

HA Resource Hub Submission Form	
Resource Title: Development of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths	Age Range: 9-11
Author name and email contact: Kim Biddulph kim.biddulph@cityoflondon.gov.uk	Resource Details: (e.g. how many documents does it consist of? In which order?) This PDF, with images and reconstruction of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths.
Necessary prior learning to complete this: Dates of start of Roman occupation of Britain Some learning about the Roman period, and bathing in particular, before using this resource would be recommended.	What does it lead to next? Discussion of the end of Roman Britain. Where did the Britons go when the Roman legions left and the Anglo-Saxons invaded?
Explanation: How should this resource be used? The resource shows a reconstruction produced in 2020 of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths in the City of London (Roman Londinium) by Judith Dobie. The reconstruction drawing shows what we think the house and bathhouse looked like when it was at its height in AD 250 using evidence found in excavation. It may not be totally accurate – we used evidence as much as possible but also used educated guesses. Look at the document about what is left of the bathhouse now – there is a photo of it and a plan of the walls. Compare this to the large version of Judith’s painting. Which bits are based on the evidence (the bathhouse and two sections of the house). Which bits are based on educated guesses? (the section of the house on the left – no evidence has been found for it). Now look more closely at the painting. Ask children to point out some of the detail e.g. mending the road, unloading cargo from the boats on the river, taking cows to market, stoking the furnace of the bathhouse (the white T-shaped building). “If this house is in London, what is the name of the river?” (<i>Thames</i>) Look at the different buildings and explore why they are different shapes. The white one in the middle is a bathhouse. A Roman bathhouse was like a sauna today. The rooms were heated using a furnace and chimneys so that the heat was drawn through the building under the floor and up the walls. Some rooms would have been warmer than others e.g. the one nearest the furnace. “How do we know it was a furnace?” (because burned wood was found in it). “Do you have any idea why the roof would have been curved instead of pointed like the other roofs?” (<i>Because a curved roof helps to circulate the heat evenly</i>). We know the roof was curved because we have found some of the curved roof tiles when they fell down onto the bathhouse floor. Tell children that this is a picture of the house in AD 250. Recap when the Romans arrived (AD 43). Explain that this house went through some changes over time since the beginning of the Roman period. Print out the Development over Time resource for children to draw on or look at it on screen. In each box there is a short description of what the house looked like at different times during and after the Roman occupation of Britain. Get children to draw the house as they think it looked at one or more of these different times. For instance, in AD 150, children could just draw the U-shaped house with the red	

tile roof and not draw the bathhouse – there might have been a garden there instead. In AD 550, you could draw the house and bathhouse without any roofs and with the walls falling down – soil would be covering the North Wing, the section furthest away from the river.

Discuss how the site changed over time e.g. the river got further away. “Why was that?” (*Because the Romans built new wharves out into the river every few decades.*) “Why did the house fall down?” (*Because it was abandoned.*) Explain that sometime soon after AD 400 the Roman army was called back to Rome and Britain was abandoned. When the Anglo-Saxons came they didn’t live in Londinium. “Why not?” (*Britons might still have been living there, or the houses were crumbling and couldn’t be lived in, or the Anglo-Saxons may have been superstitious about living in the old abandoned City.*)

Discuss how easy or difficult it was to imagine and draw the house at different times. We don’t have photos of places or people as far back as the Roman times so we rely on these kinds of drawings to show us what it was like, but sometimes they are based on guesses. What does that make you think about other pictures of Roman places and people? (We have to look at the evidence behind the pictures)

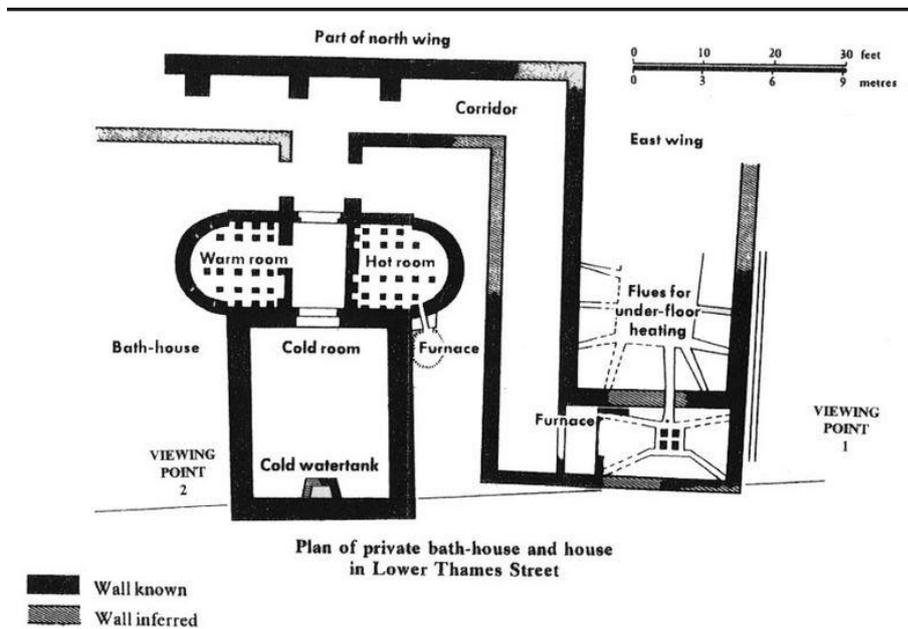
Billingsgate Roman House and Baths

What does it look like now?



This is a photo of the bathhouse today. Most of the walls and the roof have disappeared and all we have are the bottoms of the walls and the floors. The room closest to us is one of the heated rooms in the bathhouse and you can actually see under the floor where stacks of tiles held the floor up.

What is left of the house and bathhouse?



There is only the bathhouse and some of the house left to see. On the right is the East Wing and at the top is the North Wing. We think there was a West Wing but we haven't found it.

Painted reconstruction of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths by Judith Dobie.



The house is U-shaped, with a white roofed T-shaped bathhouse in the central courtyard. Two boats are tied up at the Thames wharf, unloading goods.