

PET81

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PET81

St Peter's Hill and 223–225 Upper Thames Street, EC4

T Williams

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Excavations conducted over an eight-month period revealed a Roman to post-medieval sequence. There was little evidence of activity prior to a cutting of terraces into the hillside provisionally dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd c. The excavated area encompassed the lowest terrace and the retaining wall of a higher terrace, agreeing with the sequence found to the E by P Marsden underneath the present Salvation Army building in Queen Victoria Street (see GM91 above). On the lower terrace massive N-S and E-W foundations were constructed of oak piles, rammed chalk and limestone blocks. The N-S foundation was about 3.75m wide and the E-W foundation 8.5m wide. These formed the W and S segments of a massive structure for which the upper terrace wall formed the N element. The internal surface consisted of a good quality *opus signinum* floor while to the W gravels were dumped to make up an external surface. These gravels sealed a lattice of timber possibly associated with the construction phase. The probably 4th c riverside wall, which ran just to the S of the structure, was constructed after the monumental building was at least partially dismantled, though it may have used some of the latter's south-most parts. Evidence of a later Roman timber building with beaten earth floors was uncovered on the N half of the site, again possibly utilising parts of the monumental structure.

Saxon activity survived only under Peter's Hill and Upper Thames Street, both of which were sectioned as part of the excavation. Under the former a sequence of structural and occupational activity was identified, yielding a quantity of grass-tempered pottery, but the area was too small to allow firm conclusions. Both streets appear to have been laid out in the 12th c, Upper Thames Street using the Roman riverside wall as its S boundary. Medieval street surfaces survived on both streets from the 12th to 20th c. Various related medieval properties were excavated and although the pre-13th c material is fragmented the spatial distribution of the early pits suggests various properties. The W wall of St Peter's church, possibly of the 12th c, was examined in relationship to various phases of street surfaces of Peter's Hill. A sequence of Great Fire deposits consisted of burnt brick cellars, the destruction of the church and subsequent substantial dumping over the whole area, agreeing with documented raising of street levels by the Thames. A rebuilt wall on the site of the church incorporated a large quantity of moulded stonework which should allow considerable insight into the appearance of the pre-Fire church. A marked continuity of street frontages and property divisions can be traced from the 13th c to the post-Fire period and this continuity only ceased with the construction of a Victorian warehouse on the site.

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