

Crossrail Early East - Stepney Green Phase 2

Site code XRV10

Assessment of registered finds

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1 Quantification and assessment

1.1 Site archive: finds and environmental, quantification and description

1.1.1 The accessioned finds

Table 1 Summary of accessioned finds by material and period

Material	Roman	Medieval	Post-med	Not known	Total	Comment
Bone			12		12	
Ceramic			2		2	Excludes BM, pipes)
Copper alloy			16	6	22	
Fibre			1		1	
Glass			26	1	27	
Iron			2	9	11	
Lead			1	1	2	
Leather			1		1	
Wood			2		2	
Total			63	17	80	

1.1.2 The registered finds

1.1.2.1 Introduction/methodology

The finds have been accessioned in accordance with MoLAS procedures and the records are held on the Oracle database. The iron and copper-alloy artefacts have been X-rayed and the coins cleaned for identification. All objects were examined individually, with the aid of x-rays where appropriate.

1.1.2.2 Finds summary by period

1.1.2.2.1 EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL (c 1480–1640)

The earliest registered finds are from a cess pit (sub group 14) and two moats (sub-groups 6, 11) associated with the late medieval/ early Tudor manor house. The silting and backfills of both moats are dated by ceramics to the late 16th–early 17th century with a small amount of residual late medieval material. The brick-lined cess pit which is cut into the earlier moat contained several complete late 16th-century cooking pots.

The registered finds from the earlier (ditch-like) moat include, from the bottom sediments [218], an imported cobalt blue glass flask- or bottle- base <80> and a piece of green window glass <78>, from overlying silts [217] dated c 1550–1575, a coin (<16>), a small and narrow horseshoe with rectangular nail-holes (<64>, [217]) (eg Clark 1995, Type 3, Fig 84), a twisted copper-alloy loop from a purse-mesh (a late medieval/ 16th century form of protective reinforcement against cut-purse thieves; Egan 2008, 62–4, Fig 52) and a copper-alloy lace-chape <138> and, from the backfill [216] dated c 1600–1610, a fragment of high quality imported 16th-century Venetian or North European ('façon de Venise') vessel with a cobalt blue decorative trail <72>. The finds from the later brick-built moat include, from the bottom sediments [288], part of an early to mid-16th-century shoe (<124> and a wooden bowling ball <122> and, from the silting [276], part of an iron rowel spur <85> and a copper-alloy dress pin with a hollow domed head <93>. There are also some less datable finds from both moats: a small iron wall-hook (<63> [216] and short lengths of copper-alloy wire <23> [217], <91> [258].

The finds from the cess pit (fills [250] and [251] dated c 1570–1600) consist of pieces (mainly bases) from a distinctive type of tall pedestal beaker made in England from a very thin-walled natural green 'forest' or 'potash' glass with decorative optic-blown vertical ribs (<99>– <105>, <134>, <136>) (Willmott 200, 47, Type 4.2), as well as a green glass flask-rim <104>, three fragments from a high quality Venetian colourless glass beaker or goblet (<106>) decorated with twisted bands of opaque white and blue glass trails (*vetro a fili* decoration; Willmott *ibid*, 16–17) and a knife with a plain scale-tang bone handle (<94>).

These mainly domestic/dress-related finds from the moats and cesspit are probably all related to the manor house although some (eg the horseshoe) could have been thrown into the moat by a passer-by. They are closely dated by late 16th to early 17th-century pottery from the same contexts although some (eg the shoe) are earlier 16th century.

1.1.2.2 LATER POST-MEDIEVAL (LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY)

All remaining finds date to the late 18th to 19th century and were found in cesspits and soakaways, many of which are associated with late 19th-century slum housing to the west of Garden Street.

Finds from an early to mid 19th-century cesspit, possibly connected with a Baptist College on the site (subgroup 26, [262]) include small fragments of clear lead glass tumblers and wine or spirit glasses (<127>– <132>), a wooden brush (<123>), two bone knife-handle terminals (<95>, <96>) and some small corroded pieces of metal. A larger group of finds from a later 19th-century cesspit associated with the slum dwellings (sub-group 30, [199], [203], [204]) includes bone and brass buttons (<30>, <31>, <34>, <71>, <15>), a small bone domino (<36>), an oval brooch or locket with a corroded plain copper-alloy (brass) frame enclosing an amber-coloured cut-glass cameo (<22>), an oval blue 'paste' glass imitation gemstone (<26>), a small clear glass bottle and larger glass stopper (<27>, <18>) (both probably pharmaceutical) and pieces from corroded iron and brass blades and tools (<18>, <61>, <59>, <60>) possibly connected with small fragments of possible copper-alloy waste and two crucible fragments <38>. Another group of finds from a similar late 19th century cess pit (sub group 32) includes pieces from a cut or pressed glass candlestick (25>), tumbler and wine glass fragments (<127>, <131>), an octagonal ink bottle and a circular domed and grooved bone mount <29>, possibly from the top of a small container.

The finds from the later cess pits or soakaways are typical everyday mid to late Victorian objects, mainly domestic with a small element of industrial waste. The people living in the area were poor and the objects reflect this. The only decorative or leisure items are the base from a mass-produced type of glass candlestick, two very simple items of jewellery and a small poor-quality domino.

1.1.2.3 Possible list of objects for further cleaning/investigative conservation

<94> [251] Bone handled knife. ?Clean for photography/display. 17thc context

<22> [204] Oval brooch (pin missing) with ?amber or onyx cameo. ?Clean brass frame for photography/display. Identify cameo material. 19thc context

1.1.2.4 List of objects for illustration/photography

This will depend on the form of publication but might include shoe <124>, wooden bowling ball <122>, dress pin <93>, spur <85>, horseshoe <64>, wooden brush <123> (possibly –still haven't seen this yet), imported glass <72>, <80>, <106>, English glass <101>, <251> (maybe a group 16/17thc glass photograph as the pieces are small), bone knife <94>, oval cameo brooch <22>, domino <36>

2 Analysis of potential

2.1 General assessment of potential

Most of the early post-medieval (16th- and 17th-century) registered finds appear to be directly related to the use and disuse of the manor house. With the other finds they have the potential to throw light on the life of the inhabitants of the house in the mid to late 16th century, possibly with reference to finds from other manor houses and palaces.

The finds from mid to late 19th-century cess pits associated with Victorian slum dwellings are typical of their type and period. Many are in poor condition and/or fragmentary. Some have the potential to illustrate the possessions of a poor London community at this time (eg in a display or popular publication) but they have limited research or journal publication potential.

Potential for future display boards

There are three possible themes for future display boards: the Tudor manor house, the 18th century Baptist College and finds from Victorian slum dwellings.

Tudor manor house

The displayable/photographable finds fall into the following categories:

Dress and dress accessories – part of a shoe <124> with soles from others; a copper-alloy dress pin (used for fastening clothing and headdresses) <93>. The short lengths of copper wire <91>, <23> may have come from headdresses but no way of proving this.

Horse-related items – part of spur <85>; horseshoe <64>

Leisure items – bowling ball

Eating and drinking – everyday glass drinking vessels (very fragmentary but possibly <99>, <101>, <103>, <104>), luxury glass drinking vessel fragments <72>, <106>; bone-handled knife <94>. And the pottery of course.

Money – coins <16>, <18>, <87>

Structural – small pieces of window glass eg <78> (green), eg <216>, <74>, <75> (blue).

Also a piece of lead window came <97> from [282]. Obviously there are stone mouldings, bricks and floor tiles as well (Ian Betts report)

Baptist College

Is cess pit subgroup 26 related to the college? If so there is a wooden brush <123> which I've never seen, plus small fragments of wine glass eg <128>, <131>, and some thin crumpled cloth <125>.

Victorian slum dwellings

Dress and dress accessories – buttons eg <30>, <31>, <34>, <71>, <15>, jewellery - oval cameo brooch (<22>), glass imitation glass gemstone (<26>)

Eating and drinking small tumbler and wine glass fragments (<127>, <131>), (also a complete clear glass salt and a near-complete pale green decorative Victorian drinking glass <13> from [54] and [57] both 'ashy fill'- same area?)

Decorative items for the home – base of a glass candlestick <25>

Writing - octagonal ink bottle

Leisure - domino <26>

Health - small glass bottle may be medicinal; glass stopper

Industry - pieces from corroded iron and brass blades and tools (<18>, <61>, <59>, <60>) possibly connected with small fragments of possible copper-alloy waste and two crucible fragments <38>.

3 Significance of the data

The registered finds have local (London) significance. They also have a wider regional and national significance as examples of the type of domestic, clothing-related and other items used and discarded in (a) a Tudor manor house and (b) by the poor in the 19th century.

4 Revised research aims

None

5 Method statements

NB SOME FINDS (EG THE BOWLING BALL, THE BRUSH, THE SHOE, HORSESHOE, SPUR) ARE NOT WITH THE OTHERS. I'M ASSUMING THEY ARE IN A DISPLAY BOX SOMEWHERE BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO BE FOUND FOR ANALYSIS.

5.1.1 Registered finds

Integration of finds with stratigraphic data	0.5 day
Catalogue 80 finds on Oracle @ 35 a day	2.25 days
Research and write text for journal and/or popular publication	2 days
Illustrate a maximum fourteen items. All could be photographed, some 19thc items as a group.	
Finds review	1 hour
Editing, queries etc	0.25 day

Total specialist time 5.75 days (plus 1 hour)

6 Bibliography

Clark, J (ed), 1995 *The medieval horse and its equipment, c 1150–c 1450*, HMSO Medieval Finds Excav London 5, London

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Willmott, H, 2002 *Early post-medieval glass in England, 1500–1670*, CBA Res Rep 132, York