

Late Medieval consolidation Inland port and market centre (14th – 15th century)

The Town

Kingston prospered during the 14th and 15th centuries and the town continued to grow. At Charter Quay many properties were divided into narrower plots although these were extended westwards as more land was reclaimed, and new timber buildings, on stone and tile foundations, were erected over a much larger area than before. Timber revetments began to be built on the River Thames waterfront, providing defence against flooding, protecting the riverbank from erosion and creating simple quaysides ('wharfage') for boats to load and unload.

There was a change in use of the Charter Quay area, possibly resulting from a change in ownership, with increasing 'industrial' activity. The London Charterhouse, a religious house founded in 1370, acquired the considerable Kingston property of John Wenge as part of its initial endowment, and the priory continued to purchase property in the town during the 15th century. The estate came to include a large part of the Charter Quay site west of Market Place, all land between the Hogsmill and Emms Passage, and some of that to the south of Emms Passage, as well as land further up the *Lurtebourne* (Hogsmill). The estate's houses, fields and meadows were normally leased individually to tenants.

Behind le Hyerowe

The Borough Charter of 1441 established the market's rights, and documents of the period list those occupying properties on its west side – a baker, fishmonger, vintner, sawyer, skinner, brewer and a hosier, as well as a number of inn-keepers and some

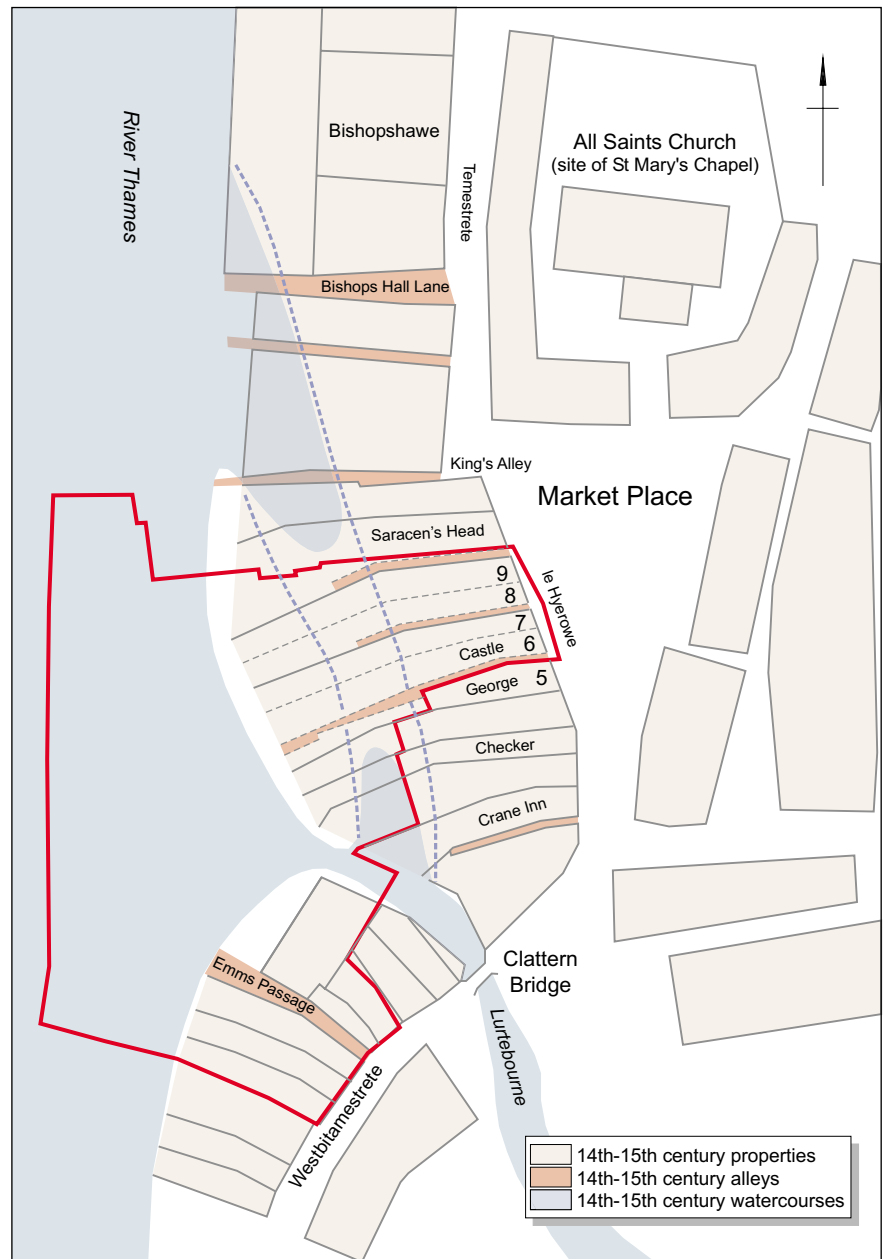


Figure 37: Alleyways such as Emms Passage provided access between the Market Place and High Street and the waterfronts alongside the River Thames and Hogsmill.

properties paid for the right to have stalls in the street and the market. Wool, leather and cheese are known to have been sold there, and the few coins found, which included a relatively

unworn groat of Edward III (1327–1377) (worth about 4d/2p) and two worn silver pennies of late 14th or early 15th century date, reflect the commerce of the area.



Figure 38: Excavating the foundations of a series of medieval buildings constructed over the edge of the infilled channel.

The inns included the *Saracen's Head* at the north of the site, dating to at least a generation before 1417 (Fig. 37). To the south, the *George* was part of the Charterhouse estate and was leased out by it in 1442, 1455, 1474, 1483 and 1492–3. Further south again was the *Checker* which, like the *George*, was also probably established in the 15th century. Although, of the market place businesses, only the inns have been identified, one property with a sequence of large hearths may have been the bakery, and some of the buildings abutted a lane leading towards the river called *Souteresrowe* ('shoemakers' row'), where it was customary to sell shoes. Leather found preserved in dumped, waterlogged deposits behind several of the late medieval revetments included fragments of shoes (including complete soles) and offcuts, possibly the waste from shoe manufacture and repair.

Medieval towns lacked the luxury of space enjoyed by rural communities, and long narrow properties ('burgage plots') were laid out to maximise the number of traders in the market place. These usually combined a shop or store and a dwelling along the street frontage, in some cases with workshops or other buildings. However, the rentals of 1383, 1417 and 1427 indicate that, as pressure on land increased, a number of properties on the west side of the market were divided lengthways. This led to narrower properties, usually the width of a single bay of a timber-framed house, up to 5m wide, as was the case at Charter Quay. The new buildings were built at right-angles to the street, with the gable end of the roof at the front, and the main entrance opening onto an alley or passage at one side. As a result, any enlargement of the buildings would have been either vertically, by adding another storey, or to the rear, resulting in long, narrow buildings. The interiors of such buildings would have enjoyed minimal daylight. The terrace of buildings running south to Clattern Bridge was known as *le Hyerowe*, presumably because of the height of its buildings.

There was also some encroachment onto the market place, as reflected in the rental of 1417 which records several sets of posts in the street, probably to support jettied upper stories extending over the ground floor. Sets of posts were certainly present outside the *George* and the *Saracen's Head* inns. In 1427, for instance, the tenement of Edward Lusthill (which is probably identified with the *Saracen's Head*) was extended six and a half feet (1.98m) into the market place over its entire width of 13ft (4m) in order to build a new frontage.

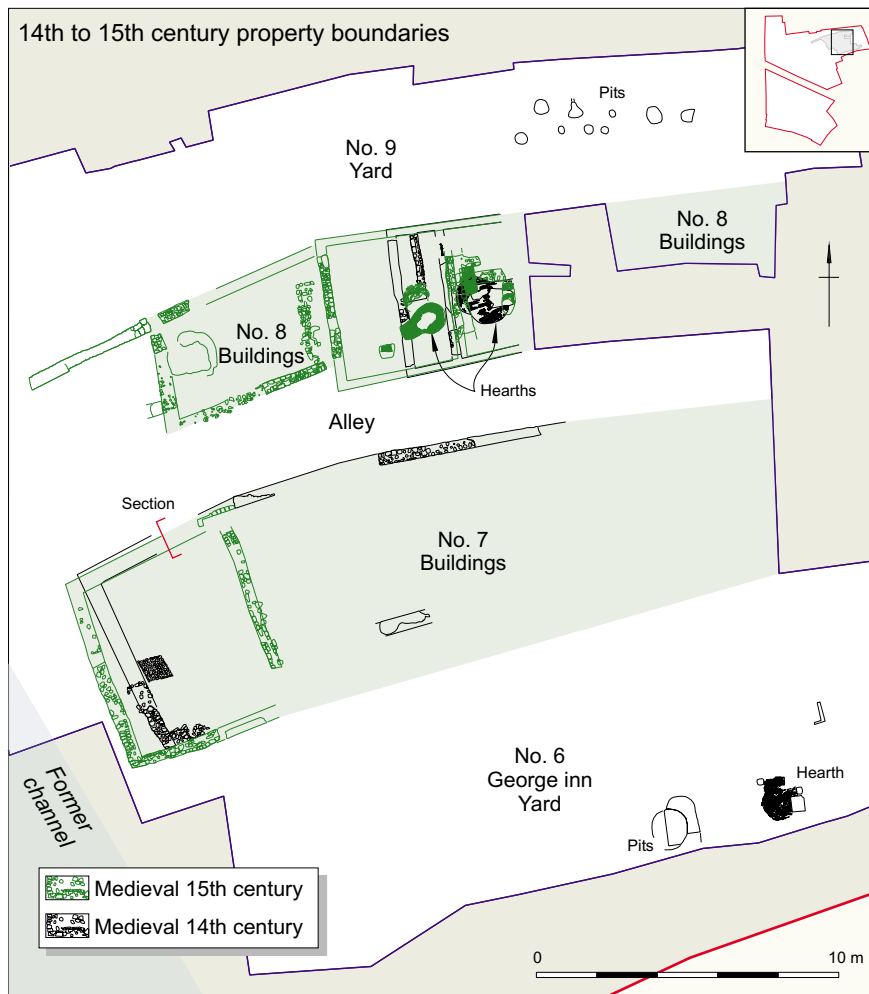


Figure 39: 14th to 15th century buildings at Nos 7 and 8 Market Place.

The earliest surviving traces of cellar on the market frontage belong to the 16th–17th century, but there may have been earlier, medieval cellars or undercrofts, similar to that excavated in 1986, and now displayed, beneath the John Lewis store, north of Kingston

Bridge. Most of the wall footings of the late 14th and 15th century timber-framed buildings were built of a characteristic mix of Reigate stone and flint, with regular levelling courses of roof tiles, all set in mortar. Despite the availability of roof tiles it seems that

No 8 Market Place

Excavation at No 8 Market Place revealed at least three phases of late medieval building (Fig. 39). The earliest building (phase 1), which stopped 5m short of the former edge of the Hogsmill channel, was c. 4.5m wide, although post-medieval rebuilding had destroyed both north and south walls. Towards its western end, a partition wall created what may have been a small storeroom with a further division in its northwest corner. East of the partition wall was a sequence of at least two large, keyhole-shaped hearths (Fig. 40). Each had a circular clay-domed chamber to the west and a long flue to the east, their floors being made of closely-packed, broken roof tiles set on edge.

After some 20–30 years the building was demolished and rebuilt, extending further to the west (phase 2). The earlier walls were largely robbed out, or taken down to ground level. The new building's western wall and a (rebuilt) internal partition wall each had a large 'slot' in the top, presumably to hold the vertical posts of the timber-framing. An internal east-west wall, overlying the two earlier hearths, abutted the partition wall, while there was a sequence of two new hearths in the room to the west, similar to the earlier ones, but with their flues facing west. A third, much smaller, square hearth in the same room would have had a different use (Fig. 41).

Subsequently, the partition wall was widened, the east-west internal wall dismantled and two new pitched-tile hearths built (phase 3) (Fig. 43). These were smaller than the earlier hearths, and a different shape, and may have served a domestic function. Also, another room, c. 6m by 3.5m, was added to the west. It contained a circular clay-lined hearth at its west end, but this may have been replaced by another at the east end where traces of a lightly burnt mortar floor survived, overlying a stone foundation.



Figure 40: Plan of 14th century hearth.

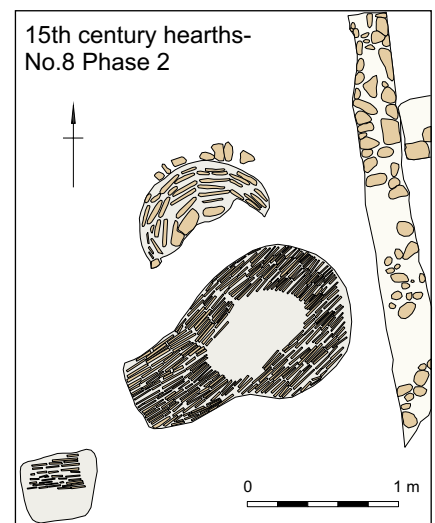


Figure 41: Plan of 15th century hearth.

most of the buildings continued to be roofed with thatch. A few floor tiles were found, as well as fragments of plain window glass.

Access to the yards and buildings behind the market frontage was also through the alleys, three of which, dating to at least the 14th century, lay within the area excavated; one, in the southernmost property, survived until the Charter Quay development. Such alleys also linked the market to the waterfront, allowing goods to be transported to and from the town centre by boat.

Buildings behind the market frontage were best preserved in the central two of the four properties excavated (corresponding to Nos 7–8 Market Place) (Fig. 38 & 39). By the late 15th century these had been extended to the west, although, where walls had been built over the now largely infilled Hogsmill channel, subsidence had caused structural problems. There was no building on the lower lying ground beyond it, and all that was found there were two ditches marking property boundaries, a few gullies and rubbish pits.

The features recorded in northern of the two properties (No 8) illustrate the complexity of the building sequence during this period. Before the 14th century the area to the rear had probably been an open yard, but between c. 1400 and 1500 there were three phases of building represented by a succession of walls, hearths or ovens, and floor surfaces. Analysis of the few charred plant remains recovered from the hearths was unable to establish their function, although it is more like-

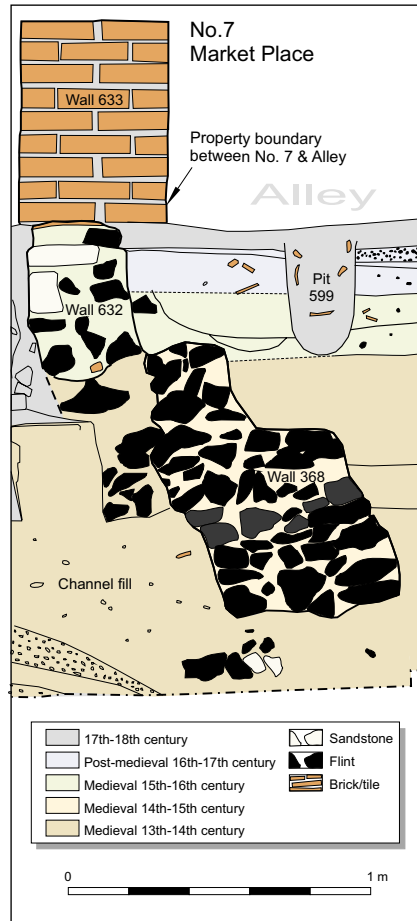


Figure 42: Section showing sequence of walls marking one of the property boundaries in Trench 3.

ly that they were baking ovens than domestic fireplaces.

The rear of southern property (No 7) also contained substantial buildings of 14th or 15th century date. Apart from a tile-built hearth at No 9 (Fig. 44), however, the other two properties (Nos 6 and 9) contained only a number of pits.

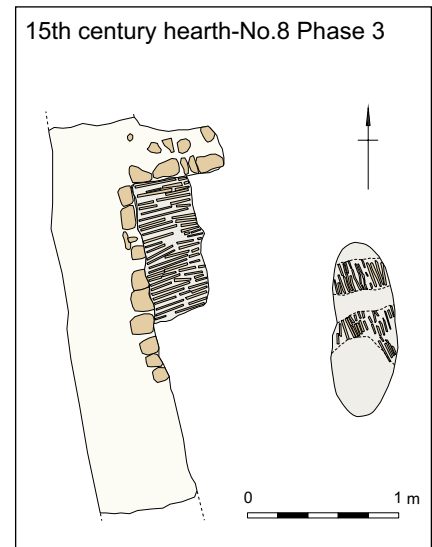


Figure 43: Plan of 15th century hearth.

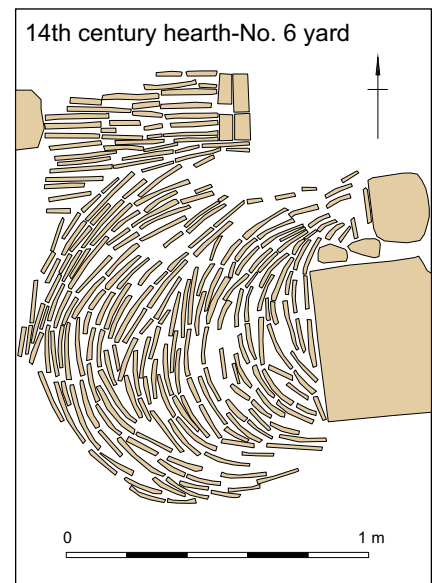


Figure 44: Plan of 14th century hearth.

No 7 Market Place

The rubble foundations of a mid 14th century building c. 6.5m wide but of uncertain length, projected 10m over the (by then infilled) Hogsmill channel, to the rear of the market frontage (Fig. 42). Its north wall, marking the property boundary, was traced eastwards for at least 12m, beyond which it had been destroyed by later building. Although the foundations at the western end were c. 1m deep, they did not reach the bottom of the channel and the building had suffered from subsidence at that end. No floor levels, to indicate the building's function, survived, but it may have been used for storage, possibly as a warehouse, or as a workshop.

The building was rebuilt at least once in the late 14th or early 15th century, re-using the earlier foundations on the north side, but extending slightly further to the south and west. There was evidence for at least one internal division, and traces of clay floors survived at the western end. Surprisingly perhaps, the foundations in the second phase were less substantial than those of its predecessor, and it too had suffered from subsidence. It is clear that the walls did not extend to roof height, but instead provided the footings for what was probably a single-storey timber-framed building with panels of wattle and daub infill.

Down Westbitamestrete

As the town around the market developed, so the former suburb of *Clateringbrugende*, south of the Hogsmill, also grew in wealth, stretching further along both sides of *Westbitamestrete* (High Street), and the Charter Quay excavations revealed that during the 14th century the area had a largely industrial character.

In the 19th century ‘some beautiful early capitals and bases of piers’ of c. 1300 date were found near the Guildhall, on land formerly called *La Ryole* (one is now displayed outside Kingston Central Library), pointing to the presence on High Street of a stone building of some importance and architectural merit. Perhaps not coincidentally, there was also a substantial house called *La Ryole* in Vintry Ward (the district of wine importers) in the City of London, and it may be that the same merchant owned both properties. It is known that other important City merchants, including the Lovekyns who were involved in some of the town’s inns and wine shops and were buried in All Saints Church, held property in Kingston. They were presumably attracted by the town’s location, as both an important local market and as an inland port and transshipment point. Kingston was at the tidal limit of the River Thames, so that while large vessels could sail that far up the river, the presence of the bridge at Kingston would have prevented them from going any further, and their cargoes of wine and other goods would need to be transferred to smaller boats for distribution upstream.

Emms Passage, leading west off High Street, probably became formalised as an alleyway at this time, linking the street and the waterfront, and facilitating the river trade (**Fig. 34**). The limited excavation of the lane near its junction with High Street revealed a sequence of gravel surfaces directly overlying natural deposits.

The absence of later cellars on High Street north of Emms Passage meant that the sequence of 14th to 15th century buildings there was better preserved than on the market place, and medieval deposits lay directly underneath the modern concrete flooring. The late 12th–13th century timber building that had previously occupied this property had apparently long since fallen into disuse, or been dismantled and not replaced. Instead, the property was given over to some form of industrial activity characterised by a series of hearths of varying shape and size (although none closely resembled the keyhole-shaped examples found behind the market place). The presence of similar hearths on the south side of Emms Passage may indicate that the same person owned properties on both sides of the lane. Although documentary study did not uncover the names of

Figure 45: One of the hearths being excavated – possibly the base of a bread oven dating to the late 14th (or early 15th) century.



the 14th century occupiers of the High Street properties, trades there are known to have included iron smithing and possibly gold working. There is no evidence, however, that these hearths were associated with metal working, and baking (*Fig. 45*) or malting are again more likely uses.

By the start of the 15th century the character of the area had changed again, as increasing demand for property led to the division of the earlier single High Street property. The resulting two buildings may have been jettied, although the competition for space in this part of town was still probably less intense than on the market frontage. Both buildings had yards behind them, and a third building, reached from Emms Passage, was built on ground to their rear. This may have been a house, or perhaps a barn or warehouse, with a later northward extension perhaps being used as a workshop or for storage. This may be the building referred to in the 16th century as a barn belonging to one of the properties, probably the southernmost, on High Street.

14th century industrial activity on High Street

The front of the High Street property north of Emms Passage contained a series of pitched-tile hearths, (*Figs 48-50*) all within 20m of the street (*Fig. 46*), one dated to c. 1375-1400, and its replacement to c. 1390-1410. Unlike those behind the market, these were out of doors, although several post-holes near them may indicate the presence of shelters. No clear floors were identified, there being instead a sequence of clay and mortar surfaces interleaved with dark ashy material containing a lot of charcoal. The ground may have been of beaten earth strewn with rushes or hay, although as it was probably still prone to periodic flooding, or at least damp, it may have been covered with wooden planking. (A similar sequence of hearths and deposits was recorded in 1990 south of Emms Passage.)

Sometime in the mid-14th century a building, measuring c. 9m by 5m, was built to the rear of the hearths, along the north side of Emms Passage. Its eastern end was built over some of the ashy spreads, although it appears to have been broadly contemporary with use of the hearths. It had narrow, low walls that would have provided the footings for a single storey timber frame. There may have been doorways in the east and the south sides, but there were few internal features and the building might best be interpreted as a store.

The charred remains of cereals and flower seeds from a pit on the property contained a large quantity of cereal grains, the majority of which were wheat, probably *Triticum aestivum* - a wheat used for making bread. Rye and some barley were also present, along with cornflower and stinking mayweed, both characteristic weeds of medieval crops. Although mixed crops, such as maslin (wheat and rye) and dredge (oats and barley), may have been grown, and mixed grains may have been used for brewing, baking or adding to pottages¹⁸, it was impossible to say whether the grain found had arrived already mixed. The presence of the hearths suggests the grain was used for baking bread for which clean grain would be required.

The remains of beetles recovered from one of the hearths provide further clues as to their use. Although most were from species that infest rotting timber, such as damp flooring, and casks, there were also two grain weevils which feed particularly on wheat and rye. There were also three golden spiders, which eat a wide range of cereals and cereal products, as well as spices and medicinal herbs; they are usually found among vegetable and animal debris in warehouses, poorly kept store rooms and old houses, and although generally regarded as having been introduced into England the 19th century, small numbers may have been introduced earlier.

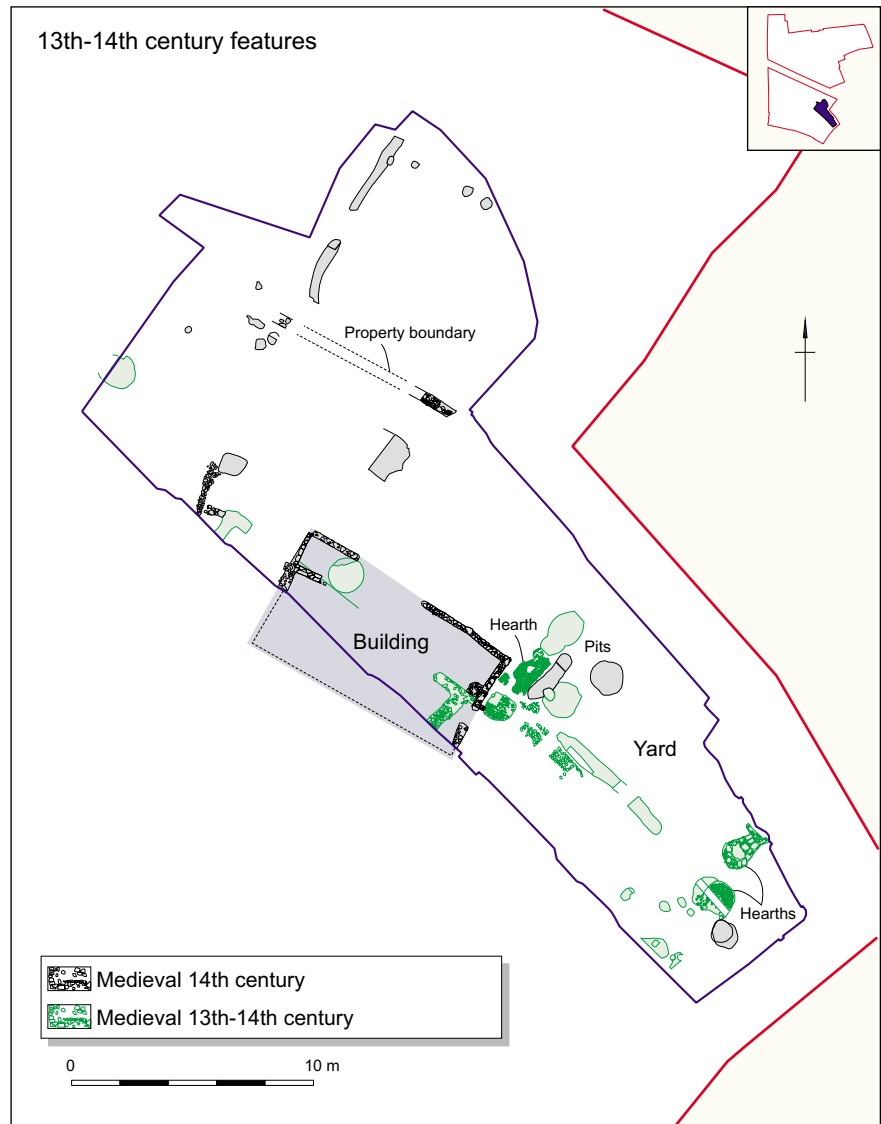


Figure 46: Plan showing concentration of 14th century features near the High Street frontage in Trench 2.

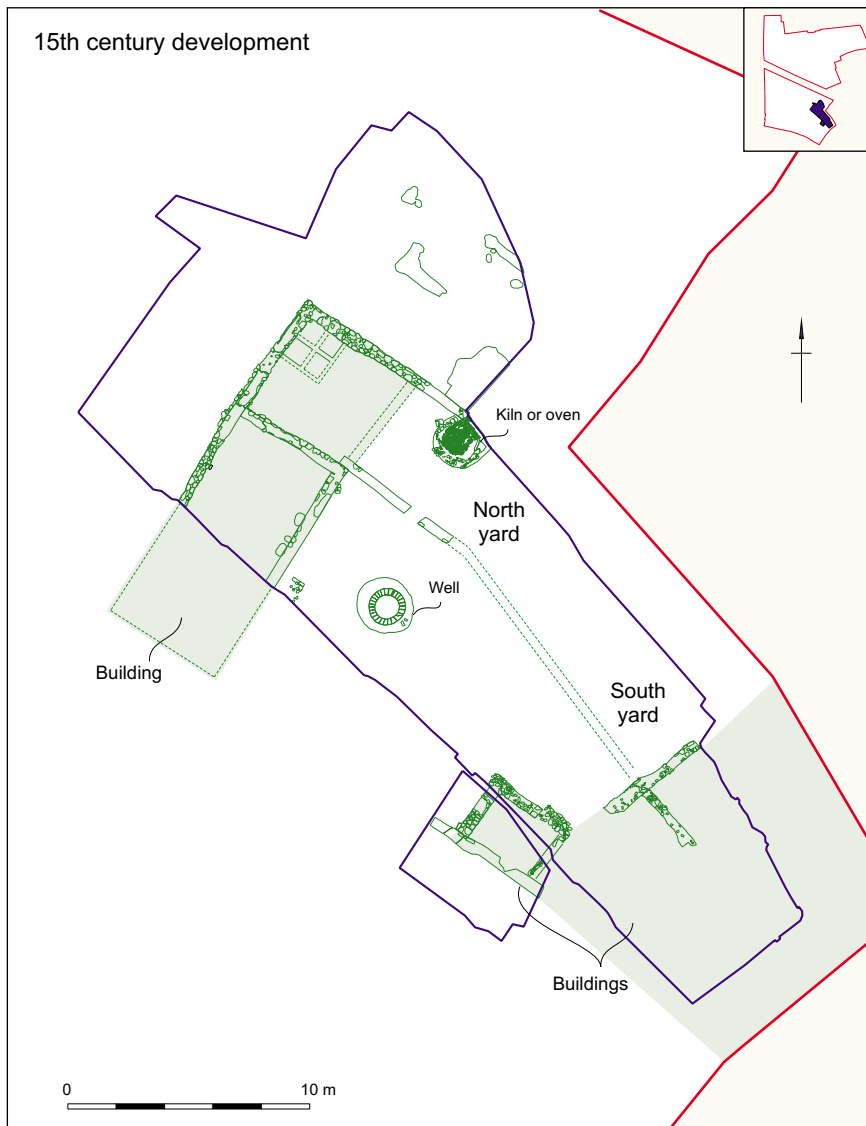


Figure 47: Plan of Trench 2 showing 15th century structural developments.

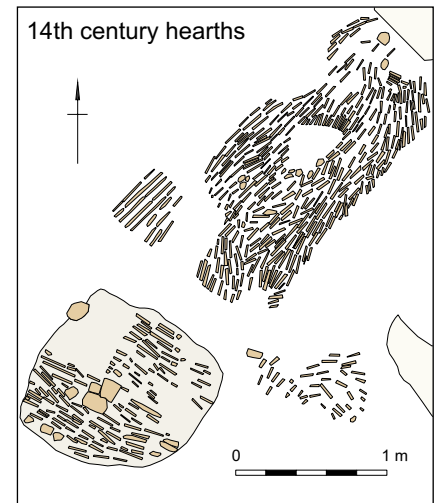


Figure 48: Plan of 14th century hearths.

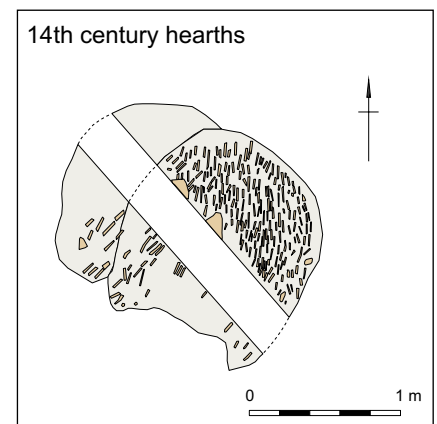


Figure 49: Plan of 14th century hearths.

Property division and construction in the 15th century

At the start of the 15th century, the High Street property on the north side of Emms Lane was divided into two, and two buildings sharing a party wall, each c. 12m by 6m, were built aligned at a right angle to High Street (Fig. 47). The 14th century building (the possible store) towards the rear of the (now) southern property was initially retained, but then demolished to create a gravel yard opening onto Emms Passage. The yard contained a well, its lower courses formed of squared chalk blocks, the upper part finished in brick (Fig. 51). There was a similar yard in the northern property, the two yards being separated by a wall of neatly squared blocks of Reigate stone, forming a simple decorative effect on its south face.

At the same time a new property was laid out to the west, extending from Emms Passage to the Hogsmill, containing a large building, c. 10m long and 5m wide, lying at a right angle, and adjacent to, the lane (Fig. 52). Like the yard wall (the line of which was continued by the building's north wall) its externally visible walls were made of well-faced chalk and Reigate stone blocks. Its eastern wall butted the remains of the demolished 14th store, and its west wall corresponded approximately with the earlier, but now redundant, 13th century property boundary wall. There was probably a doorway midway along the east side, and traces of a mortar floor and floor joists survived inside. Immediately north of the doorway were three post-holes that may have held posts supporting a second storey.

Around the middle of the 15th century, the building was extended to the north, with a slight change in alignment. The new walls were of a much less regular construction, its east wall being made of quite large, but rather irregular stone blocks, perhaps representing the later blocking of an open-fronted structure. The northwest corner had deeper foundations where it overlay reclaimed land, and here there was a small, shallow, rectangular stone-lined pit divided into four compartments and containing some charcoal – possibly a fuel store.

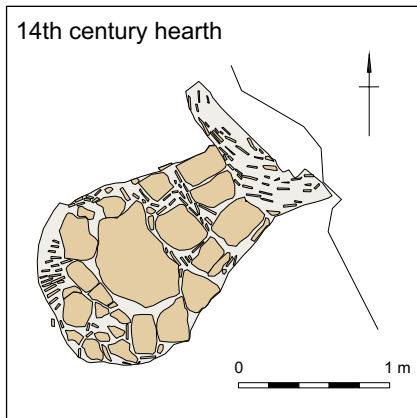


Figure 50: Plan of 14th century hearth.



Figure 51: Late 15th century well built of chalk blocks and brick located in the yard area.

A small cellar

Behind the High Street buildings, beside Emms Passage, was a small (2m by 3m), 15th century cellar, 1.5m deep (Fig. 53). It was built of chalk, Reigate stone and flint with courses of tile, and with mortar on the walls and floor. There were no steps but access would have been from the building above. Charred remains of cereals (mainly wheat), peas and possibly field beans were found in the cellar, but more frequent were items preserved by mineralisation, including apple and grape. Duck and pigeon (probably domestic) were identified in the small quantity of animal bone.

In the material that had been used to backfill the cellar was an iron woodworking axe and a jetton of 15th or 16th century date. The jetton (one of three found) originated in France and the Low Countries. Their dating is still uncertain, being issued some time in the 15th or 16th century, although they could have been used up to the 17th century. They were used as reckoning counters, although they also occur on sites where no formal accounting appears to have taken place, and they may have been used as low denomination coins. Seven late 14th or early 15th century pennies were found in a post-hole to the south of Emms Passage, hidden for some reason and never retrieved.



Figure 52: Foundations and bottom courses of a late 15th century building at 90° to Emms Passage – perhaps a precursor to the later maltings in this property.



Figure 53: Late medieval cellared structure adjacent to Emms Passage – a later brick wall lies across the middle. The walls were carefully built of blocks of chalk and Reigate stone interspersed with courses of flint nodules and tile.

South of Emms Passage there are no medieval buildings later than the 14th century hearths, and the area behind the High Street frontage, which had a series of levelling layers and gravel surfaces, appears to have been used either as yards, or as wharfage where goods were stored. Documents name some of the residents of the area. In 1439, for instance, John and Sylvestra Punche were leased a wedge-shaped strip of waste land along the river on the south side of the Hogsmill adjacent to Clattern Bridge. By 1446, Thomas Broker had 'a garden, a close and a barn' (probably a yard and a warehouse) there, to which a wharf was added by 1455. Immediately to the south of this, by 1440, was a plot called Paradise Garden, which consisted of a two-storey building at the front with a garden behind.

Late medieval trades are known to have included a dyer, a brewer, a boatman and a wood merchant – during the late 13th and 14th centuries, Kingston had become an important centre for stockpiling wood from the surrounding

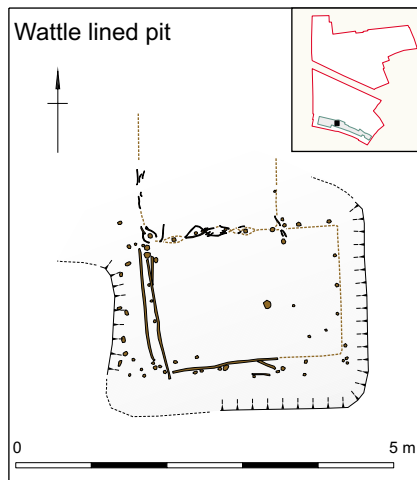


Figure 54: A wattle-lined pit – perhaps a well – dug towards the rear of one of the properties to the south of Emms Passage. A complete horse skeleton was found in the top.

area, before its transport to London in large river boats called 'shouts'. It is possible that a wood merchant held the riverside property (recorded as a woodyard in the 16th century) near the mouth of the Hogsmill, accessed from Emms Passage.

Figure 55: Probable malting kiln. The chamber floor, with the stoke-hole and rake-out pit behind.



15th century industrial activities

Evidence of industrial activity was found in the yard of the northern of the two High Street properties. The yard surface was made up of several spreads of gravel and other material, including a dump of cattle bucrania – the part of the skull which includes the horn. Two of the skulls had abnormal perforations, which may reflect a pathological response to bearing a yoke across the head. Another deposit contained mainly cattle foot bones. Skull and foot bones are both waste from slaughter, but they may also indicate the processing of hides, as they can be transported to the tannery attached to the skin – the horns effectively acting as 'handles'. (In contrast, a complete horse carcass was found in a wattle-lined pit, infilled in the late 15th century, c. 30m from the River Thames (Fig. 54). The pit cut a shallow, timber-lined well of 14th–early 15th century date lay, one of very few wells found, perhaps because much of the water used was drawn from the River Thames.)

On the north side of the yard was a length of wall running eastwards from the north-east corner of the extended building to the rear of the property (Fig. 47). Built into it was a large kiln or oven (Fig. 55). The chamber, on the south side of the wall, was slightly pear-shaped, with a floor of pitched roof tile fragments, and the remains of a clay dome surviving around its edge. The stoke hole was through the wall and a large, shallow, sub-rectangular rake-out pit extended to the north side. Several post-holes and gullies in the vicinity may have formed a shelter to cover the rake-out pit and the surrounding working area.

The rake-out pit contained a lot of charcoal, including both heartwood and sapwood suggesting the use of relatively wide logs (predominantly oak, beech, ash and elm) mixed with narrower roundwood (maple, alder, hazel, blackthorn, birch, willow/poplar). Analysis of the charred plant remains was unable to determine what the kiln was used for – it may have been for malting, a malthouse occupying the site in the 16th century, or for baking, so replacing the series of hearths on the High Street frontage up to the 15th century.

Mills and weirs

There were several weirs in the rivers at Kingston. Thomas Broker held a weir in the Hogsmill in 1417, to the west of Clattern Bridge. No evidence for it was found, probably due to the river's canalisation in the early 20th century. In 1524 there was a weir called *Meydenwer* or Two Mouths, near the Hogs Mill, further upstream. Of particular interest is a reference of 1455 to John Belgeyn having a building in which to keep fish. He may have occupied the property towards the northern end of site, recorded in the 12th–13th century as being occupied by a fishmonger.

Late medieval Kingston had mills at the *Hogs Mill*, and also at *Myddle Mill*, *Chappell Myll* and *Polteresmille*. Mills were also mentioned in connection with the *Saracen's Head* and *George* inns on the west side of the market. It is unlikely they were on these sites, although there is a 16th century reference to 'a garden and a barn in the Back Lane near an old corn mill' at the *George*, and a granary is recorded in the same property at the beginning of the 19th century.

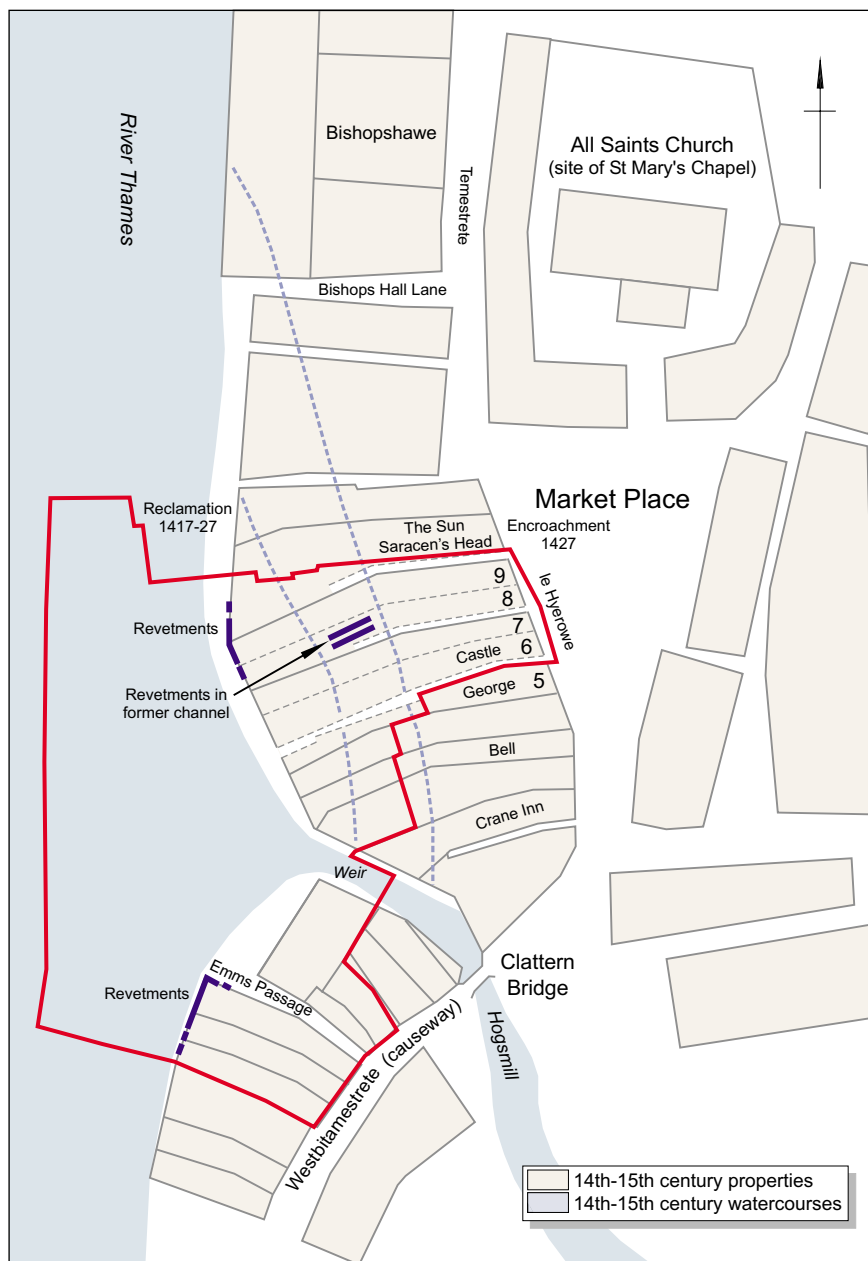


Figure 56: Topography and schematic layout of properties around Charter Quay in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Bridging the Hogsmill channel

As in the 13th century, land was reclaimed within individual properties. At least three more revetments, of probable 14th century date, were found at the rear of the same market frontage property as before (Fig. 57), but unlike the earlier revetments, which were aligned north-south along the line of the channel, these ran east-west across it (Fig. 30). As the channel became shallower, the revetments would eventually have blocked it and so provided a 'bridge' across to the low gravel bank to the west, which could itself then be reclaimed. The reclamation of the channel would then have proceeded north and south in the adjacent properties, in due course to the edge of the River Thames and the Hogsmill. These revetments were poorly preserved and less substantial than the earlier examples, reflecting the decreasing depth of the channel as it was filled in. Some of their posts had mortise holes with pegs, indicating the re-use of building timbers (Fig. 58). These had been sharpened and driven into the ground to retain the horizontal pieces, of which little survived. The latter were made entirely of sections of planking from the hulls of broken-up boats.



Figure 57: Silty flood deposits interleaved with dumps of gravel and domestic refuse infilling the former channel from the late 13th to early 15th century. Note the remains of three parallel revetments (centre) running across the channel and used to stabilise the infill deposits.

Land reclamation

The pattern of the property boundaries north of the Hogsmill exhibits a curvilinear 'bridgehead' form, which would have given maximum access to both the market and the waterfront (**Fig. 56**). Small changes in alignment of these boundaries, some of which survive today, or are recorded on 19th and 20th century maps, reflect the advances of the properties across the reclaimed ground.

Reclamation of land at the Hogsmill channel had continued through the 14th century, leading eventually to the creation of a land bridge to the gravel bank to its west. A 15th century reference to 'a way for water to go backwards' at the *George* inn may refer to the now blocked channel at the rear of the property, in which water could flow south (i.e. backwards) into the Hogsmill, but no longer north into the River Thames. Also, between the rentals of 1417 and 1427, Richard Est is recorded as having added a 'purpresture' at the River Thames end of his property, to the north of Charter Quay. This may refer to reclamation at the north end of the channel, suggesting that it had now been effectively closed off.

As properties were extended west there were also attempts, in the 14th and 15th centuries, to manage the shores of the River Thames and the Hogsmill in order both to limit the effect of flooding, and also to create wharves which could be reached by lanes running back from the street frontages. The earliest Thames-side revetments in Kingston (recorded in the late 1980s) were found on both sides of the old Kingston bridge, a series of at least six revetments spanning some 200 years from the early 13th to the early 15th century. Some appeared to be purpose-built, made of sawn planks, while others were made of re-used boat and building timbers.

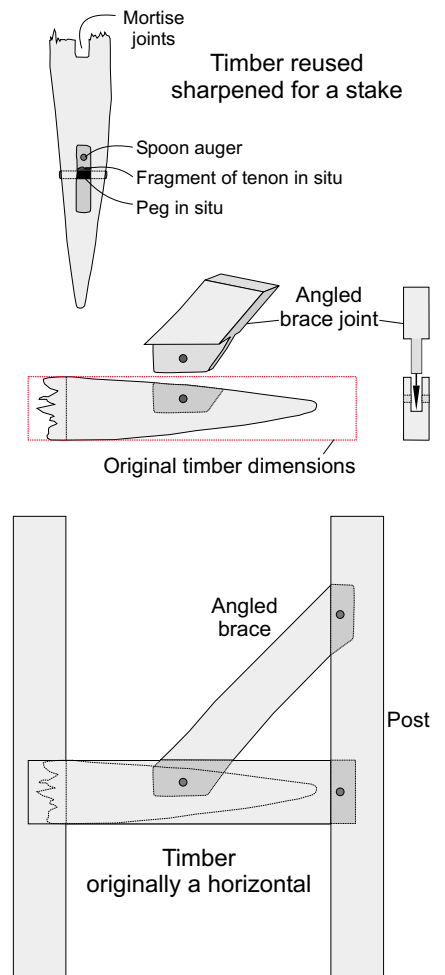


Figure 58: (Top) Building timber reused in revetment. One end has been sharpened to form a stake, but a mortise hole with peg in situ survives. (Bottom) Suggested original position of timber in frame of building.