

# New evidence for the development of the Roman city wall: excavations at 38–40 Trinity Square, London EC3: the post-Roman features

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## Introduction

Details of site location and history can be found in a previous article.<sup>1</sup>

## The medieval sequence

Twelve medieval pits, dating to AD 900–1220, and mostly square or rectangular with similar dark brown fills, were spread across the site (Open Area 6; Fig. 1). Two gullies (Structures 8 and 9; Fig. 1) also belong to this period. The western gully, S8, could provide evidence for the earlier Woodruffe Lane. Although S9, in the north-east of the site, appeared to correlate with medieval property boundary D18, dated 1270–1380, at CPW9,<sup>2</sup> the relationship of this alignment with activity at TRT85 is unclear.

Within the OA6 assemblage, the earliest post-Roman pottery recorded was late Saxon shelly ware (LSS), dating to c. 900–1050. A single sherd of red-painted ware, imported from the Rhineland, had a similar, if extended, date range of c. 900–1250. Common early medieval handmade wares, including early medieval sand-tempered ware (EMS), early medieval sand- and shell-tempered ware (EMSS), early medieval flint-tempered ware (EMFL), early medieval shell-tempered ware (EMSH), and London-area greyware (LOGR) were recorded. All come from cooking pots or jars, mostly sooted from use. The latest fabrics recorded are London-type wares (LCOAR and LCALC), first used in London at the end of the 11th century.<sup>3</sup> An early rounded jug in LCOAR,<sup>4</sup> with green glaze over a white slip, was found in structure 9. It had a rod

handle, rather than the usual strap form, stabbed down its length,<sup>5</sup> and dates to the second half of the 12th century. The latest medieval pottery identified is part of a jug in London-type ware decorated in the north French style (LOND NFR), and dating to c. 1180–1220.<sup>6</sup> It was found with part of a cooking pot in shelly-sandy ware (SSW), the wheel-thrown, shell-tempered pottery made in the London industry c. 1140–1220.<sup>7</sup> Apart from the one early rounded jug in LCOAR there are few large or joining sherds and the finds seem to represent casual disposal of domestic rubbish rather than concentrated dumping.

A sample from pit [256] had a large plant remains assemblage, with mostly free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum/turgidum*) and oats (*Avena* sp.), with a few grains of rye (*Secale cereale*) and one of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). A number of chaff fragments consisted mostly of bread wheat (*T. aestivum*) rachis fragments, and a single pedicel from wild oat (*A. fatua*),

perhaps from the wild species, included as crop weeds. Seeds of several other wild plants, came from typical weeds of arable fields including corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), knapweed (cf. *Centaurea*) and brome (cf. *Bromus* sp.). Uncharred seeds were all from wild species and came mostly from plants of disturbed and wasteland habitats.

## Post-medieval development

The earliest maps show that the area around the site was still relatively open in the later 16th century (Fig. 2).

This is corroborated by the sparse

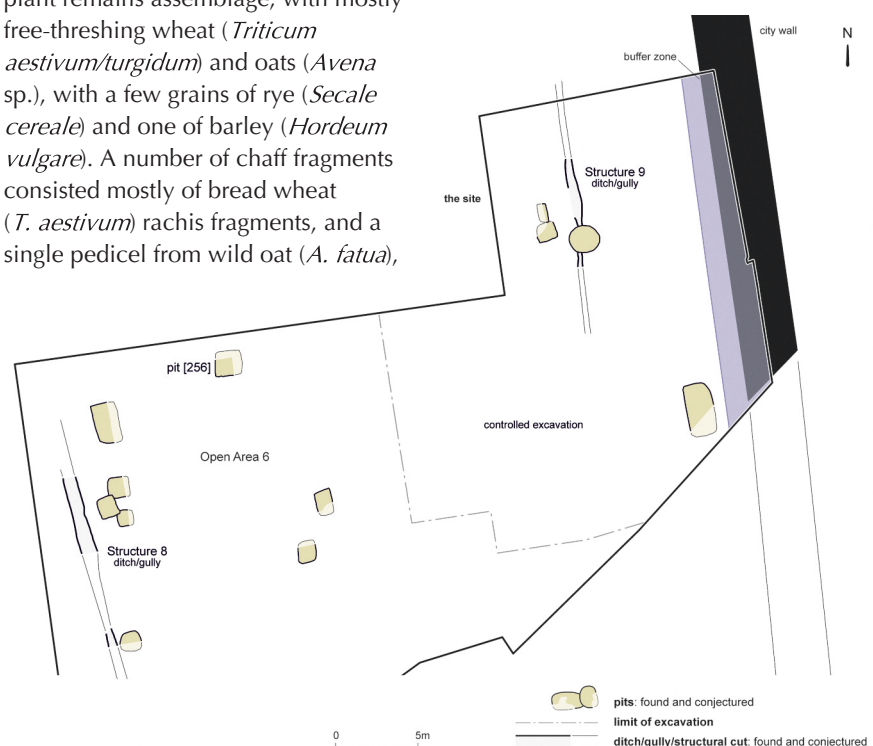


Fig. 1: medieval features

## TRINITY SQUARE

archaeological record. The only feature dated to the 16th century was a well (Structure 10; Fig. 3), c. 2.40m diameter and the deepest feature on the site with the base at 7.30m OD. Its fills included a plain green-glazed Low Countries floor tile of 1480–1600. Vast numbers of plain-glazed floor tiles were being brought into London from the Low Countries at this date. Twenty-one sherds came from a single vessel, a deep straight-sided unglazed bowl in early London-area post-medieval redware (PMRE), which had a deliberately perforated base and was most likely a planter or flowerpot. A garden theme was also suggested by evidence in environmental samples from the well fill for a diverse assemblage of plants often cultivated in kitchen gardens, including violets (*Viola* sp.), vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) and common purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*). The flowers and leaves were also used medicinally. Seeds of common garden weeds such as sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*), dead-nettle (*Lamium* sp.) and fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*) were also recovered, supporting the theory that the well lay within, or close to, a kitchen garden.

Four brick-lined features of 16th–18th-century date, Structures 11 and 16–18) were concentrated on the eastern side of the site (Fig. 3). Structure 11 was set in a cut 3m wide and 1.40m deep, with a flat base at 9.35m OD, and soakaway holes in the surround. The size of the London-made bricks suggests a late 15th–16th century date, but bricks of this date were frequently reused. The remaining three, (S16–18), were cellars set against the city wall, all of which fell out of use in the late 18th

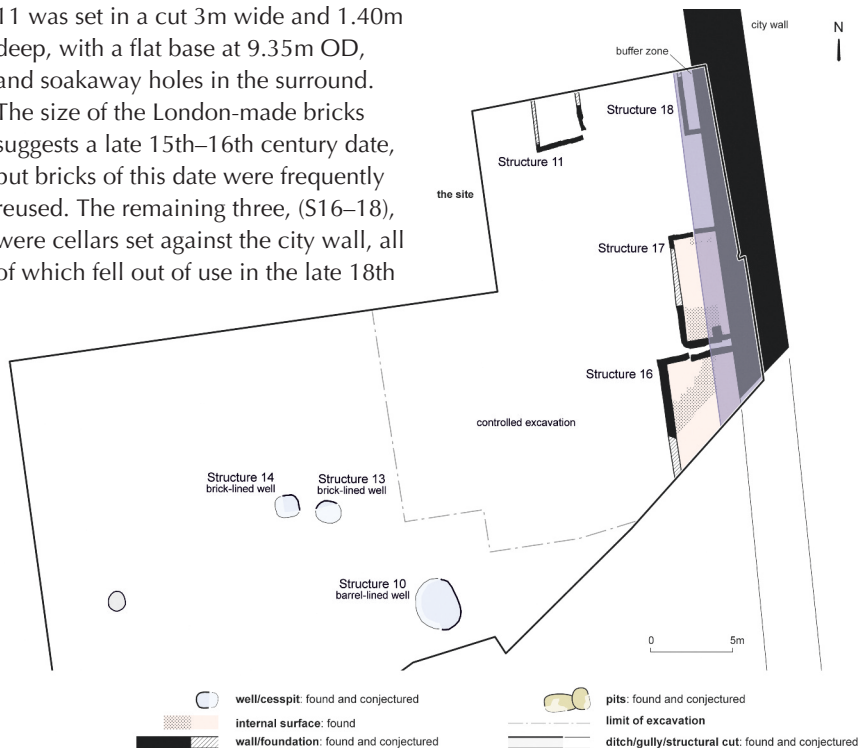


Fig. 3: post-medieval features

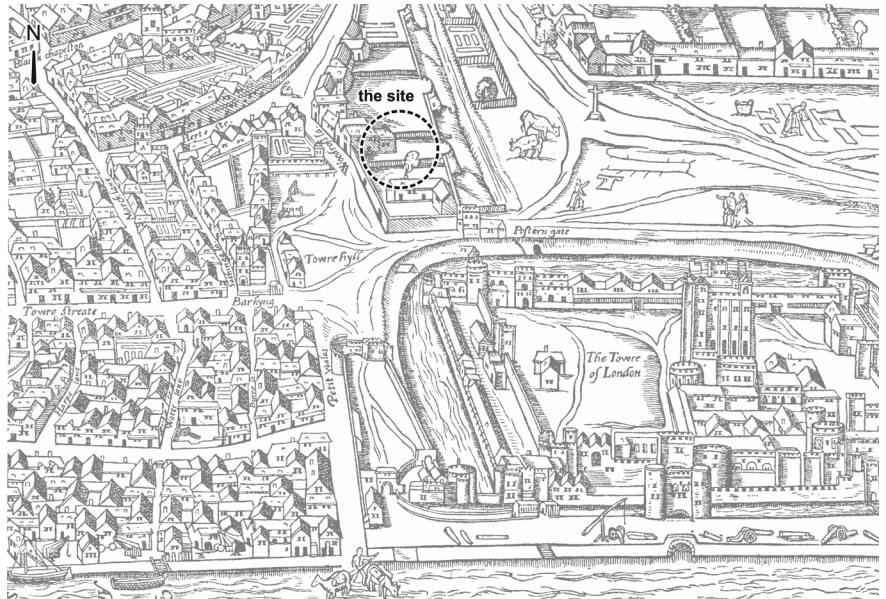


Fig. 2: the surrounding area as shown on Agas map c. 1560

or early 19th century. The evidence for these buildings contrasts with the western part of the site where well S10 and two brick-lined wells, Structures 13 and 14, were more likely to be set within an external yard to serve adjacent properties.

The central cellar, S17 was defined by three brick walls and a brick floor butted up against the city wall. The bricks dated to 1550–1700 but the structure post-dated pit [139], under its floor (Fig. 3) which contained two tin-

glazed tiles of interest. A floor tile, on which glaze had run during manufacture leaving two bald areas devoid (<T1>; Fig. 4) is probably a 'waster' or 'second'. Its design is uncertain, but it may have looked similar to tiles illustrated by Betts & Weinstein.<sup>8</sup> At least some of these were made at the Pickleherring or Rotherhithe pothouse c. 1618–1650. The other tile, a 'delft' tile showing either a landscape or biblical scene and probably from a fireplace surround, shows part of two figures painted in blue on a white background (<T2>; Fig. 4). It is probably 18th-century in date and could be of either English or Dutch origin.

It is therefore likely that S17 was not built until the 18th century. It may have been in use for about a century. The cellar infill, representing its disuse, included fabrics and forms made during the last quarter of the 18th and into the first quarter of the 19th century, with a latest date of deposition c. 1810–20 most likely, with its bias towards creamware and pearlware. Decorations included transfer-printed patterns. Also teawares, from two teapots and their lids, as well as four tea bowls, two saucers and two probable slop bowls, highlighted the important place that tea-drinking had assumed in English society by the end of the 18th century (decorated teapot with lid <61>; Fig. 5). A residual item was a probable mid-late 17th century tin-glazed tile. This

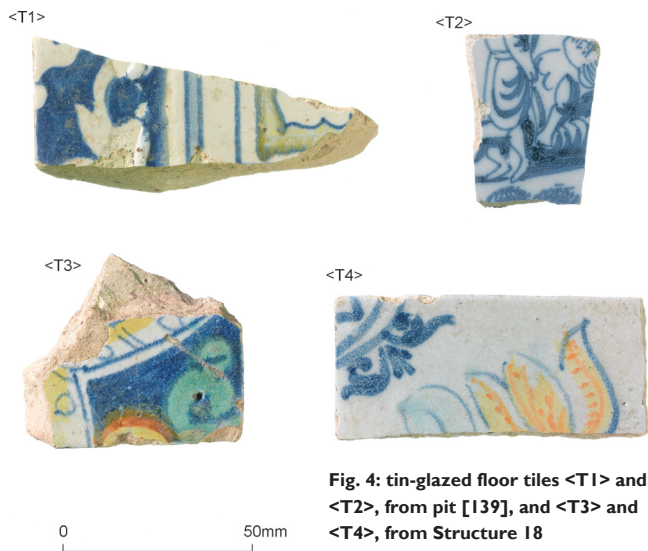


Fig. 4: tin-glazed floor tiles <T1> and <T2>, from pit [139], and <T3> and <T4>, from Structure 18

tile, which could have been used as either walling or flooring, is plain 'duck egg' blue.

Cellar S16 was probably a rebuild of an earlier brick and chalk structure. A brick drain (Structure 12; not illustrated) ran under its brick floor. A small group of English green glass wine bottle fragments from the infill can be closely dated to c. 1730–60. These include the

upper part of a mallet-shaped wine bottle with a bevelled single-string rim. There were also three pieces from an onion-shaped wine bottle, with a bevelled single-string rim, and the lower half of a colourless lead glass cylindrical pharmaceutical phial. The pottery, based on the Bow porcelain and tin-glazed plates (Fig. 6), suggested S16 went out of use in the 1750s or 1760s. The range of pottery fabrics and forms is wider and more diverse than S17, but still largely typical of objects in everyday use throughout London in the mid 18th century. Red earthenwares would have seen regular kitchen and general use but a selection of table- and teawares, with fine decorated plates,

represented the kind of china to which a household of moderately comfortable means might aspire (Fig. 5; Fig. 6).

Structure 18 was a third cellar set against the city wall. Two polychrome tin-glazed tiles from the infill were of interest. One was the corner of a floor tile with the common 'Tudor rose' design (<T3>; Fig. 4). It was almost certainly made at the Pickleherring pothouse between c. 1618 and 1650. The other tile, which could have been used as flooring or walling, shows part of a tulip with a barred ox-head corner motif (<T4>; Fig. 4). This was cut and broken after firing into a rectangular shape. This is probably also a London-made tile dating to around the mid–late 17th century. The bottle glass, also from the infill, consisted of five large pieces from an early free-blown cylindrical wine bottle with a bi-partite rim, dated c. 1770–1840.

**Conclusions**

As is general across the City of London, there is no evidence for pre-Alfredian

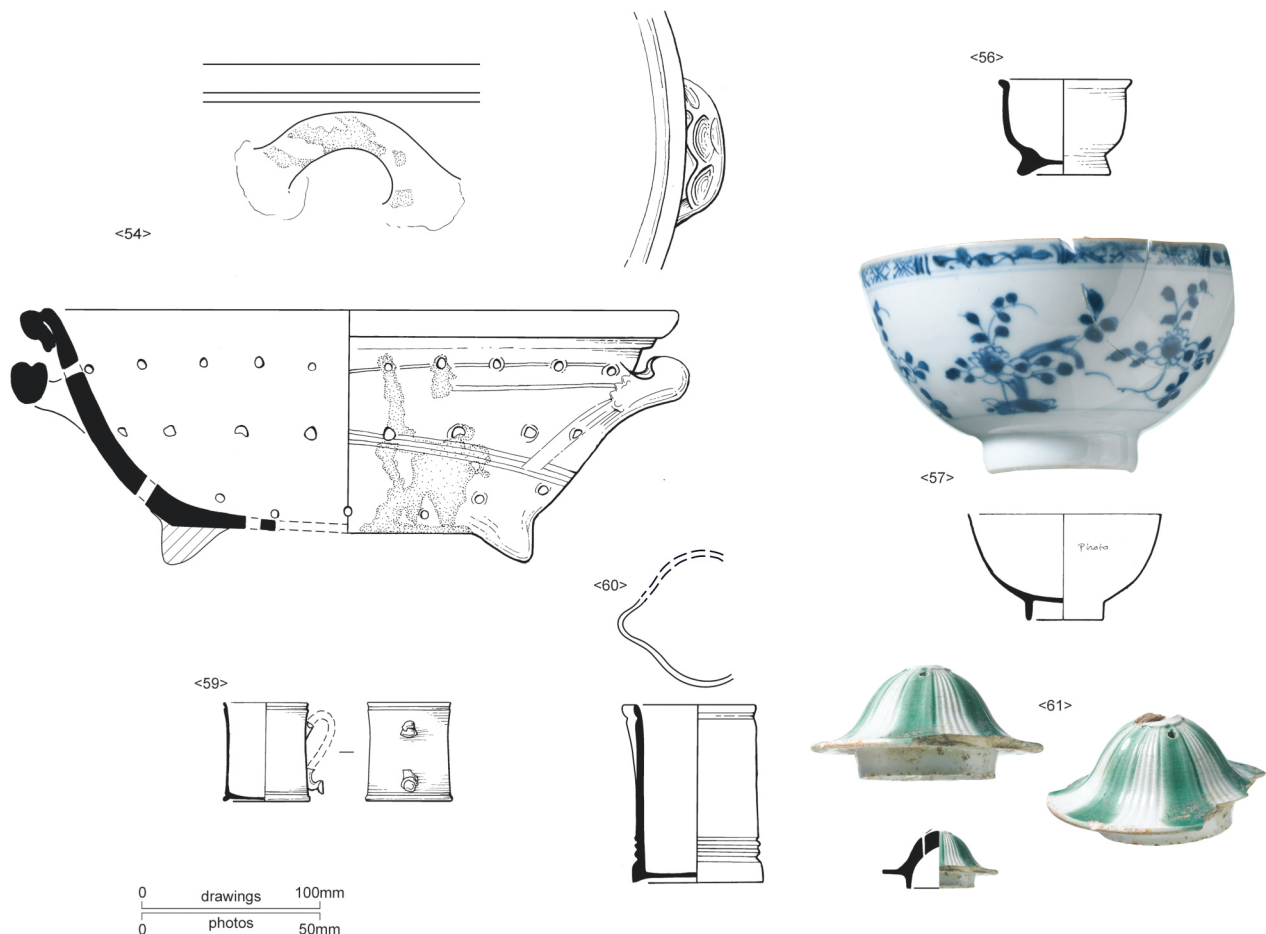


Fig. 5: eighteenth- to early 19th-century pottery: colander <54>, ointment pot <56>, blue and white porcelain bowl <57>, salt-glazed stoneware mug <59>, salt-glazed stoneware ale measure <60> and decorated teapot with lid <61>

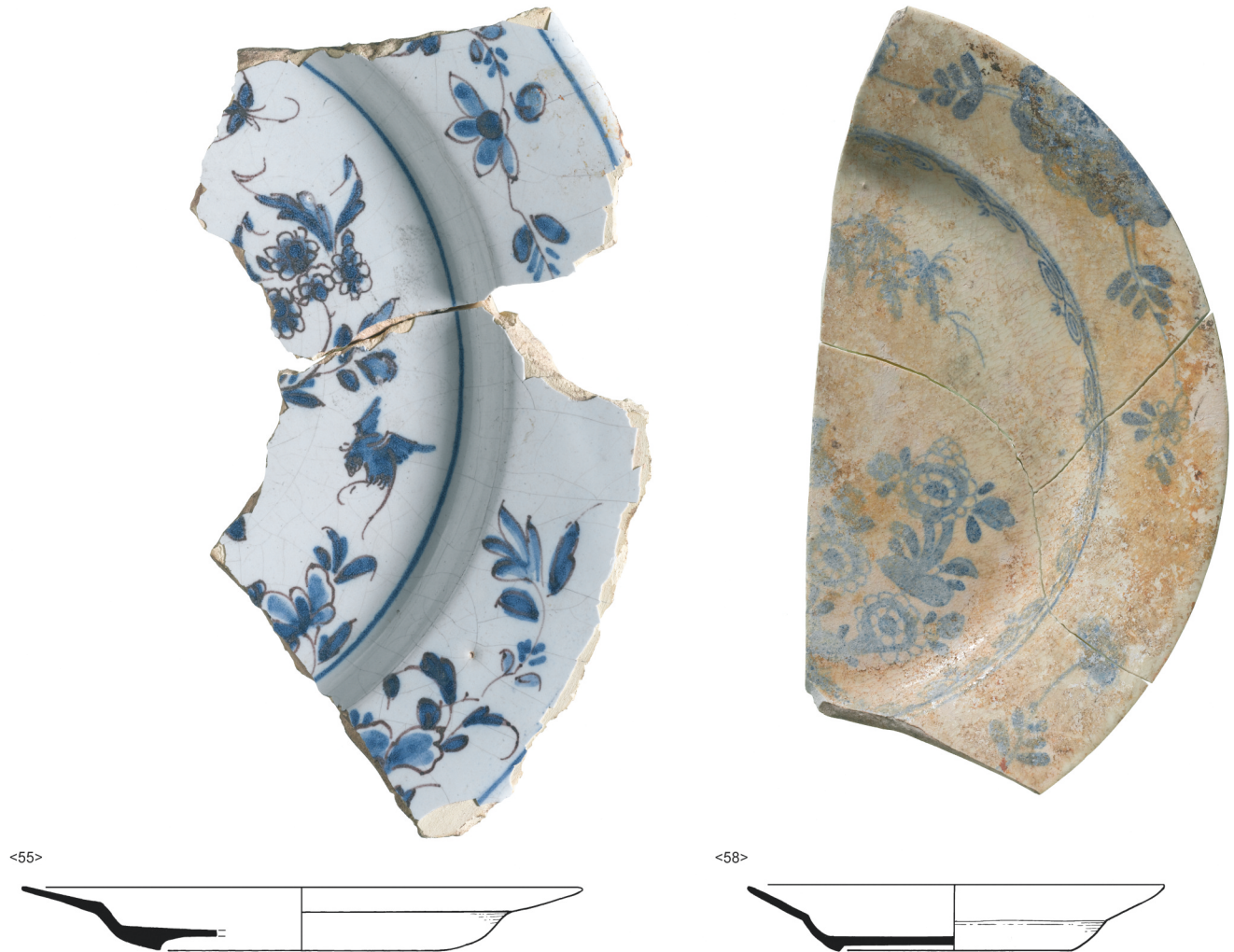


Fig. 6: decorative plate <55> and Bow porcelain plate <58>

reoccupation. The pitting representing the earliest post-Roman activity falls within the date range of AD 900–1200. The site remained marginal and relatively open land until at least the late 16th century and much of the site may have remained gardens or yards until late, particularly as the Great Fire of 1666 did not affect this part of the City. The material within the backfills of cellars on site, which fell out of use in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, indicated that by this date at least some residents enjoyed, or aspired to, the finer social, and decorative, aspects of a household of that date.

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