

GPO75

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GPO75

76–80 Newgate Street (former General Post Office; now British Telecom Headquarters, 81 Newgate Street), EC1

A Thompson and S Roskams

NGR: TQ 32050 81350

SMR: 043338–48

This large site was excavated in several stages in 1975–9; the sitecode GPO75 alludes to the site being formerly part of the General Post Office (GPO) building complex on both sides of King Edward Street. The first stage, under Thompson, had three main components:

- (a) a N-S trench which ran through most of the available site
- (b) an investigation of the church of St Nicholas Shambles and its graveyard, expanding from the S part of the exploratory trench (Fig*GPO)
- (c) a northern area by Angel Street (the N boundary of the site)

The second stage, under Roskams, continued excavation of the southern area (b) into Roman levels beneath the church. A third stage of excavation, between the southern and northern areas, was excavated in 1979 under the separate sitecode POM79 (see below).

Bronze Age pottery, not associated with any structural feature, was found in the northern area.

In the Roman period, part of a circular hut and boundary ditch (Period I, c 50–55) seem to predate the establishment of the Roman street beneath Newgate Street, which formed the frontage of the seven succeeding periods. After establishment of drains running perpendicular to the street (Period II, 50–55) two rectangular buildings were constructed at the S end by the street with other circular huts to the N (Period III, 50–60). They were destroyed by fire, probably Boudican. After a short interval properties were reestablished but not built upon (Period IV, 60–70). An integrated rebuilding on these two strip properties followed, with brickearth quarrying behind the street frontage (Period V, 65–85). The buildings were totally rebuilt in Period VII (c 90–125), with commercial premises to the front and smaller chambers behind. These were destroyed by fire, probably Hadrianic (Fig*GPO). In Period VIII (120–160) the properties were rebuilt on the same alignments, and dismantled before the end of the 2nd c (Roskams 1982).

The church of St Nicholas Shambles comprised four main phases. A nave and chancel of the ?11th c was extended to the second half of the 12th c or later; in a third phase chapels were added to the extended chancel, in the period 1340–1400; in a fourth phase, a N aisle was added to the nave and extended chancel in the first half of the 15th c, and fourthly the E end rebuilt, a sacristy added on the N side also in the first half of the 15th c. The church was dissolved in 1547 and the site converted into a court of small post-medieval houses (Bull

Head Court), which survived as scattered foundations and a well. (Thompson 1979; Tyler 1991; Schofield in prep).

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