

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE EPSOM SPA ERA

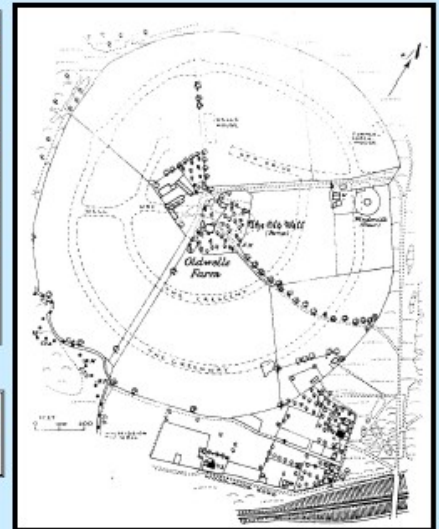


A postcard of the Victorian flint and stone well head which capped the Old Well until 1989



The new wellhead, officially opened on 25th June 1989

Whilst the position of the Old Well on Epsom Common continued to be marked by a well-head, the site of the New Well and its associated pleasure gardens, bowling greens and cockpits in Epsom were lost as the town continued to develop.



The Old Wells on Epsom Common from an OS map of 1866, with later street plan superimposed



Pit A - a water-logged cesspit constructed of brick and Reigate stone



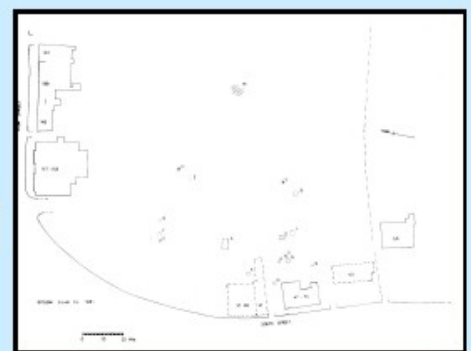
Aerial photo of redevelopment in Epsom town centre in the 1980s. To the left is the High Street site and to the right is the South Street site, now beneath the Ashley Centre and the Epsom Playhouse

Little remains of the Spa period in Epsom; whilst the proximity of the town to London was one reason for the spa's popularity, it has also contributed to the 20th century destruction of its remaining buildings. They have mostly disappeared under the pressure of demand for housing and commercial premises.

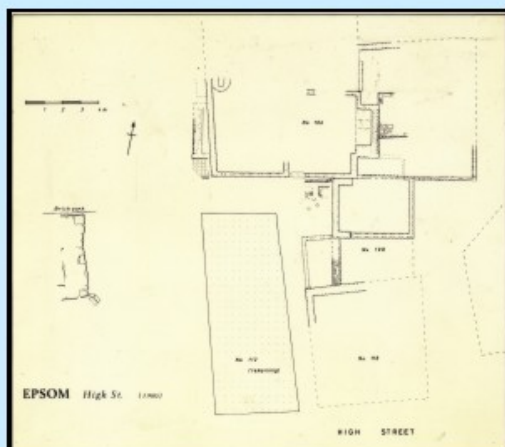
Redevelopment in the late 1970s-early 1980s gave Nonsuch Antiquarian Society (now EEHAS) and Bourne Hall Museum the opportunity to rescue and record evidence for the spa period.



View of High Street site before demolition in 1969. No. 110 is the larger building, gable-end to the street



A plan of excavated features on the South Street site, 1981



Plan of excavated features, High Street site



Pit F on the South Street site had fill of mid-18th century pot



A number of domestic wells, lined with shaped chalk blocks, were found on the site. In town, wells often became fouled and a new well dug. The old well would have then been used as a rubbish pit. The wells are difficult to date as the building technique continued well into the 19th century but the pit rubbish can help provide a date. Most dated from the 18th or early 19th century.