

The Greenhouse in detail

The greenhouse was built against the east end of the north boundary wall. It has been demolished but much of the floor and some other features remain. The Ordnance Survey maps suggest that it was constructed between 1896 and 1913.

The building

Externally the building had a length of 6.76m and a width of 3.4 m.

The north side was formed by the high brick garden boundary wall which has been constructed in at least three stages:

- The lowest part of soft red brick laid in Flemish bond two stretchers thick. It was capped by a soldier course one stretcher thick with sloping offsets of cut brick below.
- An addition one stretcher thick capped by a soldier course.
- A further similar addition also capped by a soldier course.

The lowest part of the wall probably dates from the 18th century. The two extensions may be 19th century.

The east end of the greenhouse consisted of a brick wall which sloped down as if the greenhouse had a lean-to roof. This wall butts up against and laps over the offset on the north wall so it must be later.

The lower part of the west and south side walls were brick. The foundations of these are still in place although the western side is in poor condition.

The rest of the structure appears to have been glass probably with a timber (rather than metal) frame.

A painting by Stephanie Batstone dating from the 1970s (figure 1) shows a three-quarter span roof with the short side resting against the north wall.

An air-photo taken in 1921 (figure 2) shows the south wall and roof divided into seven sections by evenly spaced glazing bars.

The north wall has a line of five slots the tops of which are 2.36m above floor level (figure 6). These are not evenly spaced and do not accord with the number of glazing bars shown in the 1921 air-photo. They must therefore have supported a horizontal timber which, in turn, supported the glazing bars.

There is also a slot to support the foot of the west gable (figure 6). The Stephanie Batstone watercolour appears to show shaped barge boards but the detail is unclear. The watercolour also shows an elaborate finial at the apex of the western end of the roof.

The doors

The water colour shows two doors one towards the north end of the west wall and the other at the east end of the south wall.

The south door seems to have opened to a short concreted floored passage with a second door at the inner end (figures 5 and 7). The 1921 air-photo does not seem to show the outer door so this may have been a later addition.

The western door appears to have opened directly into the main greenhouse. It had a sandstone lintel which is still in situ (figures 4 and 5).

The watercolour shows both doors had solid bottoms and glazed tops. The glazing was clear glass with a red border around the edges and yellow corners.

The floor

The centre part of the floor was covered with a chequer of yellow and dark grey ceramic tiles which are marked with a crown and 'W & C' on the underside (figure 8).

A significant proportion – perhaps about half – of the grey and yellow floor tiles are missing.

A half metre wide strip along the north wall is covered with concrete rough cast of uncertain date. It probably covers a planting pit as the wall above has iron eye bolts to hold at least three lines of wires presumably to support plants. There are also various other metal fittings which were probably for training plants. These have not yet been surveyed.

There appears to have a 0.4m wide earth strip along the south wall.

There is a drain near the centre of the floor which probably connects to a pipe which discharges onto the concrete floor to the east of the greenhouse.

Internal fittings

An iron frame to support a greenhouse bench was found in the culvert where the stream enters the garden (figure 10). It seems likely that it came from this greenhouse as it is nearby. It almost certainly came from the south side of the greenhouse as there is a planting trench against the north wall. It had 0.61m high cast iron legs moulded to look like turned wood.

There is a cistern in the north east corner. The inside is cement rendered, the outside pebble dashed. It rests on the floor tiles and may be an addition.

There is a short section of lead pipe passing through the east wall above the cistern – presumably the remains of the water supply.

There is a small stone shelf above the cistern. The wall above this is sooted so it must have supported a small oil heater.

There are the remains of two iron bars set into the floor and there are likely to be others under the shed (modern, now removed). These probably supported benches below the window along the south side of the house.

The Access path on the west side

This runs along the west side of the greenhouse and gives access to the west door. It is of York stone or similar slabs and is in reasonable condition (figures 3, 4 and 5). There is a cast iron boot scraper on the west side of the path at the north end (figure 9).

Discussion of the greenhouse

Enough survives to reconstruct the main features of the greenhouse.

The sloping top of the east wall does not accord with the roof shown in the Batstone watercolour and the high part of the north boundary wall extends beyond the greenhouse foundations. These features probably relate to earlier structures on the site, probably the buildings shown on the maps of 1847 and 1868. It is not clear whether these were greenhouses or sheds although an inventory of the landlord's fixtures in Wandle Cottage in 1869 included a greenhouse containing 'a 5 Tier Flower Stage returned [?] railed stage in front of house 2 shelves each on 4 Brackets 2 shelves on 5 brackets'.¹

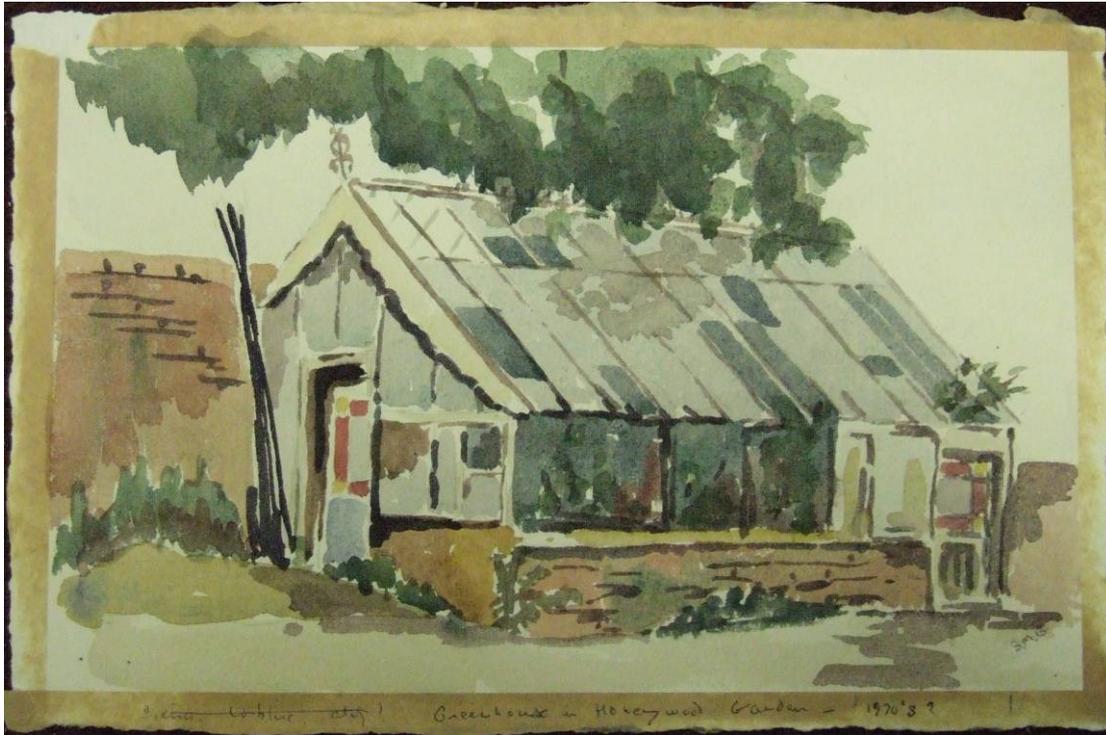


Figure 1. Watercolour by Stephanie Batstone showing the greenhouse in the 1970s.

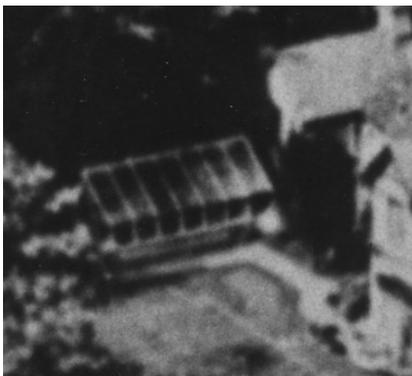


Figure 2. The greenhouse from an air-photo dated 1921.

¹ Sutton Legal deed bundle item 19.



Figure 3. The remains of the greenhouse in 2008.



Figure 4. The stone slab path to the west door with the remains of the greenhouse floor on the right. in 2008.

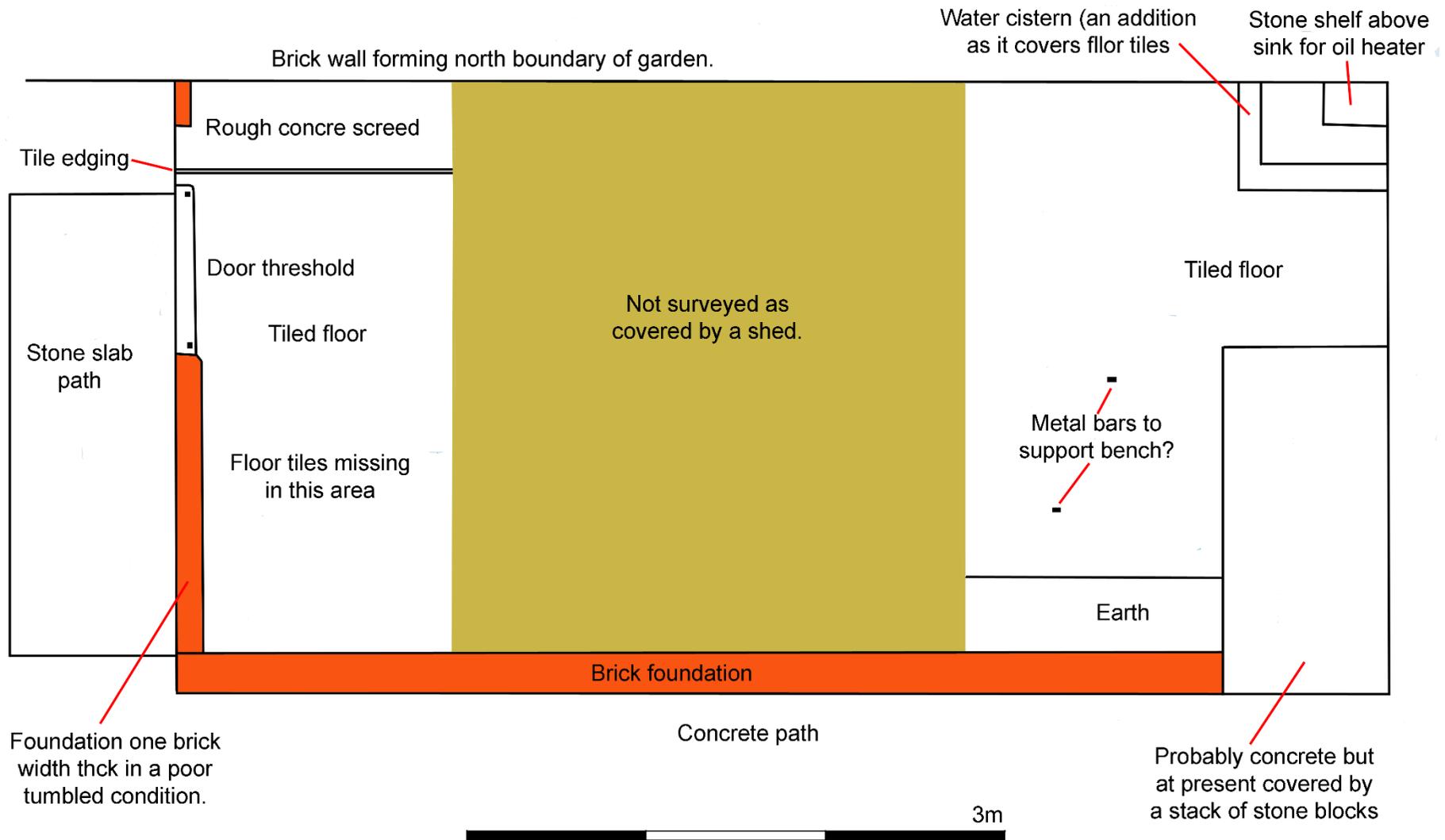


Figure 5. Plan of the greenhouse. North at the top.

Slots for timbers to support the roof shaded green

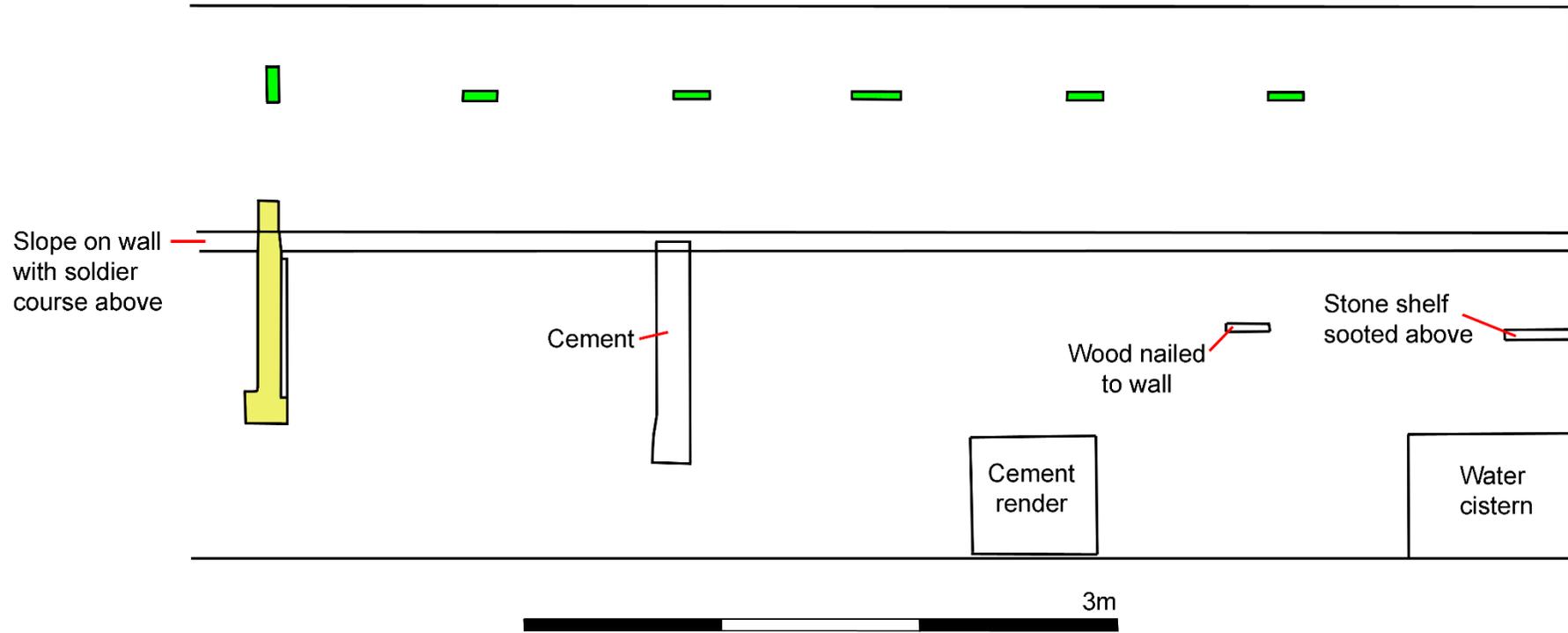


Figure 6. The north wall of the greenhouse.

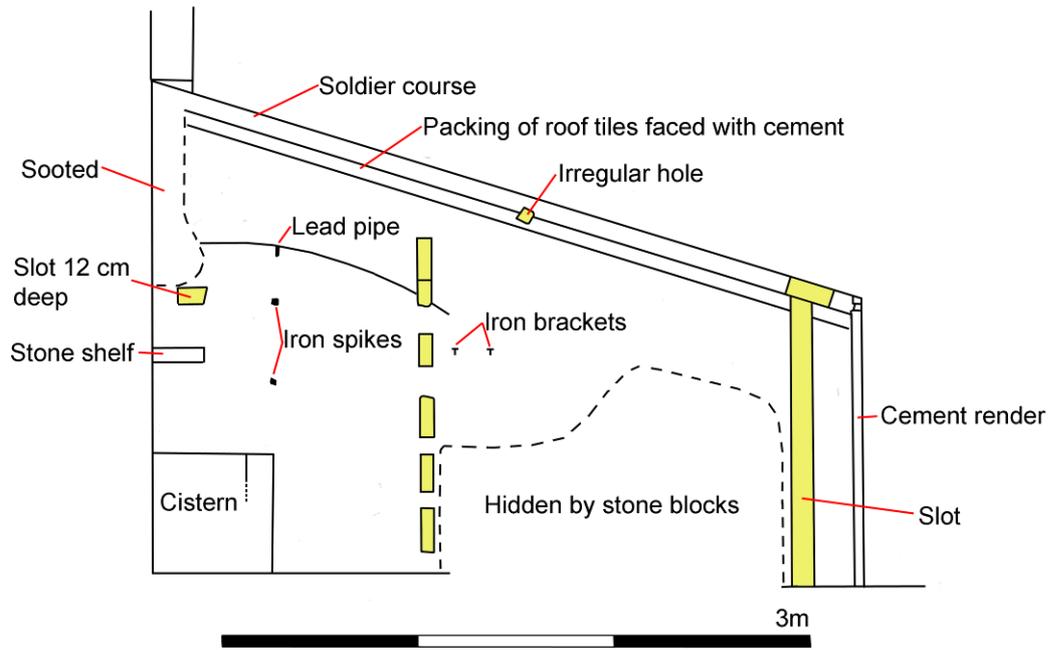


Figure 7. The east wall



Figure 8. The back of one of the floor tiles showing the crown and 'W & C' mark.



Figure 9. The boot scraper by the west door.



Figure 10. An iron frame for a greenhouse bench found in the culvert within the garden.