

OST82

Courtesy of LAARC - 1998

OST82
7-10 Foster Lane, EC2
I Blair

NGR: TQ 32200 81310
SMR: 043465-73

A two-month excavation and one-month watching brief funded by Wates Developments produced evidence of Roman and later periods from a small area of excavation and from a watching brief on building works. The earliest activity, recorded during the watching brief, consisted of quarry pits cut into the natural brickearth. Sealing the consolidation of at least one of these pits in the SE corner of the site was a succession of at least eight major road metallings, the earliest of Flavian date, of a NE-SW road. It seems likely that this originally formed the W boundary of an insula which was bounded on the E by the Roman road found at Milk Street in 1977 (see MLK76).

Associated with the later road surfaces was a structure fronting directly onto the street to its W. This phase of activity was superseded by a series of linear roadside cuts which are interpreted as gullies. This means that subsequent buildings (which were not recorded) were pushed back behind the new lines of roadside ditches. In the main area of excavation the first series of buildings comprised four internal walls forming a room 3m x 2.5m, its axis parallel to the street, of brickearth sills probably for wattle and daub walls. This contained a domestic hearth similar to those on the GPO Newgate Street site (GPO75). The building was destroyed by fire in the mid- to late 2nd c (the general date of the road widening) and was replaced by further structures which suffered the same fate in the early/mid-3rd c.

Cutting through the later fire dumps the NE corner of a Roman masonry structure was recorded on the W side of the site, running under Foster Lane. A second masonry structure in the N of the site comprised one N-S wall of rammed chalk, on the Roman alignment, which was not robbed until the early 11th c.

The dark earth was found slumped over 3rd c surfaces, though its relationship to the masonry buildings and to the road was not established. External surfaces and stakes of the 10th c suggest the establishment of Foster Lane. The medieval period was represented by two cesspits, which produced crucibles for metal working, in one case (datable to the 14th c), with traces of gold working upon it.

An important group of 14th c Venetian glass beaker fragments (Figs*OST) were recovered from one of the medieval cesspits.

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