

XWL79

Courtesy of LAARC 1998

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8–10 Crosswall, EC3

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Excavations were carried out in the N and at the S end of the site. The earliest indication of activity occurred in the N area where the natural gravels were cut by a drainage ditch of early 2nd c date, and by the construction of the Roman defensive wall (which is dated elsewhere to the late 2nd - early 3rd c). On this site the wall had become incorporated into a property boundary, its outer face forming part of the western boundary of the site. A total length of c 22.5m was recorded, with a 10m stretch surviving 3m in height up to the third tile course and with numerous post-Roman repairs. Some 3m in advance of the wall the contemporary V-shaped ditch was recorded in both the N and S areas of the site: it was c 2m deep and c 4m wide. The remains of Bastion 4 were located in the S and a hitherto unknown bastion, to be called B4A, was discovered in the N area. The foundations of these bastions were rectangular in shape and projected 5.4m (B4A) and a minimum 4.7m (B4) from the wall, B4A's foundations - coursed chalk and ragstone - being 'stepped' into the bottom of the V-shaped ditch. The solid, D-shaped superstructure of B4A was partly at least composed of reused monumental masonry - including fragments of an inscribed Roman tombstone, probably of early 3rd c date - and was not keyed into the wall. The 3m high stretch of wall (Fig *) and the foundation of B4A have been preserved within the present building.

In the medieval period, a defensive ditch was constructed and infilled in the late 12th-13th c when B4A was demolished and B4 apparently demolished, though since documentary evidence indicates that B4 survived into the 17th c, this may only have been partial. During a watching brief on the E side of the site the W edge of a ditch was recorded at a low level and is likely to have been part of a later medieval defensive ditch - the City Ditch. Post-medieval horn-core lined pits dating to the late 16th-17th c were found, two of which were associated with the casting of gun-metal. Towards the end of the 17th c domestic properties were established. In the S a basement containing a brick water channel and well were recorded: they possibly represented the remains of a wash-house. The backfill of the well contained a substantial quantity of material associated with glass making in the late 17th-early 18th c. In the N area, two brick-lined cesspits were constructed against the City Wall where they probably demarcated two properties. Both were disused by the early-mid-18th c. One of the cesspits was infilled about 1770, probably as the result of a household clearance: it contained a large collection of pottery and glassware - many near-complete items - and an animal bone assemblage which included an angora rabbit and a linnet. In the later 19th c the Metropolitan Bonded Warehouse was constructed, storing tea and cork; features connected with this and the Irongate sewer, which ran N-S beneath the warehouse, were recorded.

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