

houses outside the north gate to be allocated to merchants of the fairs¹⁷. Ralph Vineter had acquired two tenements outside the Abbey Gate by the end of the 13th century, and by 1343 the plot was developed as the Holy Way Tavern¹⁸. In the early 16th century the plot was occupied by the Saracen's Head which was certainly in existence by 1398¹⁹.

A possible interpretation for the excavated medieval building is that it was one of the houses built in this area soon after 1250 and bought by Abbot de Wenlock in 1289. A fourth property was later added and all were leased at very high rates to merchants during the fairs: the four properties had a combined rate of £75 for the month of the fair and Henry Nazard paid £14 13s 4d each year for one property during the fair between 1311 and 1314²⁰. These houses were probably two-storey buildings with solars above; one having a cellar containing three shops²¹.

By the middle of the 14th century, with the decline of the fair, the houses (now five in number) were rented out without reference to the fair for less than half the rate asked in the late 13th century²². This may be the period when the painted plaster was stripped from the walls and new floors laid. By the end of the 14th century there were seven houses rented out for a combined total of £21 6s 8d²³. It may have been during this period that

partitions were constructed in the building. In 1486-7 (the time of the demise of the fair) Westminster Abbey paid £230 to rebuild four houses and the Saracen's Head²⁴. This may equate with the removal of the partitions and the deposition of layers of building material. From this time on there were hearths in the structure, suggesting a domestic function, although it is unknown whether there were other hearths elsewhere in the building during the earlier periods. The building continued in use with little change until the south wall was rebuilt and the western wall was constructed during the 17th century, perhaps for sub-division into tenements. Demolition probably took place in about 1800.

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17. *Ibid.*, 101.

19. *Ibid.*, 37.

21. *Ibid.*, 101.

23. *Ibid.*, 111.

18. *Ibid.*, 24.

20. *Ibid.*, 106.

22. *Ibid.*, 110-1.

24. *Ibid.*, 79.

Excavations and post-excavation work

City of London. Enquiries to Museum of London Archaeology Service, Number One, London Wall, London EC2Y 5EA (0171-972 9111).

Croydon & District, processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collections every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Enquiries to Mrs Muriel Shaw, 28 Lismore Road, South Croydon, CR2 7QA (0181-688 2720).

Greater London (except north-east and south-east London), by Museum of London Archaeology Service. Excavations and processing in all areas. General enquiries to MOLAS, Number One, London Wall, London EC2Y 5EA (0171-972 9111).

Borough of Greenwich. Cataloguing of excavated and other archaeological material, the majority from sites in the borough. For further information contact Greenwich Borough Museum, 232 Plumstead High Street, London SE18 1JT (0181-855 3240).

Hammersmith & Fulham, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Fulham Palace. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham Palace Road, SW6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, SW6 (0171-731 4498).

Kingston, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston (0181-546 5386).

North-east London, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Newham Museum Service, Archaeology and Local History Centre, 31 Stock Street, E13 0BX (0181-472 4785).

Surrey, by Surrey County Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to Rob Poulton, Archaeological Unit Manager, Planning Department, Pelham Lodge, Kingston, Surrey (0181-541 9457).

Vauxhall Pottery, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, SE17 (0171-703 3324).

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