



**Christopher Clarke Antiques**

**Dealers in Campaign Furniture  
& Travel Items**

The Navy Office, Crutched Friars, 1750.

REF: 82783

Height: 18.41 cm (7.2") Width: 27.29 cm (10.7")

**£420**



This naive watercolour on paper is titled to the top left 'The Navy Office, Crutched Friars, 1750'.

The distinct perspective suggests that it was copied from the King's Manuscripts folio titled 'A survey and description of the principal harbours with their accommodations and conveniences for erecting, mooring, securing and refitting the Navy Royal of England (1698)' and attributed to Edmund Dummer. A similar engraving was made by T. Taylor in 1714. Aside from its naivety, this watercolour does have some differences though, most notably the people going about their business. The red brick wall also has an entrance only on the left side whereas in the prints both walls to either side of the main gate have their own entrance.

The Navy Office moved to this site in 1654 and stayed there until its relocation to Somerset House in 1786. Previously it had occupied various different other locations in the Tower Hill area. The painting shows Sir Christopher Wren's building which was completed in 1682 and built on the site of the previous Navy Office which burnt down in 1672. The Comptroller of the Navy presided over the 'Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Navy' who made up the Navy Board and worked out of this building. The naval officers and civilians who made up the Board were responsible for the business of running an efficient navy.

This included everything from the construction of ships and the upkeep of docks and buildings to organising supplies and paying the wages. One notable board member was Samuel Pepys who was Clerk of the Acts.

Despite its naïve qualities, the artist has been methodical in their work on the building, making good use of a ruler. However, the people have a much jollier looser style. This is an interesting watercolour of a building that helped Britain build it's empire. In a simple black frame. Mid to late 18th Century.

Image is given. Framed size is H 8 3/4 (22 cm) W 12 1/2 (31.75 cm) D 1/2 inches (1.5 cm)