

ABC87

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Abacus House, 33–39 Gutter Lane, EC2

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NGR: TQ 32220 81300

SMR: 041695–704

The heavily truncated remains of the E edge of a Roman road and its associated drainage ditches were uncovered in the extreme NW corner of the site, thus verifying the alignment of this road, first recorded at OST82, to the W. The road ran from SW to NE, presumably to the S gate of the Cripplegate fort. Fronting the road and extending to the E were 1st and 2nd c clay-walled buildings, some separated by narrow alleyways. All these buildings reflected the road alignment, including the earliest which were probably destroyed in the Boudican sack of London in AD 61. Many had plastered internal walls. Floors were predominantly of clay, with one notable exception, a polychrome mosaic uncovered to the SE. This mosaic, in a room possibly with an apsidal end, consisted of a square central panel of small white tesserae, in the centre of which a square within a circle were picked out in black. Alternating bands of black and white tesserae formed a narrow edge around the central panel, outside which larger squared red tesserae extended 1m to the walls of the room. The structure was destroyed by fire during the 2nd c. Later Roman activity was represented by the NE corner of a substantial but heavily robbed masonry structure, possibly dating to the 3rd c and similar to those found at OST82.

Overlying the Roman sequence, dark earth survived only in small pockets. The site was extensively pitted during the medieval period and occupied from 1520, according to documentary sources, by Embroiderers' Hall (Schofield 1995). Near the Gutter Lane frontage, a single brick-lined cesspit, containing an assemblage of fine glass and pottery, appeared to be related to the Hall.

The rich finds are predominantly Roman and post-medieval. The many Roman bone objects include a good selection of needles and pins, some complete, and among less usual finds, a whole bone ligula, half a bone skate, a whole spindlewhorl and part of a double-sided ivory comb. Roman ceramics include many samian stamps, mortaria stamps and several counters and lamps. Roman copper alloy objects include a brooch, coins and a lock and key. Roman glass includes flagons, jars and unguentaria. Among post-medieval pottery are many whole vessels. Post-medieval pins, studs and rings were recovered, and post-medieval glass comprised a range of forms, including many wine glasses, some with unusual decoration.

London Archaeol, 6, 1990, 164

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Robinson, J, 1989 Abacus House, 33–39 Gutter Lane, Post-Roman Pottery Appraisal

Schofield, J, 1995 *Medieval London houses*, 188