

THE EXCAVATION OF A SECTION ACROSS ALDRERSGATE STREET, CITY OF LONDON, 1972

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SUMMARY:

The recording of a standing section across Aldersgate Street, left by the contractors during building work for the new Museum of London, provided evidence for a build-up of street levels from the Roman to the late Medieval period; these are described in detail below. The front and back walls of the cellar of a fourteenth-century house fronting onto Aldersgate Street, as well as some of its internal floor levels, were also observed in section and recorded.

INTRODUCTION.

In March 1972, contractors' work on the site of the Rotunda of the new Museum of London left a large hole which penetrated well into the natural London Clay.¹ This excavation took away a length of about 50 metres of the east half of Aldersgate Street, one of the main roads leading directly from a gate in the City Wall, in consequence leaving a standing

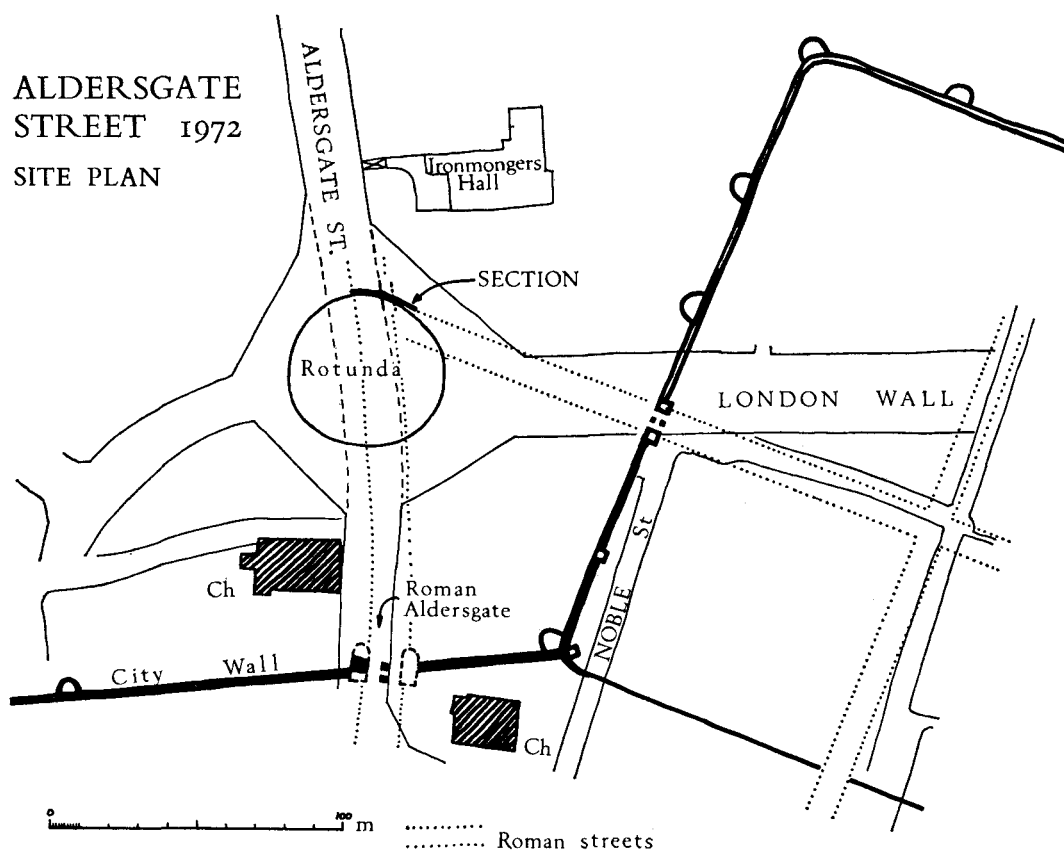


Fig. 1. Aldersgate Street Site Plan

section across part of the street on the north edge of the site, as well as across some of the medieval sub-cellar deposits on its east side. The exact position of this excavation is shown on the plan, Fig. 1, and the complete section shown in Plate 1. There was no opportunity to record the equivalent deposits on the south edge of the contractors' excavation.

The limited amount of excavation of these deposits which circumstances allowed was enough, however, to reveal a virtually undisturbed sequence of Roman and Medieval road surfaces and layers under the modern street, built up from the top of the natural brickearth to a height of over 2 m. These layers, comprising the eastern half of the width of the modern street, were traceable horizontally for a distance of 7.5 m., from the nineteenth-century brick foundations on the east, to a deep modern concrete-enclosed sewer along the middle of the road to the west. The western half of the street was unfortunately not exposed in the contractors' excavations. The sequence of street levels was somewhat cut into by other service trenches excavated at different times, but these were fortunately not deep enough to disturb the lowest layers of the road make-up.

To the east of the line of the street, and underneath the floors of the nineteenth century cellars, the excavations left a standing section across the front (west) and back (east) walls of the cellar, dateable on ceramic evidence to the early or middle part of the fourteenth century, of one of the houses fronting onto the eastern side of Aldersgate Street. As will be shown below, this is of considerable interest in showing the position at this period of a substantial stone-built house in relation to the roadway, as well as the depth of the cellar floor from a road level which strong evidence suggests is contemporary.

DESCRIPTION OF LAYERS AND FEATURES

(Layer and feature numbers are marked on the section, Fig. 2. Inset paragraphs after the layer numbers below represent interpretation and comments.)

INTRODUCTION :

The various layers underneath the line of Aldersgate Street represent a fairly typical series of superimposed layers of silt, earth and gravel, dating from the Roman to the later Medieval periods. It has been found elsewhere² that one of the characteristic features of streets, at least of the Medieval period, which have been subjected to long periods of use lies in the alternation of layers of more or less hard-packed gravel or stones laid down as new road surfaces, and layers of soft silt and earth (usually containing much household rubbish) representing a casual build-up of material thrown onto the roadway from the houses on either side, or accumulated through the action of rainwash and the passage of numerous carts along over and through the roadway.³ Roman roadways, however, appear to have been cleaner and probably more frequently re-surfaced.⁴

LAYER

49. The earliest feature on the site; a deep round-bottomed pit or gully, to the W. of the section, with homogeneous fill of the same material as the "ploughsoil", 1.29, but with an admixture of a small proportion of gravel, bones and Roman building tile.

It was not possible in the short space of time available to draw any conclusions as to the nature or date of this feature, except to say that it was overlain by a thick layer (1.29) of ploughsoil—which suggests an early Roman date.

- (29a. Modern disturbance caused by a horizontal tunnel for a small drain or sewer.)

29. Light grey-brown friable clay with charcoal specks throughout, and homogeneous in composition. Contained several Roman pottery sherds (see below, p. 81), fragments of building tile and some bones.
The sharp break between this layer and the natural brickearth with the absence of any natural soil horizons, and the presence of pottery and tile at all levels, would suggest that this soil has been extensively ploughed at some period.
28. Gully cut into ploughsoil l.29. Homogeneous fill of mud and gravel mixed with fragmented pink wall plaster, bricks, some bones and a few sherds of pottery.
It was unfortunately only possible to excavate this feature for a length of under half a metre, but even so it appeared that the longitudinal axis of this feature was approximately parallel to the road—*i.e.* N.-S.

Above the level of the ploughsoil the various road layers have been cut roughly into two halves by the combined effects of the Medieval pit or gully, layers 36 and 37, and the modern service trenches features 3, 4 and 5, with the consequent interruption in the horizontal stratigraphy between the east and west edges of the section. The two vertical sequences so formed have therefore been numbered separately, from layers 48 to 30 on the west, and from layers 27 to 1 on the east.

48. Compacted layer of gravel, small stones and a little crushed brick, with several large flattened rag-stone cobbles very smoothed on the upper surfaces; laid directly onto the ploughsoil.
This layer was obviously a deliberate spread to form a roadway, the worn cobbles showing considerable use. It extended E. as l.27, though cut by the medieval pit l.36-37. However, for a primary road leading directly out of the City via Aldersgate, its composition appeared remarkably insubstantial, although it showed a considerable degree of compaction.
47. Compacted gravel, overlying l.48.
Probably continuous with layers 23 and/or 25, and possibly representing a later Roman road layer. Cut into or obliterated by activity associated with l.46.
46. Dark muddy earth with a little gravel and bones, in part overlying l.47, and for the rest overlying l.48; no dating evidence.
45. Compacted gravel and large and small stones.
Deliberate spread of gravel forming a road surface; possibly continuous with layers 21 to 26, and could be said to be either the last of the Roman or the first of the Medieval road levels.
44. Mud and earth.
43. Thin compacted gravel, though forming a well-defined road surface.
Possibly equivalent to the road surface formed by l.15, and therefore probably late thirteenth century in date (see below).
42. Localised layer of compacted large and small gravel.
Forming a minor road surface, possibly formerly continuous with l.13, and cut into by l.41.
41. Dark gravelly mud and earth.
40. Black sandy mud, with a few sherds of pottery (see below p. 83 and Fig. 3), bones and oysters, with black charcoal mud and sand at the bottom.
39. Thick deposit of homogenous black slightly sandy silt.
Layers 40 and 39 represent the fill of a deep pit or gully which has cut well into the natural brick earth, in or along what was presumably more or less the centre of the Medieval roadway. It was only observed in section and could not be excavated along any of its length, but its position and shape, as well as the composition of its filling, suggests that it was a water-worn gully running along the length of the road and acting as some sort of central drainage ditch. Its origins could either have been *natural*—possibly being an enlargement by storm water flow of a series of deep cart ruts—or else dug deliberately with this function in mind. The section to the east of the roadway shows that there were no lateral drainage gutters at any time during the Medieval period. The few ceramic finds from the bottom, l.40, indicate a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century date.
When this gully was blocked a new road surface, l.38, was spread over it.



Plate 1. Section across Aldersgate Street and Medieval Cellar

38. Thick layer of compressed muddy gravel, forming a well-defined compacted road surface.
This was probably continuous with l.11, another well-defined surface. From both these layers was cut another probable gully represented by layers 37 and 36.
37. Soft dark sand with domestic refuse and a little gravel.
36. Soft black sandy mud and earth, with lenses of mud and gravel, and a little domestic refuse, including animal bones and shells, and a number of pottery sherds (described below, p. 83 and drawn in Fig. 3).
Layers 37 and 36 fill another gully with probably the same function and origin as that to the W. in the middle of the road. The dateable finds from l.36 indicate a date of filling in the early part of the fourteenth century. It is somewhat later than the western gully, being cut on the W. from the road make-up which sealed the earlier gully. Its eastern lip was just observed on the E. edge of the service trench F.5 to have been cutting l.11, which makes this layer equivalent to and contemporary with l.38. At some stage the gully became blocked with silt, and was covered with a fresh spread of gravel, l.35.
35. Compacted dirty gravel, appearing on both sides of service trench F.3, and merging horizontally to the W. with l.34.
34. Black earth and gravel, overlying l.38.
33. Localised layer of dirty mixed earth and gravel, merging to the W. with the upper part of l.34.
32. Thick spread of dirty gravel with well-defined surface of compacted large gravel stones, and becoming cleaner towards the E. Appeared also between service trenches 3 and 4.
Possibly equivalent stratigraphically with the road surface represented by l.5, another well-defined surface. Dateable by inference possibly to the mid or late fourteenth century.
31. Dirty earth and gravel. Also appeared between service trenches 3 and 4.
30. Thick layer of very highly compacted yellow sandy gravel.
Possibly equivalent to l.3 to the E. Any used road surface, for which this layer was the make-up, had been cut away by modern disturbances. Possibly late fourteenth or fifteenth century in date.

EASTERN HALF OF THE SECTION

All levels on the east edge of the road have been truncated by the cutting made for the brick wall which formed the nineteenth-century frontage of the street. This extended well into natural, and as is shown on the section (Fig. 2) rests on the base of the cellar wall of the Medieval stone house. The upper levels were disturbed by a modern coal chute. To the west, in the middle of the available section, these levels have been truncated by the fourteenth-century gully (layers 36 and 37) and by the service trenches. It will be seen that there are rather more road levels remaining in the section towards the edge of the road than in the middle—the result both of the greater frequency of casual spreading of gravel immediately outside the house fronts, as well as the greater disturbance caused by carts nearer the road centre.

27. Compacted layer of gravel, smoothed stones, crushed tile, similar in every respect to the first Roman layer 48. Like l.28 it is laid directly upon the ploughsoil l.29, and is laid directly over the filling of the Roman gully l.28. Forms a very hard packed road surface.
26. Thin spread of dark sticky earth and mud.
25. Thin compacted gravel.
24. Dark earth and mud.
23. Compacted gravel.
22. Dark earth, with a few bones and oysters; overlying l.23, and continuing as the filling of a possible cart rut cut through layers 23 to 26 and into l.27.
21. Compacted large and small gravel.
Possibly equivalent to l.45. The three road levels represented by layers 21, 23 and 25, together with layers 47 and possibly 45, are the only ones it would be legitimate to consider as being the later Roman successors to the first surface (layers 48/27), for which a date in the third century is argued (see below).

20. Compact dark mud and earth with some gravel, with bones and oysters; grades upwards into l.19.
19. Compact dirty earth and gravel.
18. Small pit cut into earlier layers, with filling of soft earth and a little gravel, with some bones, oysters, roof tile and ceramics.
The ceramic material can be dated to probably the middle or late thirteenth century (see below, and Fig. 3). Layers 19 and 20 are all that remain therefore of any deposits accumulated between the end of the Roman period and the thirteenth century.
17. Spread of gravel and stones, with a compacted flattened surface. Grades into l.15 westwards, and directly seals the pit l.18.
16. Local spread of dirty mud.
15. Thin but well-compacted layer of gravel, forming a good road surface.
Possibly equivalent to l.43, and probably late thirteenth-century in date.
- 14 and 13. Thin spreads of gravel overlying l.15, and cut into by activity associated with l.12.
12. Muddy earth with a little gravel, and small lens of clay.
11. Compacted layer of large and small gravel and stones, with well-marked flattened surface.
This road level is cut into immediately to the E. of the service trench F.5 by the lip of the early fourteenth-century gully l.36/37, and therefore itself of the same date. This date is also supported by the probable association of l.10—below. Probably equivalent to l.38.
10. Local spread of creamy yellow mortar with a little gravel and small chips of stone, becoming thicker to the E., and laid directly on the road level l.11.
In all probability this represents the debris thrown onto the street during the construction of the stone house fronting at this point onto the E. side of the street, the bottom of the cellar walls of which remained under the modern cellar floors (see descriptions below). The colour and texture of the mortar in this layer appeared to be the same as that bonding the stones of the wall F.8. Unfortunately the whole section was destroyed before samples of these mortars were taken. If this is the construction level of the stone house—for which a date in the fourteenth century is suggested below—then it both indicates the level from which this structure was built, and also provides the only archaeological link between the build-up of the street surfaces and the construction of the medieval cellar and its associated layers. It is possible to estimate the depth of the cellar from the contemporary street level to its floor as being 2.40 metres.
9. Dirty clay and mud, with a little gravel.
8. Dirty yellow coarse gravel, grading W. into l.5.
7. Thin dirty mud.
6. Local spread of thin compacted gravel.
5. Thick hard yellow gravel, with well-marked flattened surface. Probably equivalent to l.32.
4. Dirty mud and earth.
3. Compacted yellow gravel and stones.
2. Mortary gravel.
1. Yellow sandy gravel.
Equivalent, at least in date, to l.30.

CONCLUSIONS:

The road levels and other deposits described above, form a relatively undisturbed record of activity on the road in both the Roman and Medieval periods. One remarkable result of the recording of this section was the support given to the conclusions drawn from observations on contractors' workings on the site of Aldersgate itself in 1939.⁵ The Roman gateway was then observed to have been inserted into the City Wall, and Aldersgate—and therefore possibly the Roman Aldersgate Street itself—cannot be earlier than the third century.

The pottery from the ploughsoil, l.29, from the Roman gully, l.28, and from the road make-up itself, ls.27 and 48, was rather mixed in date, and its evidence is therefore by no means equivocal. The latest dateable finds, however, were not earlier than the late second century. Moreover, the absence of any appreciable build-up of superimposed road metal-ling during the Roman period also suggests that the roadway under Aldersgate Street was both late in date, and of rather lesser importance than would have been, for instance, those leading from Aldgate, Bishopsgate or Newgate.⁶

Another major point of interest shown by this section lies in the virtual absence of any sign of deposition of either silt or gravel during the period from (presumably) the end of the Roman period until the twelfth or thirteenth century. The only layers which seem to suggest any activity during this period are layers 19 and 20, and possibly 45 and 46, though no dating evidence was obtained from any of them. Aldersgate Street must have always been a comparatively minor thoroughfare, and Aldersgate itself a comparatively minor gateway in the City Wall—although there is no evidence to suggest that it remained unused for any length of time. On the one hand, if the Roman street out of Aldersgate had become completely abandoned during the early (or indeed later) Saxon period, it would have seemed reasonable to have expected a fairly thick deposit of probably black wind-blown or rain-washed soil, on which vegetation would have grown, or else some signs of squatters' huts and occupation debris. Frequent use of the road during this period, on the other hand, would have resulted in the deposition of layers of more or less similar composition to those laid down during the Medieval period. The absence of either sorts of deposits between the certain Roman and Medieval levels would suggest, therefore, a continued though infrequent use of the road leading out of Aldersgate during the Saxon period—a deduction which, if taken to its logical conclusion, would have implications which the evidence of this one small section ought not to be made to bear alone.

No excavations have been carried out along either side of Aldersgate Street outside the walls, or even much relevant documentary research. It is therefore not possible to know the extent of occupation of this area during the Saxon or early Medieval periods, or indeed for the later Medieval period on which documentary sources should be able to throw at least some light. The archaeological evidence from this road section argues, however, for the construction and use of Aldersgate Street as a road—albeit a rather minor one—during at least the later part of the Roman period on what had probably been open ground. Nothing was observed to enable any connection to be made between this road and that which must have led from the west gate of the Fort, and which was observed to have been blocked at some point—it has been suggested at the same time as Aldersgate was inserted into the City Wall.⁷ From the thirteenth century onwards the evidence suggests that increasing use was made of the old Roman road, which had probably never been entirely abandoned, with gullies cut along the road during the fourteenth century, and with more and more attention paid to the surfacing of the road during the later Medieval period.

At this point, however, it should be stressed that considerably more information could have been obtained concerning this overall historical picture if the successive deposits under a length of this roadway could have been stripped off horizontally layer by layer, each observed in plan as well as in section. There were various problematical features in the section which could have been considerably clarified had they been seen in plan. It is to be hoped that with the destruction of so many of the streets and lanes of Roman and Medieval London, some attention will be paid to the examination of lengths of, as well as sections

across, their various constituent layers. Even if this is not possible, however, it must be clear that the careful archaeological investigation, even in section, of the deposits underneath the modern streets can provide more information for the history and topography of an area over a long period than can almost any other type of site in a heavily built-up area.⁸

THE MEDIEVAL CELLAR.

As has been mentioned above, to the east of the line of Aldersgate Street the contractors' excavations cut through the back and front walls, and the internal deposits, of a Cellar, sealed underneath the modern cellar floor. This was dateable on ceramic evidence to the early part of the fourteenth century. The section across these features which was left as a result of the contractors' work was somewhat oblique to the line at right-angles to both walls. Allowance has been made for this on the plan (Fig. 1), but the section (Fig. 2) is drawn out as observed. Again it was only possible to observe these features in section.

Immediately underneath the nineteenth century brick wall (f.7) on the east edge of Aldersgate Street the stump of the west wall of the Medieval cellar was preserved (f.8). This had been cut through the natural brickearth into the underlying sand and gravel and rested on the compacted infilling of probably a construction trench (l.60). It was built of chalk blocks, with a sandy yellow mortar, and of similar build to the east wall (f.11).

LAYER

60. Packed yellow-grey gravel and clay.
59. Infilling of a pit or trench in the middle of the cellar; homogenous mixed brown clay and gravel. One sherd of a Surrey ware jug of the early or mid fourteenth century found at the very bottom.
The function of this excavation is somewhat uncertain. It lay exactly in the middle of the cellar, its sides were clean-cut, and its fill was not that of a domestic rubbish pit. A mine for sand and gravel might be suggested. Its fill was overlain directly by the clay floor l.57.
58. Localised layer of mortar and gravel abutting against the interior of the E. cellar wall F.9, and directly overlying the natural sand.
Possibly the construction level of this wall.
- 57-50. Floor deposits in the interior of the cellar.
57. Thin layer of packed stiff brown clay.
56. Mortar and stone chippings, abutting against inner face of W. cellar wall, F.8, and overlying l.57.
55. Localised layer of ash and earth.
54. Grey mortar, earth and gravel, with some fragments of roof tile.
53. Brown earth and gravel.
52. Thick layer of black gravelly earth with much charcoal, and frequent specks of oxidised and decayed copper waste. A fragment of crucible, and a sherd of a Raeren stoneware mug were also recovered from this layer.
This deposit probably represents the debris from the workshop of a bronze or copper smith; the sherd of Raeren stoneware (not drawn, below) puts the date of this most probably in the late fifteenth or the first half of the sixteenth century.
51. Compact brown earth.
50. Floor of orange-brown sandy clay.
- 61-63. Layers of cess pit.
63. Brown earth and cess, large stones and some bones and pottery sherds of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. (See Fig. 3)
62. Brown cess, with some complete and fragmentary bricks of fifteen-century type (retained, see below).
61. Plaster, bricks and earth.

During the contractors' excavations the back wall of the Cellar was observed by one of the machine operators to have extended some way to the south. This has been indicated on the plan (Fig. 1).

The date of the construction of this Cellar can be put to the early or middle part of the fourteenth century on the evidence of two sherds of pottery, one (p. 84 below) in the bottom of the pit 1.59, the other (p. 84 below) sealed immediately underneath the first clay floor 1.57. The position of the probable construction level of the building of this Cellar, overlying an early fourteenth-century road level, also suggests a date at this period. Its period of use extended well into the sixteenth century. All the archaeological levels later than this had been destroyed by the modern cellar floor; and all the occupation levels earlier than the fourteenth century had of course been destroyed by the construction of this Cellar.

The archaeological evidence therefore points to the existence of a fairly substantial building fronting onto Aldersgate Street, which was probably stone-built up to the level of the first floor, and with a timber-framed upper storey or storeys. It is very much to be hoped that further research on the documentation of the area will produce more evidence of a similar nature.

THE FINDS.⁹

All finds are illustrated in Fig. 3, to which numbers in the text refer.

ROMAN.

Several sherds of Roman pottery and building tile were recovered from layers 27, 28 and 29. Although rather fragmentary, as well as being somewhat mixed, they help to date these Roman layers as being probably not earlier than the later second century. Considering the derived nature of most, if not all, of this material, this dating is not inconsistent with a suggested date in the third century for the probable insertion of Aldersgate into the City Wall, and the consequent laying down of Aldersgate Street itself.

LAYER 29 (PLOUGHSOIL)

Body sherd of Samian, Drag. 37, dated to *c.* 150-180 (No. 1).

Large fragment of building tile.

Small fragment of roller-stamped tile.

LAYER 28 (FILL OF GULLY)

4 sherds Samian: Drag. 37, base;

Drag. 18/31, body sherd;

Ritt. 12, rim;

Curle 11, body sherd.

Also sherds of Verulamium ware, South Spanish amphora, a mortarium (rim), and one sherd of a vessel in fine off-white sandy fabric (?neck of a beaker), and three fragments of wall tile.

A terminal date of *c.* 150-160 is suggested for these finds.

LAYER 27 (FIRST ROAD MAKE-UP)

Body sherds of Verulamium ware;

One body sherd of mortarium, probably from Colchester or N. Kent, *c.* 55-80.

Three fragments of wall tile.

MEDIEVAL.

Three groups of medieval pottery provide valuable dating evidence for the post-Roman road levels. These are the groups from the two gullies, layers 39/40 and 36/37, and from the small pit on the east of the section, 1.18. Two sherds of pottery from the Cellar (layers 57 and 59) also provide a chronological link between the road layers and the building of the house fronting onto the street.

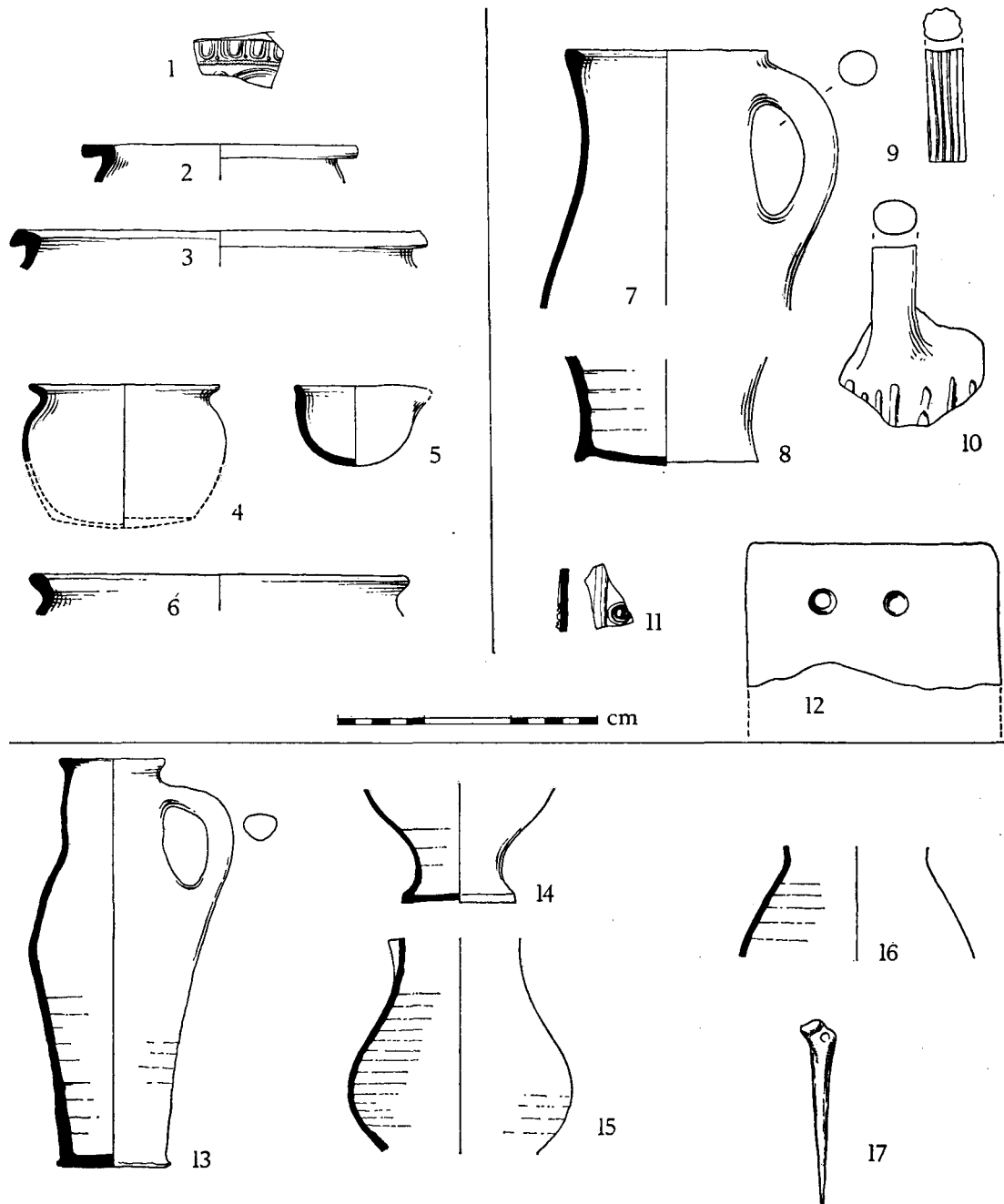


Fig. 3
Pottery from Aldersgate Street (1/2)

LAYER 18

Eight small body sherds from 1 jug; fine red-brown sandy fabric with grey core, with traces of thin lead glaze on exterior; one sherd showing a painted stripe of red iron-rich slip.

Cooking pots (Nos. 2 and 3). Several small sherds of shell-tempered ware, dark grey or brown, of which one flanged rim is illustrated, No. 2.

Four sherds of "hard Medieval grey ware",¹⁰ one (No. 3) a squared rim, the other decorated with slight wavy combing on the exterior. Also several fragments of Roman wall tiles, one small fragment of Medieval roofing tile, a few animal bones, oyster shells and a winkle.

Dateable to the middle of the thirteenth century.

LAYER 12

One small body sherd of a jug, brick-red sandy fabric with dark grey core, with yellow glaze over a thick white slip on the exterior.

Two sherds cooking pots, sandy grey ware.

Six fragments roofing tile, one with brown glaze on upper surface.

Probably late thirteenth-early fourteenth century; stratigraphically contemporary with the filling of the W. gully, Layers 39/40.

LAYER 9 (No. 6)

Three small sherds of decorated jug (not drawn): (i) body sherd of Surrey-ware jug, off-white to pale grey sandy fabric w. tempering of rounded white quartz sand, w. decoration of vertical applied strips w. a rouletted pattern, and covering of green glaze. (ii) base of handle of jug, grey to grey-brown fine sandy fabric w. green glaze over a white slip on exterior. (iii) body sherd, grey sandy fabric w. brown interior surface, w. yellow green glaze over a white slip on exterior.

Rim sherd of "hard Medieval grey ware", No. 6.

Dateable to the early fourteenth century.

LAYERS 39 AND 40 (WESTERN GULLY). (Nos. 4-5)

Two very small body sherds of decorated jugs: (i) brick-red sandy w. decoration of part of an applied strip and small spots of applied white slip, w. over-all yellow glaze. (ii) dark grey-brown sandy fabric w. part of an applied strip of white slip, w. over-all yellow-brown glaze.

Cooking pots. Two body sherds and one rim, "hard Medieval grey ware". The rim sherd illustrated (No. 4) can be compared directly to the smaller example of this type in Hurst's report.¹¹

Crucible, No. 5. Part of small vessel, creamy-buff fine sandy fabric, w. tempering of rounded white quartz sand, unglazed.

Also present: 10 fragments of tile, one with a round hole, and some glazed on one surface; several animal bones and oyster shells.

LAYERS 36/37 (EASTERN GULLY). (Nos. 7-12)

7. Part of neck and handle of jug; pale pinkish-buff sandy fabric (Surrey ware), with tempering of small rounded pink and white quartz sand. Speckled green glaze over most of exterior. Rounded rod handle.

8. Base of large jug, w. pronounced foot-ring; reddish-brown fine sandy micaceous fabric w. grey core, and patches of white slip on the exterior.

9. Part of rod handle of jug; fine untempered off-white fabric w. thick dark green glaze over exterior. Handle markedly ridged on outer side.

10. Bottom part of handle of jug; pale pinkish-buff fine sandy fabric, with tempering of small rounded red quartz sand; glazed green on the exterior, with decoration probably of alternating vertical applied strips of white slip and rows of applied scales. Lower handle attachment made by pressing against a finger on the interior of pot.

11. Sherd of decorated jug; reddish-brown sandy fabric, with covering of white slip, and a pellet of white clay stamped in the form of an eye.

Not drawn: small body sherds of nine other separate jugs, all standard London types of the period, of which only one is Surrey ware. Of the other eight, all are of reddish-brown to grey-brown sandy fabric, and all except one with green glaze over a white slip over the exterior. One vessel has thin vertical lines of painted white slip, another is probably of "London Baluster" type.¹² Cooking pots: eight small body sherds, of which five are of "hard Medieval grey ware".

Tiles: 12 fragments of roofing tiles, one illustrated (No. 12) having two round peg holes, one not going right through the thickness of the tile. Thickness: 1.5 cm.

Also present: a small number of animal bones and oyster shells, and two fragments of coarse gritted white wall plaster.

Dateable to the early fourteenth century.

LAYER 63 (CESS PIT TO E. OF CELLAR). (Nos. 13-17)

13. Tall biconical jug; pale buff slightly sandy fabric, with small bib of yellow-green glaze on shoulder. Made at Cheam.¹³

14. Bottom part of "Tudor green" pedestal cup; fine off-white fabric with a little fine sand tempering; lustrous holly-green glaze on interior only.

15. Large sherd of jug; off-white to buff slightly sandy fabric, w. pale turquoise-blue tin glaze on both interior and exterior; shows part of a simple pulled spout, and originally had a handle; base missing. Mediterranean origin.

16. Sherd of shoulder of biconical Cheam-type jug with bib of speckled green glaze.

Also two other sherds of off-white to buff sandy Surrey-ware vessels.

17. Part of a bone cut to form a pointed implement, possibly connected with weaving.

Dateable to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

LAYER 59 (VERY BOTTOM OF PIT UNDER CELLAR). Not drawn.

One sherd of Surrey-ware jug with moulded decoration; off-white to pale buff sandy fabric with tempering of small rounded red and white quartz sand, w. dark green glaze on exterior. Part of press-moulded decoration in the form, probably, of a wheat sheaf. Probably early to mid-fourteenth century.

LAYER 57. Not drawn.

Another very small sherd of similar type to that from l.59.

NOTES

¹ The excavation was carried out by the writer on behalf of the Guildhall Museum, where the finds and site records are now lodged.

I am particularly grateful to the Contractors, Messrs. G. E. Wallis and Sons Ltd., for unhindered access to the site at all times; and to Ralph Merrifield and Hugh Chapman for their help in the subsequent interpretation of the site.

² Streets are now being excavated in a number of towns, but see in particular published sections across Saxon and Medieval Streets in Oxford and Winchester—in T. G. Hassall, "Excavation in Oxford, 1970 (3rd Interim report)", *Oxoniensia* XXXVI (1971), 8-9; and M. Biddle, "Excavations at Winchester (3rd Interim report)", *Antiquaries Journal*, XLV pt. II (1965), 242-3.

³ Graphically illustrated by various contemporary documentary references to the bad state of streets. See an "Order . . . for the Repair of the Roads" of 1356 (from H. T. Riley, *Memorials of London Life*, p. 291): ". . . all the folks who bring victuals and wares by carts and horses to the City, do make greivous complaint that they incur great damage, and are oftentimes in peril of losing what they bring, and sometimes do lose it, because that the roads without the Gates of the City are so torn up, and the pavement so broken, as may be seen by the by all persons on view thereof . . ." See also on the condition of Medieval roads and streets: H. S. Bennett, *The Pastons and their England*, 128-136; and E. L. Sabine, "City cleaning in Medieval London", *Speculum*, XII (1937), 33-34.

⁴ R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London* (1965), 133 ff.

⁵ The results of these excavations are recorded in MS notes, with plans and sections) deposited in the Guildhall Museum, and are briefly summarised in R. Merrifield, *ibid.*, pp. 102 and 319.

⁶ See R. Merrifield *ibid.*, pp. 113-130, for general discussion of Roman streets in London.

⁷ See reference in Note 5.

⁸ See also J. Haslam "Medieval Streets in London", *The London Archaeologist*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1972), 3-8.

⁹ I am especially grateful to Mrs. Joanna Bird for help given on the identification of the Roman material. Comments on the Medieval material are by the writer.

¹⁰ J. G. Hurst, "The Kitchen area of Northolt Manor, Middlesex", *Medieval Archaeology* V (1961), 267 where this type of ware is given a general date range of 1225 to 1325.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 268, Fig. 70, No. 1.

¹² London Museum, *Medieval Catalogue*, 216, No. 5.

¹³ *Surrey Archaeological Collections* XXXV (1924), 79; and XLVII (1949), 99.

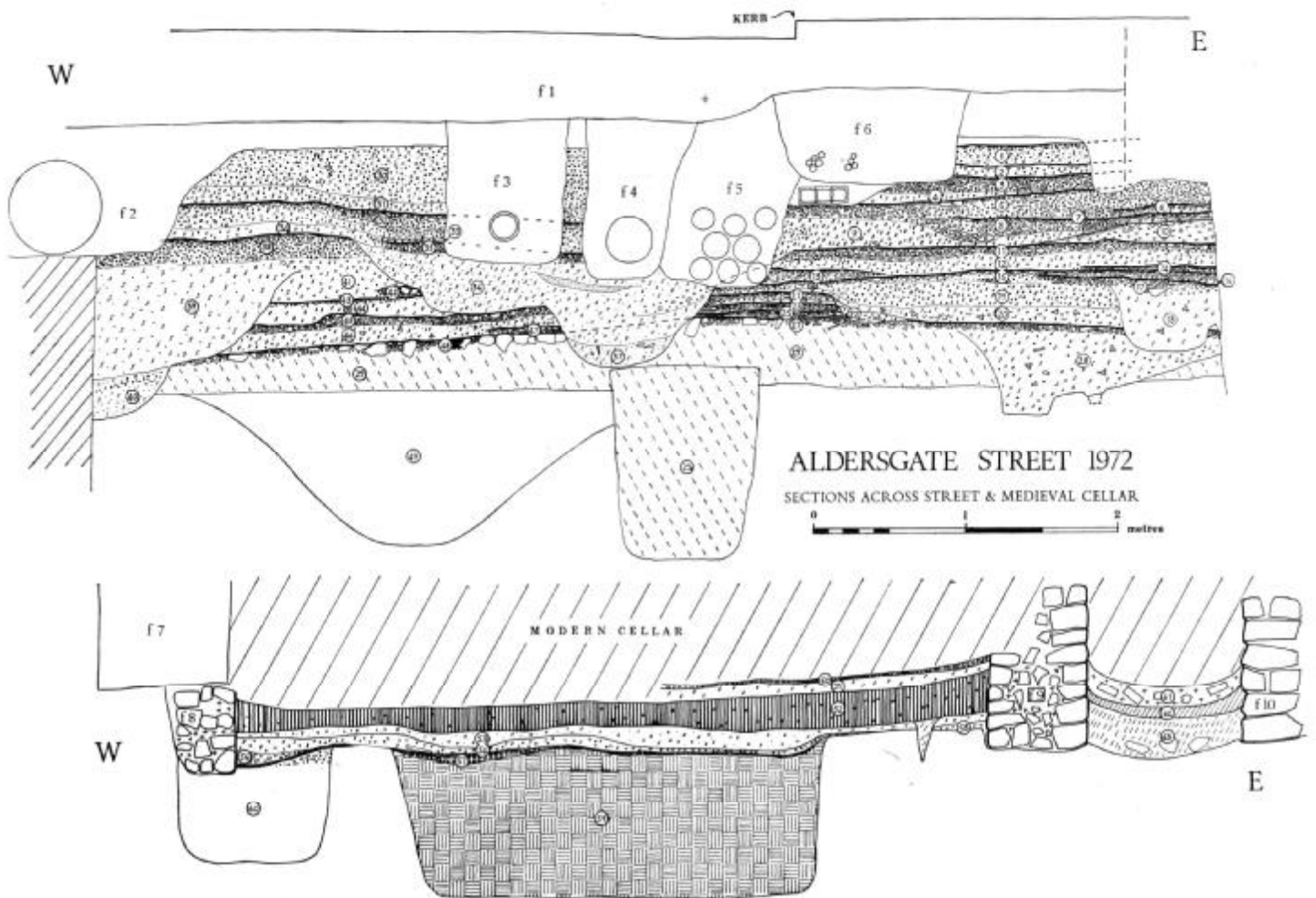


Fig. 2. Sections across Aldersgate Street and Medieval Cellar