

FMO85

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FMO85

37–40 Fish Street Hill, 16–20 Monument Street, EC3

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NGR: TQ 32920 80730

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Between July and September 1985 an excavation was carried out in advance of redevelopment of the site by Speyhawk, who sponsored the archaeological investigation. The site comprised the remaining quarter of a block which had produced evidence for London's early Roman waterfront in 1981 (PDN81). The area of excavation was *c* 20m x 15m and lay immediately adjacent to the expected alignment of the approach roads to both Roman and medieval London Bridge. In the early 1st c, the sloping hillside leading down to the Thames was sealed by a series of dumped deposits to create an artificial level terrace upon which a substantial building was constructed. The W wall and the SW corner of this building were masonry, but at least part of the S wall was probably timber framed. Internal brickearth surfaces in several large rooms and a corridor area along the W frontage were about 1.0m higher than the contemporary external ground level to the S.

After a fire in the mid-1st c, possibly associated with the Boudican revolt, the building was reconstructed to a similar plan but with timber walls replaced by masonry. Later modifications occurred when the SW corner was rebuilt, the S wall was strengthened and a deep E-W foundation, possibly reflecting the roof ridge alignment, was built across the site. In its latest form, the building was *c* 14.5m wide E-W with a 7.2m gap separating the S wall and the central bisecting E-W foundation. To the W of the building a series of compacted gravel surfaces and a series of intercutting drains and gullies which led off to the S were found. The highest of these was backfilled with redeposited fire debris of the early to mid-2nd c. The later development of the site after this date is not known in detail, since the horizontal sequence was truncated by a modern concrete slab. However, many cut features were recorded. Evidence of the two late Saxon/early medieval cellared buildings was found, cut through the underlying Roman deposits. One used earth-fast posts regularly spaced around the edge of a rectangular cut; the other had N and E walls of mortared rubble and an E wall represented by a probable robbed timber sill. Inside both buildings was a series of brickearth and beaten-earth floors.

A group of *c* 30 pits, ranging in date from mid 10th to early 13th c, was found along the E side of the site. The particular concentration is presumed to reflect the close packing of properties along the early medieval predecessor of Fish Street Hill. A complete 17th c cellar, probably burnt in the Great Fire of 1666, was exposed, as well as a number of 17th,

18th and 19th c wells, cesspits and wall foundations. These reveal the gradual evolution of the property boundaries which were extant until early 1985.

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