

they also post-date probable earlier garden features, and several contained finds dating to 1720 or later.

In the southwest corner of the site there were what appear to be three large bedding pits, more or less equally spaced on an east-west line. Pottery suggests a date of at least 1720; the alignment also differs slightly to that of earlier features.

Environmental evidence

A number of samples were taken, principally from within the historic garden. However, the well-drained and fairly acidic soil did not favour preservation; examination produced no more than a few fragments of bone and charcoal and several garden snails. Some bone was also recovered by hand, again relatively fragmentary and limited to common domesticated animals.

The end of the historic garden

Overlying the garden was a deposit of quite uniformly graded topsoil/subsoil, about 0.5m (20in) thick, which produced finds dating to between 1750 and 1900. It is likely that the whole area had been put to turf, in a single event which sealed the historic garden. Several factors indicate that this took place about 1740:

The dating evidence from the garden. Soil horizons were of limited value, with much material pre-1700. However, there were several phases of development, and some secondary features date from at least the 1720s.

A change in garden design is clearly denoted by the robbing of the north-south dividing wall. This is approximately dated to the mid 18th century, and would seem to be contemporary with the demise of the garden, in that both garden features and robbing are overlain by the same deposit.

Some dating evidence was obtained from the inter-

face of historic garden and overlying deposits. This indicates a date shortly before the mid 18th century; an apparently subsequent feature has also been dated to c 1750.

The disappearance of the garden in the 1740s would fit with a contemporary change in ideas. This may be summarised as a new fashion for naturalised and more open gardens, which rapidly displaced the concept of formal design; the results were usually drastic and, at least in southern England, almost universal.

Conclusion

The finds from Chester House included both prehistoric and early medieval material. These groups, although largely residual, form valuable additions to the corpus of evidence for early settlement. This is particularly true of the medieval pottery, when set against the background of other recent work.

The main finding of the investigation was undoubtedly the historic garden. This is complementary to the history of Chester House; it also contributes to the wider knowledge of gardens, much of it from documentary sources. The garden falls at a significant point, in the final phase of formal design which followed the Restoration, and shortly before the major changes of the mid 18th century.

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Annual Lecture and Meeting

THE ANNUAL Lecture and Meeting of the London Archaeologist will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 17th May in the Lecture Theatre of the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1. The speaker will be announced in the next issue. Before the lecture, the annual reports and accounts will be presented. The proceedings will include the election

of officers and the election to the Publication Committee of the six local society representatives, whose nominations should be made to the Chairman, c/o 7 Coalecroft Road, SW15 6LW. Local societies are invited to send one representative with voting powers; subscribers and their friends will also be welcome. Refreshments will be served from 6.30 p.m.