

TL74

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TL74

2-3 Trig Lane, Upper Thames Street, EC4
M Harrison; later G Milne & C Milne

NGR: TQ 32030 80830

SMR: 042167-72

Excavations in 1974-6 revealed a series of timber and stone riverfront revetments and associated features erected on the Thames' foreshore from the mid 13th-mid 15th c (Fig*TL). It was possible to plot the differing development and rates of riverfront extension during this period on three adjacent properties.

The earliest feature was a free-standing structure or platform which was built on the foreshore possibly c 1250. During the mid 13th and 14th c a series of closely datable revetments successively advanced the waterfront to the S into the Thames, These revetments were horizontally planked and both front- and back-braced; one survived to a height of 2.5m. Behind the waterfronts and above the contemporary infilling, surfaces of gravel and stone chips, and buildings were laid out.

In about 1346 the E section of the earlier revetment was advanced about 3m to the S with the erection of a back-braced revetment, several of the timbers of which were reused boat strakes. Its W limit may have marked a property boundary. A substantial building was erected behind this waterfront, the chalk rubble of its S wall encasing the earlier revetment. At about the same time 2m to the W of the timber revetment a riverwall of irregular courses of dressed ragstone was constructed, the inlet between the two waterfronts being aligned on the S end of Bosse Alley. In about 1370 a back-braced 'stave wall' advanced the timber waterfront in the west; in the east it replaced the earlier revetment. About 6.5m of the foreshore was reclaimed in about 1383 when the E end of the waterfront was advanced with the construction of a back-braced revetment. The 'stave wall' was then heightened or a second storey replaced. A new building was erected above the demolished earlier one, one wall of its earliest phase being constructed of uncoursed greensand and chalk rubble; there seems to have been a yard to its S (*ie* at the water's edge). A number of jetties, landing stages and other features were recorded on the foreshore.

The subdivided waterfront then underwent a major rebuild in about 1483. A massive ragstone faced riverwall was constructed to the S of the timber revetments to produce a common frontage and stair which functioned with the earlier riverwall. Associated with this riverfront was a narrow building fronting E onto Trig Lane which may have been used for industrial purposes. This riverfront lasted until the 17th c.

Reclamation was resumed in the 17th c, in the areas to the W and S of the riverwall. Buildings were constructed above the earlier waterfronts, represented by brick and rubble walls, brick or mortar floors, and hearths. Other post-medieval features included drains and a well.

The watching brief on the site during construction works in 1984 is recorded under TIG84. For the revised finds dating of the major waterfront groups, see Vince 1985, 85–6.

The TL74 excavations of 1974–6 were next to the Thames and south of the new alignment of the widened Upper Thames Street (from 1974, in this area, the street was rebuilt as a ground-level tunnel under the site of the intended new City of London Boys' School). Some observation of the north ends of Trig Lane and adjacent alleys south of the former Upper Thames Street took place in 1972–3 before the construction of the tunnel, by J Haslam. The records of these observations are kept in the archive under the sitecode BC72 (Baynard's Castle, which was the main excavation in the area at the time of the first construction).

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