

# LCT84

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LCT84

91–100 Gracechurch Street, 1–6 Leadenhall Street, 2–12 Whittington Avenue (now Leadenhall Court), EC3

S P O'Connor-Thompson, G Milne, T Brigham, G Brown and P Wootton

NGR: TQ 33060 81090

SMR: 043060–93

Between September 1984 and February 1985 various investigations were undertaken on this site in advance of major archaeological excavations and subsequent redevelopment. This part of the project was generously funded by Legal and General Assurance Society Ltd. The investigations revealed over 4m of Roman stratigraphy in an area which overlies the NE corner of the early 2nd c basilica. The earliest activity comprised brickearth quarrying succeeded by both industrial and domestic building deposits. These were superseded by the basilica of which at least three *opus signinum* floors were recorded. Following its demise the roof collapsed; this in turn was sealed by the fallen S wall of the nave and activity in the area appears to have ceased until the 10th c. Also recorded was the 14m high W wall of the mid-15th c Leadenhall. The foundations comprised a series of relieving arches, which themselves are partially founded on the Roman foundations of the basilica.

From October 1985 to September 1986 extensive excavations were conducted, in addition to the preliminary work reported above. This part of the project, funded by the Legal and General Assurance Society and English Heritage, was designed to examine a large area over and immediately N of the site of the suggested Roman basilica. The eleven trenches investigated below basements of the standing buildings on the S side of the site were supervised by P Wootton, and the three large external areas were supervised by T Brigham (S) G Brown (W) and G Milne (N) (Fig\*LCT).

Evidence was found for the initial clearance of tree cover, quarry pits, ditches, a building with earth-fast posts and a thick fire debris horizon. All these were sealed by six brickearth-walled buildings, pottery from which has been dated to c AD 60–80; the associated pits, wells, alleys and middens were also excavated. All these features were swept away by a major redevelopment of the site which saw the introduction of a large masonry public building extending beyond the S, W and E limits of excavation. A well-made road lay to its N, with brickearth and timber buildings beyond that. Major structural modifications to the masonry building were recorded, as was the sequence of development in many of the rooms, together with the complex pattern of demolition and robbing. The Roman finds were typical of a Roman civilian settlement: nothing of a military character has yet been identified on the site. The Roman pottery constitutes a large assemblage, early Flavian to 4th c in date, and including a great range of imports. There are very good examples of unusual types, for example hollow-foot amphora, Rhineland mortaria, and glazed ware from central Gaul and SE England. Glass vessels included chariot and athletes cups and a double-handed cup (scyphos). Several iron water-pipe collars were recovered.

The road was resurfaced some nine times, but a thick layer of silt sealed the latest surface, into which a series of Saxon pits and other features were cut. Much structural evidence survived of the 15th c Leadenhall market, as the trenches straddled the N part of the quadrangular market building, locating its truncated foundations. A fragment of the exterior wall of the W range survived to a height of 11.2m between modern buildings. It displayed evidence for an open ground floor for trade and, above, two floors for storage of wheat. Cellars built on the site of the N wing, after its demolition in 1795, incorporated over 100 dressed mouldings and blocks from the superstructure of the building (recording by M Samuel). Post-excavation work for the various published reports was funded by English Heritage and the City of London Archaeological Trust.

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