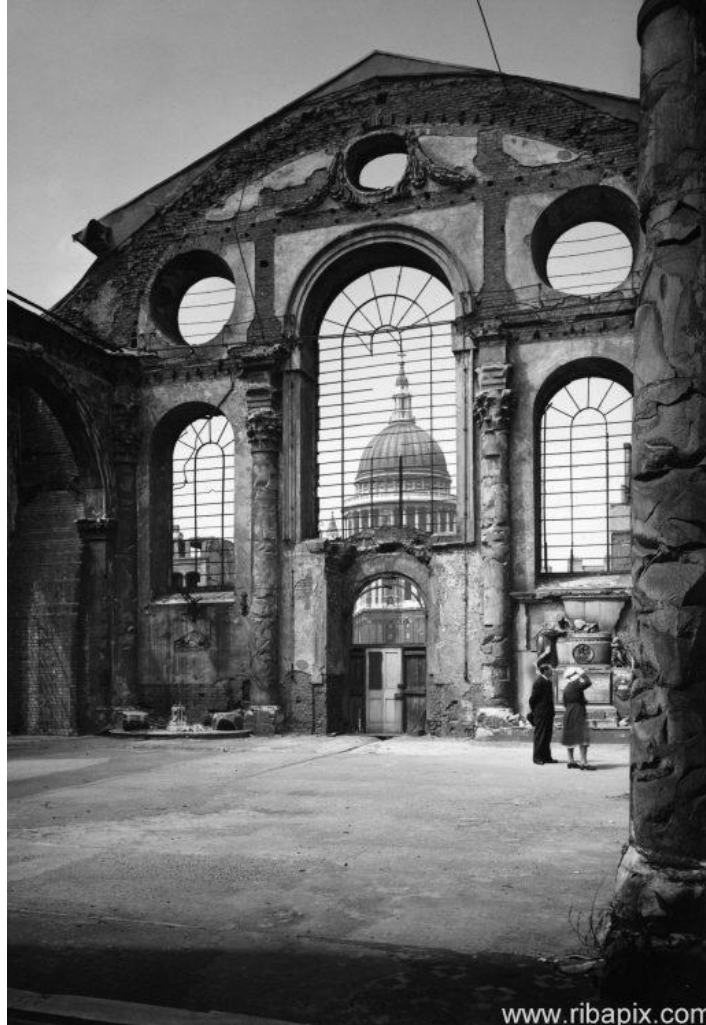
© Royal Institute of British Architects

The German air raids of World War II caused immense damage to the cities of Britain, such as Liverpool, Southampton, Birmingham and most notably London, resulting in many lost lives.

Question 1: Particular cities were targeted for bombing, can you think why?



Masonry from bomb-damaged buildings, City of London, 1940's
© Royal Institute of British Architects



The dome of St Paul's Cathedral seen through the ruins of St Mary-le-Bow, 1940's

© Royal Institute of British Architects

St Mary-le-Bow was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. In 1941 it was destroyed during the Blitz but was rebuilt and re-consecrated in 1964.

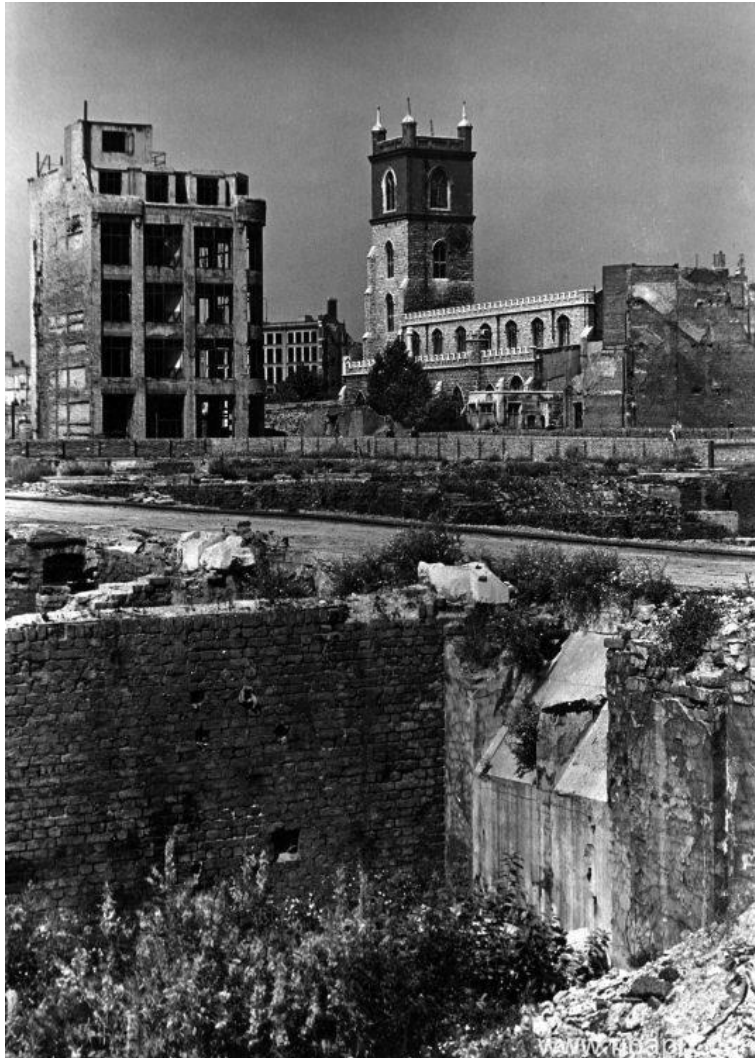
Question 2: This bomb-damaged church has lost many of its features. From the photograph can you identify what has been lost?



Reconstruction of the Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London, following war damage, 1947

© Royal Institute of British Architects

On the nights of 10 and 11 May 1941 incendiary bombs destroyed the Commons Chamber of the Houses of Parliament.



Surviving buildings and ruins after bombing raids during WWII, Barbican, 1940's

© Royal Institute of British Architects

After the war the Cripplegate area was redeveloped to create the Barbican, a residential and arts complex. Only the Church of St. Giles Cripplegate from the photograph survives today.

Question 3: Why keep surviving buildings like this church when reconstructing cities?



A glimpse of the Golden Lane Estate through a bomb damaged building, 1957

© Royal Institute of British Architects

The Golden Lane Estate is adjacent to the Barbican, and built in the 1950's. The area had been severely damaged by bombing during the war.

Question 4: In the 1950s it was still common to see bomb-damaged sites and buildings. On these sites would you rebuild the same buildings or create something new? Explain why.



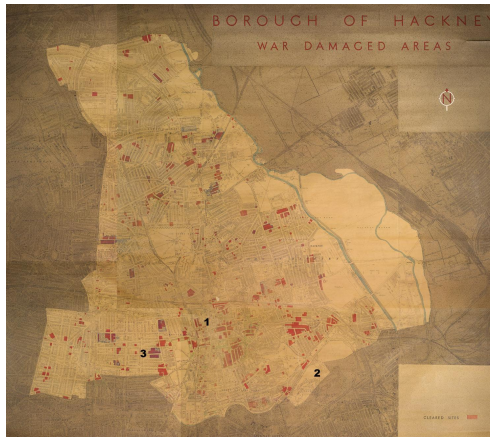
London Underground tunnel shelter, with a doctor's examination room and sick bay, 1942

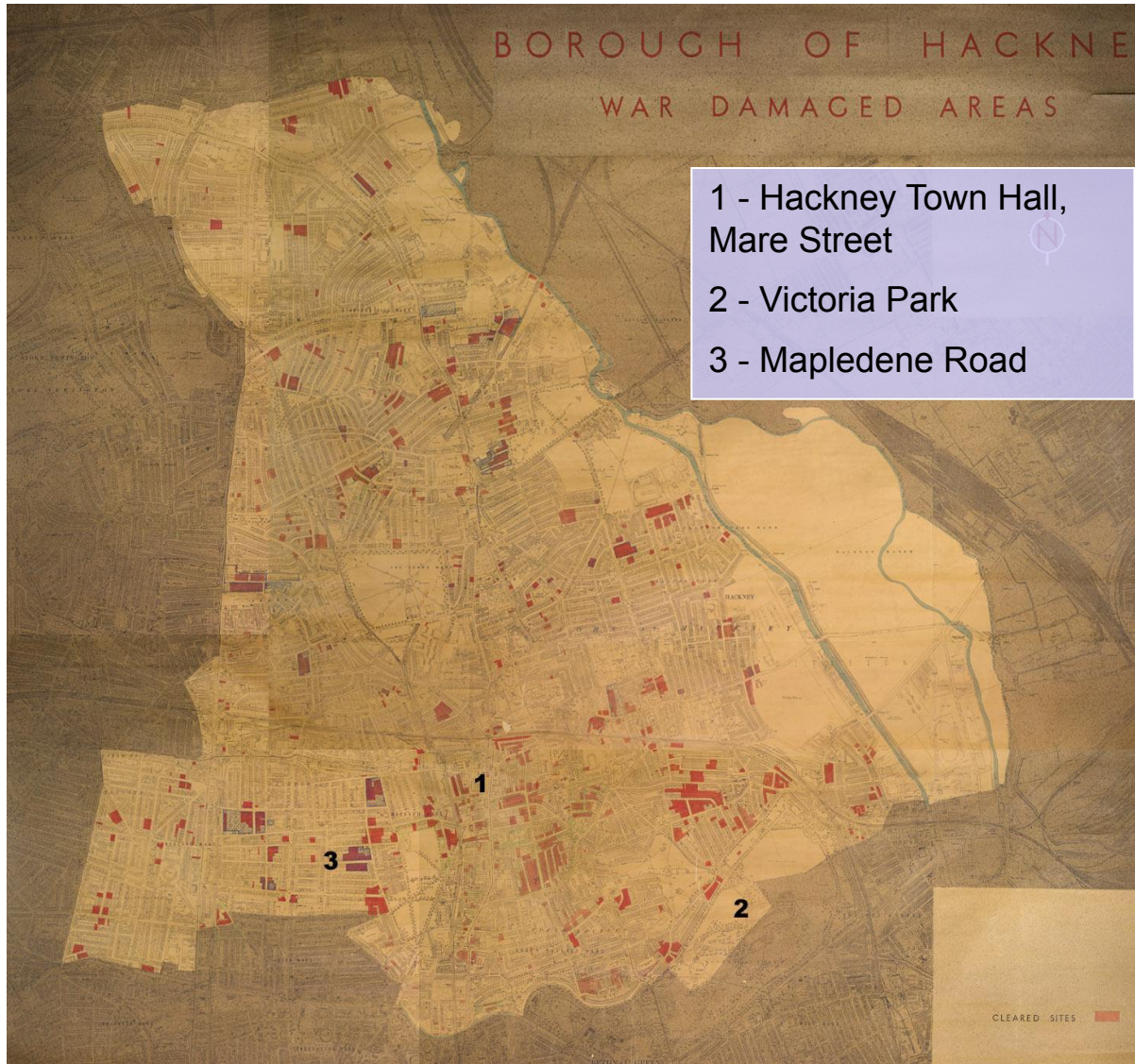
© Royal Institute of British Architects

During the war the tube tunnels of London Underground were converted into bomb shelters. Some were equipped with medical facilities.

Question 5: Why do you think people took shelter in underground stations? What other facilities do you think people would need there?

What was the impact of World War II on Hackney?





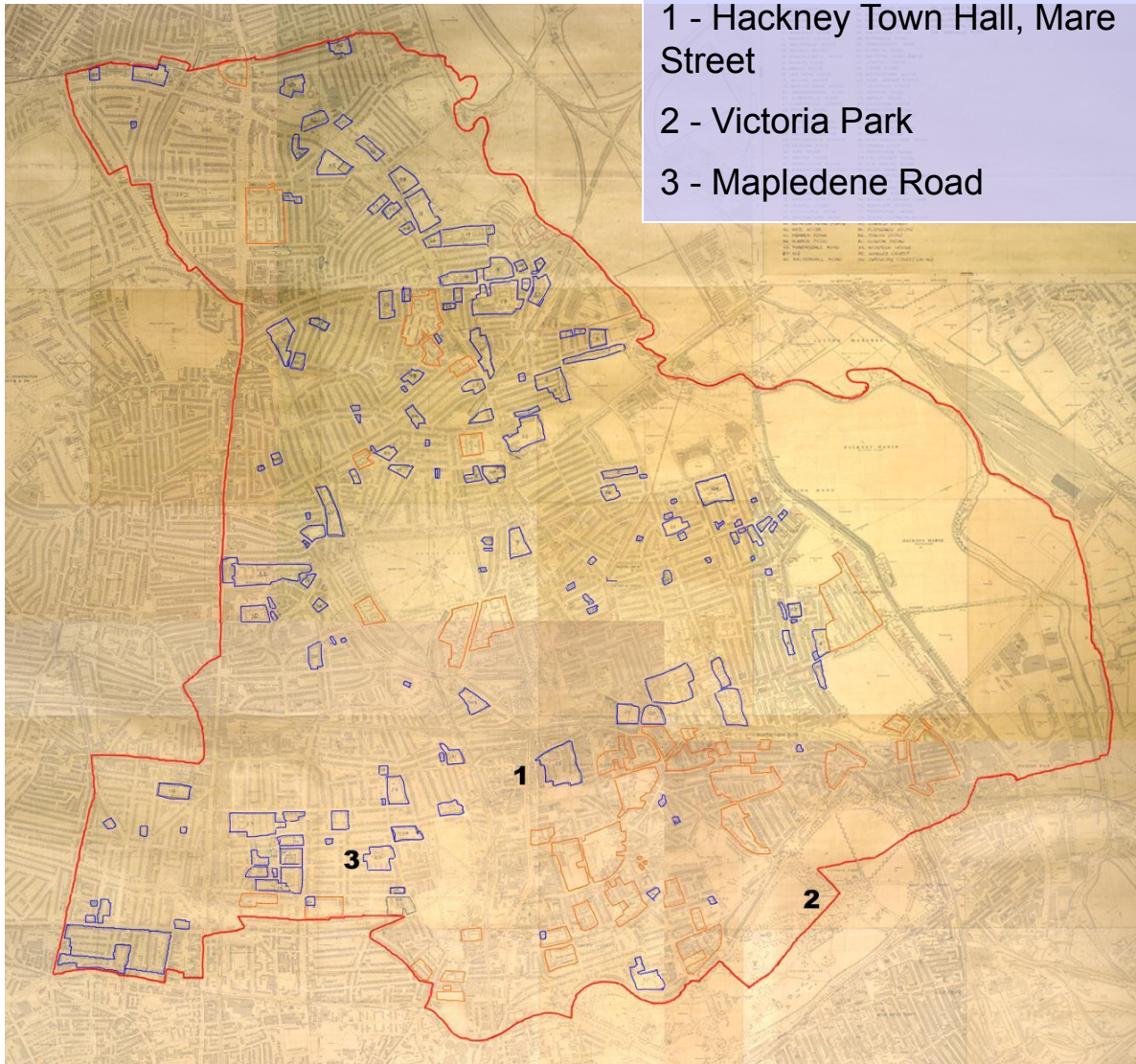
Map of areas cleared due to war damage in 1945, Hackney

Hackney Archives
Ref. HE104

During WWII London was heavily bombed, but the damage was not evenly spread; Hackney suffered more than most.

Question 6:

The map shows the area (in red) damaged during the war. Is there a pattern to the damage? Do you think random or targeted bombing have the same effect on local people? Explain why.



1 - Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street

2 - Victoria Park

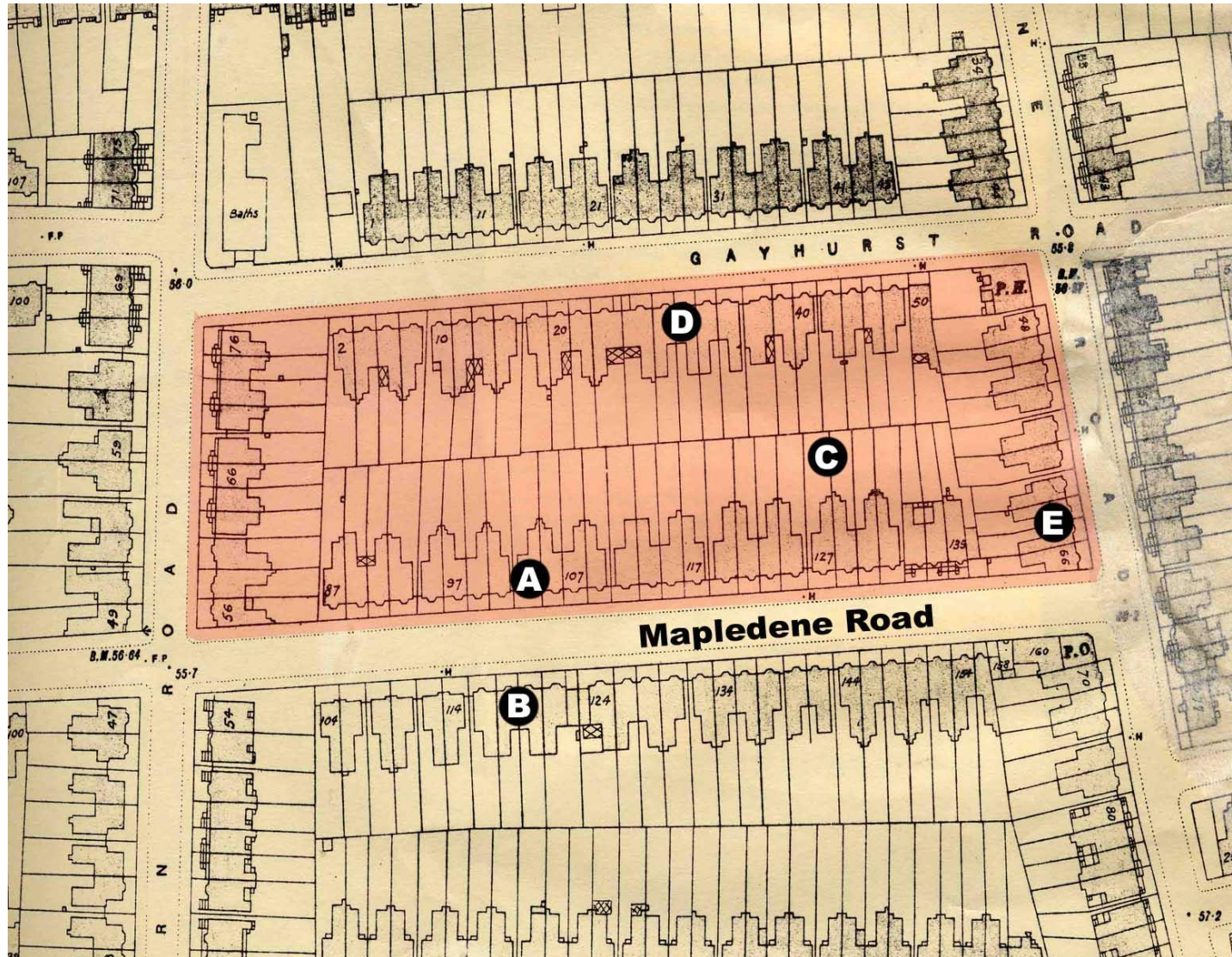
3 - Mapledene Road

Map of clearance and redevelopment areas in 1950, Hackney

Hackney Archives
Ref. HE105

After the damage of WWII many cities were surveyed and areas were identified that needed redeveloping. The boundaries of Hackney are shown in red.

Question 7: The map shows (in blue and orange) the areas that were damaged during the war and to be redeveloped. What impact do you think this plan will have? Who will it affect and who will be involved?



Map of Mapledene Road, Hackney, from 1934

Hackney Archives,
Ref. Ordnance Survey
map, 1934, Sheet V11 17



Bomb damage to 103 Mapledene Road, Hackney, following an attack by the German Air Force with high explosive bombs on 21/22 October 1940.

Hackney Archives
Ref. WD313



Bomb damage to 117-121 Mapledene Road, Hackney, following an attack by the German Air Force with high explosive bombs on 09/10 October 1940.



Bomb damage to 127-129 Mapledene Road, Hackney, showing damage to rear of houses and gardens, following an attack by the German Air Force with high explosive bombs on 09/10 October 1940.

Hackney Archives Ref. WD210

Question 8: Can you see what has happened to the air raid shelters in the gardens? What impact could events like this have on safety and morale?



Bomb damage to 30 Gayhurst Road, Hackney, following an attack by the German Air Force with high explosive bombs on 15/16 October 1940.

How did WWII affect people's homes?

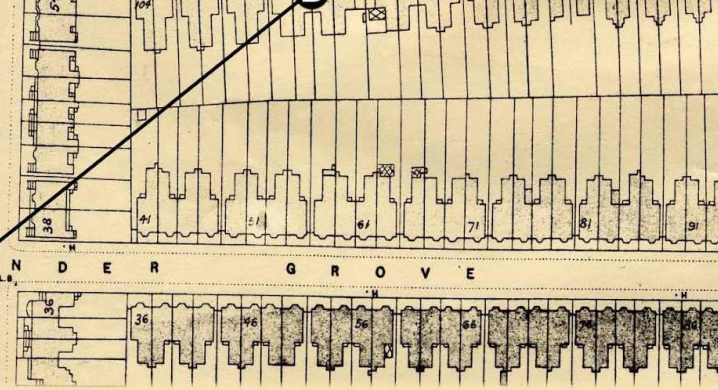
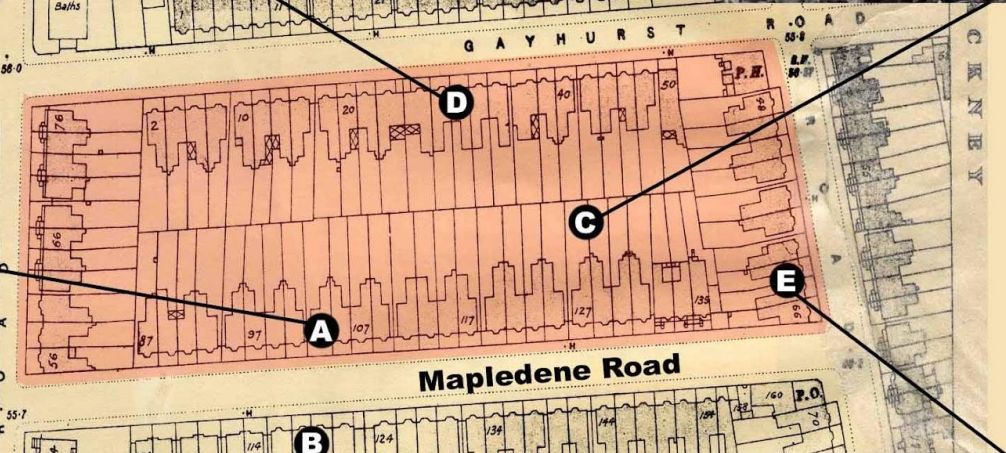
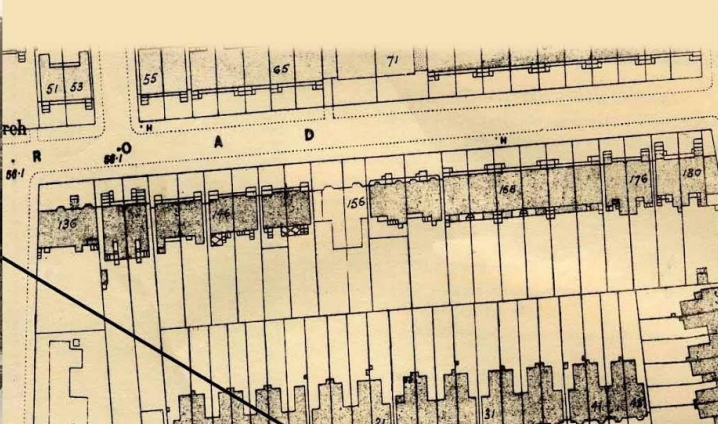
- In Hackney, as elsewhere in Britain, during bombing raids many people left their homes to stay in bomb shelters. Many used domestic shelters that were built in their gardens, others used public shelters such as London Underground stations.
- On their return home after an air raid, many would not have known if their homes would still be standing.
- **Question 9:** What would you imagine people coming out of their shelters would be thinking and hoping? How do you think people would have prepared in case their homes were destroyed?



Bomb damage to 60-64 Lansdowne Drive, following an attack by the German Air Force with high explosive bombs on 15/16 October 1940.

Hackney Archives Ref. WD316

Question 10: Carefully observe this photograph. Now sketch what you can see, especially anything that interests you.



Maps and photographs
(Hackney Archives)