

Excavation at 28–31 Wimbledon High Street

A trial excavation in Wimbledon High Street to assess the extent of medieval occupation revealed only post-medieval features.

Excavation (figs 1, 2)

A trial excavation c5m×12m took place in February 1979 in advance of redevelopment on a site at 28–31 Wimbledon High Street (TQ 23920 71090), which was previously used as a garage and is now the site of shops and Haygarth Place. The excavation was carried out by the South-west London Archaeological Unit, then employed by the Surrey Archaeological Society and now part of the Department of Greater London Archaeology of the Museum of London. It was thought likely that evidence of the medieval village of Wimbledon would be found, since documentary sources dating from the 17th century indicated such occupation on the site (Milward 1972). However the site was found to have been much disturbed by post-medieval service trenches and buildings to a depth of at least 1m: excavation was restricted to a depth of under 1m by the site contractors. Most of the features recorded probably belonged to a building which existed on the site from at least 1865 (shown on successive Ordnance Survey maps). To the east, clearance by demolition contractors showed that much of the site had been destroyed by a large deep cellar. To the south, the site had been densely built up by at least 1865; close examination of this area including several contractor's trenches showed that it consisted of sterile soil and modern bricks only and was otherwise devoid of finds and features.

Finds by Clive Orton

The whole collection forms a small assemblage of 18th and 19th century domestic items typical of the London area. The majority of the pottery is creamware; post-medieval coarse redware, Staffordshire combed slipware, stonewares, salt-glazed white ware, tin-glazed ware and Chinese porcelain are also present. A variety of forms is represented – plates are perhaps most common, but there are also bowls, cups, jars and tiles.

There are no clay pipe bowls; most of the stems appear to be of 18th or 19th century date, but a few, which are more abraded than the others, may date to the 17th century.

The majority of the glass is of hand-made dark green bottle glass, c1650–1850, mostly within the latter half of that range. There are also examples of 19th century machine-made bottle glass in olive and blue. Fragments of 18th or 19th century window glass include a 'bulls-eye'.

The bulk of the dating evidence is thus for the late 18th or 19th century. Some items are earlier (17th or early 18th century), but there is nothing earlier than the 17th century, and very little that has to be earlier than the 18th century.

Further details of the site and finds can be found in the microfiche and in the site archive held by the Museum of London.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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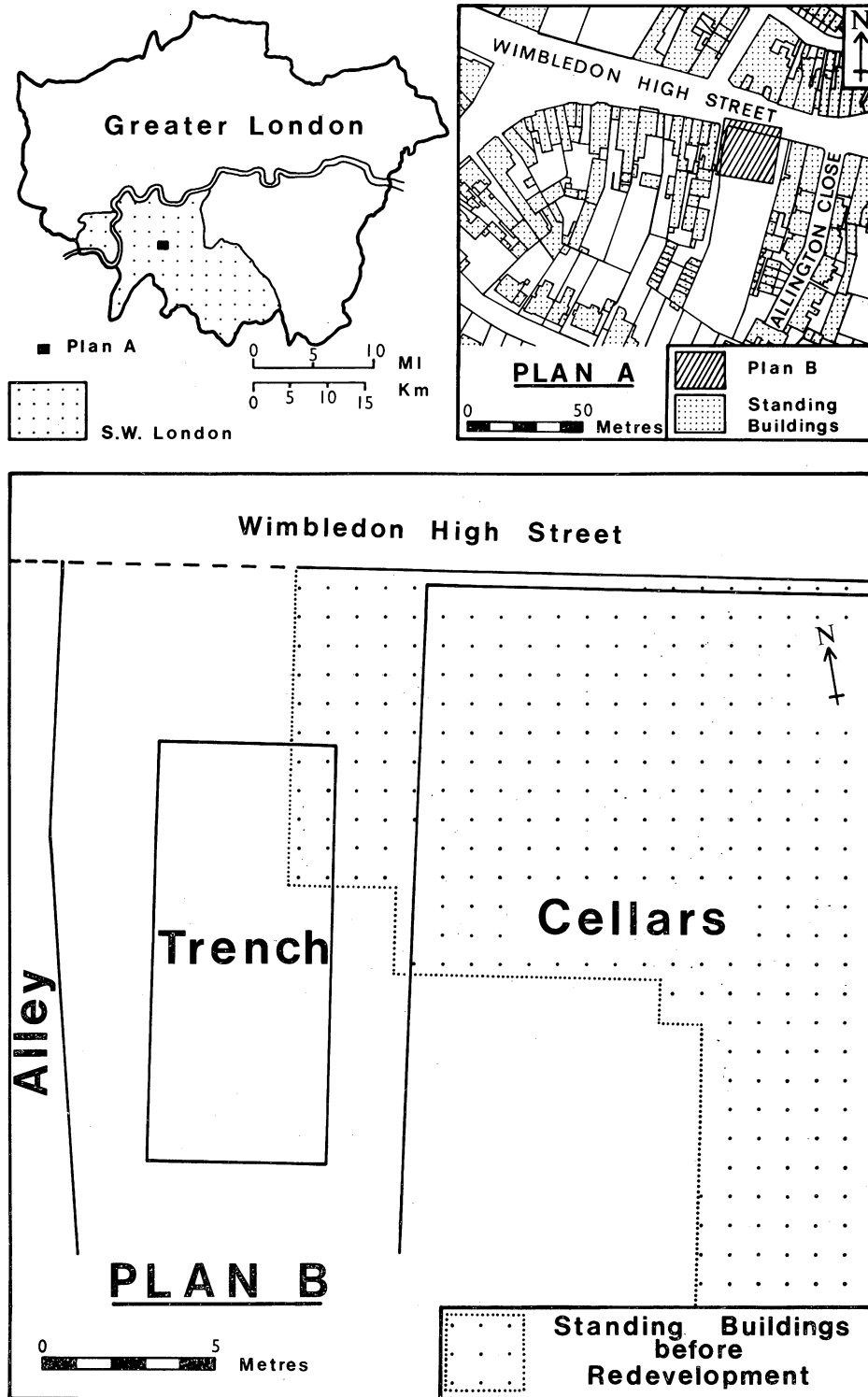


Fig 1. 28-31 Wimbledon High Street: location plans and site plan

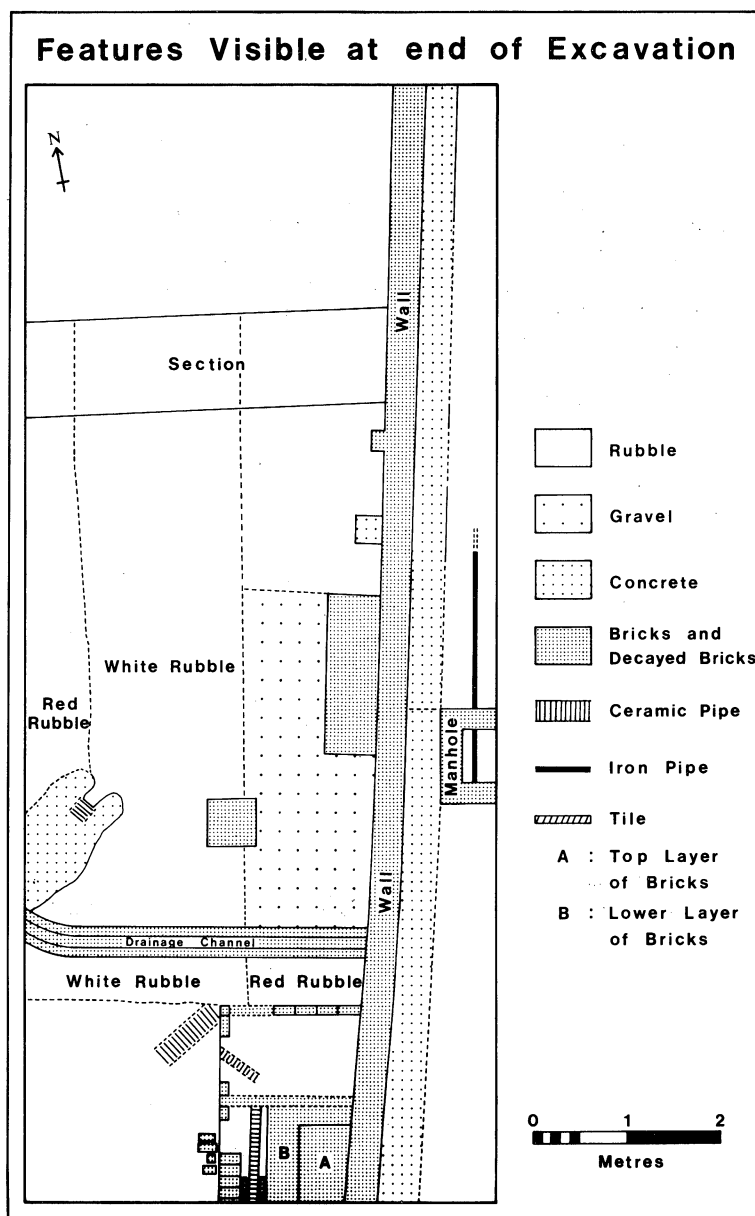


Fig 2. 28-31 Wimbledon High Street: plan of trench showing visible features

REFERENCES

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