

BOP82

Courtesy of LAARC - 1998

BOP82
28–32 Bishopsgate, EC3
C Evans

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SMR: 043362–83

Excavations funded by the Standard Charter Bank took place in a 280 sq m L-shaped area. Possible evidence of later prehistoric activity was seen in a few minor features which survived extensive Roman truncation of the brickearth natural; worked flint flakes and a substantial amount of firecracked flint were recovered from the redeposited natural which covered the site.

The initial Roman development of this area (Neronian/Flavian) was certainly planned as was evident in the continuous brickearth slab which was cut by hacking-out ditches; quarry pits were found in the E area of the site. Contemporary with this initial development was a major N-S Roman road 7.5m wide. Its projected alignment would appear to be close to that of the first forum, running north from the approximate centre of the forum to the W of the Roman forerunner of Bishopsgate, though it need not necessarily have been straight. Successive drains were excavated on either side of the road. Truncated postholes from E-W aligned timber structures which fronted upon this road were found, as was also an early pit which contained much scorched daub with wattle impressions. These early structures were succeeded by more substantial, later 1st c, brickearth buildings, which followed the earlier property lines. The interior surfaces of these later buildings survived in only a limited area where a baked clay hearth was found. A sequence of associated exterior surfaces in the E end of the site would suggest rebuilding of these structures.

These buildings were destroyed or demolished probably in the early 2nd c; a horizon of large fragments of painted wall plaster and a large pit containing substantial quantities of building materials, some of which was scorched, were found. These were sealed by a thick brickearth dump perhaps arising from a redevelopment of the area. During the watching brief, a small portion of an *in situ* red tessellated floor was seen in the SE corner of Crosby Square, and apparently dated from this redevelopment phase as it was bedded on similar brickearth deposits. In the E of the site a remarkable mid-2nd c pit was excavated which produced over 100 kilos of pottery and a large quantity of building materials and household goods. Though no later Roman horizontal stratigraphy survived on the site, fills from truncated roadside drains indicate that the road may have continued in use during the 3rd c. Only a few later Roman pits were present and their distribution would suggest that the early property boundaries had been maintained. One late Saxon pit and a number of 12th to 14th c cesspits were excavated. Two standing late medieval brick vaults, which had been part of the Crosby Place buildings (built c 1466) were examined and four main construction phases were recognised, dating from the 14th to 17th c. A large brick-vaulted cesspit was found within one of the vaults which were contemporary with their late commercial use. A post-medieval well and cesspit were also excavated.

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