

NFW74; also SM75, FRE78

Courtesy of LAARC - 1998

New Fresh Wharf, 2–6 Lower Thames Street, EC3 (NFW74)

G Clewley/L Miller

St Magnus trench, New Fresh Wharf, 2–6 Lower Thames Street, EC3 (SM75)

J Schofield

Fresh Wharf, New Fresh Wharf, 2–6 Lower Thames Street, EC3 (FRE78)

L Miller

NGR: TQ 32950 80660

SMR: 042159–66

The excavation of New Fresh Wharf (2–6 Lower Thames Street) was carried out in three stages in 1974–8. Two areas, named Areas I and II during excavation, were supervised by G Clewley (NFW74). In 1975 a third trench was excavated to relocate the Roman quay discovered in Area II; this third trench was called the St Magnus excavation, though it was several metres east of the church (SM75, supervised by J Schofield). In 1975–8 NFW74 and SM75 were written to archive level by J Schofield and L Miller, under the overall title New Fresh Wharf; the St Magnus trench was termed Area III. In 1978 the postponed redevelopment of the site resulted in a watching brief around and incorporating all three areas (resulting in the creation of Areas IV and V) by L Miller (FRE78). The archive report for FRE78 Roman period (*ie* the quayside) is a separate volume, but post-Roman periods for FRE78 are added to the relevant parts of the New Fresh Wharf archive report (shelved under NFW74). The fitting-together of the three sites is also developed in the various publications.

The redeveloped site was named St Magnus House, and this name appears in some of the archive reports and in the main excavation report for the Roman period.

The main discoveries were as follows:

Period 1: traces of a timber revetment, probably an early 2nd c quay were followed by silting and then a land revetment probably contemporary with a timber quay (Fig*NFW/SM) dated by dendrochronology to 209–224 or 209–244 and ceramically to c 235–45; a considered date of 225–45 is proposed. The structure was infilled, probably during construction; the dumping containing a large group of unused samian and Lezoux wares. Further silting preceded the robbing of the quay in the late 3rd c or later. In the late 3rd c a section of the Roman riverside wall was built across the north of the site from W to E, underneath the present S pavement of Lower Thames Street.

Period 2: after silting a mid 10th c rubble bank extended 4m south of the decayed Roman quay and extended 18m E-W; W of it a grid of oak stakes (Fig*SM) may have been the posts of a jetty leading to the riverside wall. After mid-10th-11th c silting further embankments of clay and timber (Fig*NFW) were built; dated by dendrochronology to 991–1000. This embankment was divided into plots by rough fences.

Period 3: after further 11th c silting a further revetment, the first with vertical face, was built in the late 11th c. After silting of the 11th c, a front-braced revetment dated by dendrochronology to 1188 ±9 was erected. Masonry foundations for late 12th c buildings were recorded on five of the plots (Buildings A to E). After internal modifications to the buildings (12/13th c) the plots were extended to new revetments in the early-mid 13th c.

Period 4: from this point assumed associated revetments must have lain south of the recorded areas. Dumps probably behind new revetments in the 13th/14th c were followed by a phase of rebuilding on all plots (Buildings F-H, K-L). After two phases of piecemeal alterations one property was rebuilt (Building J) in the 16th c, and after two phases of development in the 16th and 17th c the site was destroyed in the Great Fire (Fig* NFW).

Period 5: several phases of building from immediately post-Fire to 1952 were recorded.

For earlier observations on this site in 1935 and 1950, see GM125 and GM126 above.

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