

1.1 Assessment of the Ceramic Building Material and Fired Clay

by Susan Pringle

Introduction

- 1.1.1 Very small quantities of ceramic building material (0.364 kg) and fired clay (0.111 kg) were recovered from East of Station Road, and 0.130 kg of ceramic building material from Church Lane. It was hoped that this material might provide evidence for structures on the site, although they probably actually derive from field marling and post-medieval disturbance.

Methodology

- 1.1.2 All the ceramic building material and fired clay from the site was examined. Ceramic building material has been divided by form, and fragments counted and weighed. The presence of distinctive fabric types has been noted, but no analytical work has been done on the fabrics from the site, as this task is more appropriately carried out at the next stage, should the material merit it. Other information recorded includes the presence or absence of glaze, and the shape of any nail holes.
- 1.1.3 The fired clay fragments have been counted and weighed, and notes made of the most distinctive fabrics and any unusual inclusions. Exceptionally reduced or vitrified material has been noted.

Quantification

- 1.1.4 From East of Station Road, the total weight of ceramic building material scanned for the assessment is 0.475 kg, of which 0.111 kg is fired clay. From Church Lane, the total weight scanned for the assessment is 0.13 kg of ceramic building material.

Ceramic Building Material

- 1.1.5 Post-Roman ceramic building material from East of Station Road accounted for 76.6% of the total assemblage, by weight (Table 6). The material comprised eight fragments of peg or plain roofing tile. All the tile was in similar orange fabrics with cream silty streaks and a small amount of quartz sand. None was glazed, nor were any complete tiles, or complete dimensions, noted. The only diagnostic features present were two diamond-shaped nail or peg holes in context 1332, which do not occur in London until at least AD 1480.
- 1.1.6 The only identifiable tile type present at Church Lane is represented by six fragments of peg or plain roofing tile (Table 7). These are in orange fabrics, with fine moulding sand. No glaze was present. No complete tiles, or complete dimensions, were noted; the only diagnostic feature was a polygonal nail or peg hole in a tile from context 501. Dating this tile type is difficult, as peg tiles have changed little since the 13th century, but the absence of glaze and the shape of the nail holes suggests that these are unlikely to be earlier than c.1480.

Fired clay

- 1.1.7 The Fired clay and daub from East of Station Road constituted 23.4% by weight of the material scanned for this assessment (Table 8). Some of the fired clay may be natural soil that has been accidentally fired, but the calcareous content of some of the material suggests deliberate mixing with limey clays for use as daub or cob. No signs of wattle imprints or attached lime mortar were noted on any of the fragments, but the degree of abrasion would have removed any such evidence. The daub in context 1350 is reduced and blackened, suggesting that it may have been burnt in

anaerobic conditions. This could have happened in various ways, including an accidental house or hut fire, or use in a hearth or cremation context.

Provenance

East of Station Road

- 1.1.8 The material examined come from a range of features, mostly ditches but including also two pits and a gully.
- 1.1.9 The late- or post-medieval tile comes from two late Iron Age-early Roman ditches in trench 12 where it indicates some localised disturbance.
- 1.1.10 The fired clay was recovered from the ditches in trenches 7, 12, and 17, the modern ditch, and pits 1349 and 6029. Some of the material is likely to be of Iron Age date.

Church Lane

- 1.1.11 The material from Church Lane comes from topsoil and subsoil contexts. The material is fairly abraded, but there is no risk to its preservation.

Conservation

- 1.1.12 There are no special requirements for long term storage, other than the use of robust packaging materials and a dry environment. At this stage, all the material should be retained. In the future, when the archaeological implications of the deposits have been fully assessed, some of the assemblage can probably be discarded.

Comparative Material

- 1.1.13 The insecure contexts from which the material derives suggests it is unlikely that much useful information could be obtained from comparative studies.

Potential for Further Work

- 1.1.14 Both the post-medieval tile and the late Iron Age-early Roman fired clay are stray pieces, probably accumulated as a result of processes such as marling. Except insofar as they indicate disturbance, they thus contribute little to the interpretation of the site and have very little value in terms of the fieldwork event aims.

Table 6: East of Station Road: summary of ceramic building material

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Type	Period	Early date	Late date	Comments
1332	5	294	Peg tile	Med/P-med	1480	1800	Calcareous fabric; diamond n/holes; unglazed
1346	3	70	Peg tile	Med/P-med	1400	1800	Light orange fabric; unglazed.

Table 7: Church Lane: summary of ceramic building material

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Type	Period	Early date	Late date	Comments
500	1	19	Peg tile	Med/P-med	1400	1800	Orange fabric, fine moulding sand; unglazed.
501	5	110	Peg tile	Med/P-med	1480	1800	Orange fabrics, polygonal nail hole x 1; reduced x 1; abraded.
501	2	1	Tile				Small flakes, possibly from peg tiles.

Table 8: East of Station Road: summary of fired clay

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Type	Comments
1350	46	79	Fired clay	<21> small abraded scraps of calcareous daub, well reduced.
1358	2	1	Fired clay	Light brown sandy clay.
1610	1	1	Fired clay	Abraded scrap
1708	1	1	Fired clay	Light orange, calcareous; abraded
6008	3	12	Fired clay	Orange with calcareous streaks; abraded.
6028	4	2	Fired clay	Crumbs of light brown sandy clay
6030	1	12	Fired clay	Light orange clay, calcareous streaks; abraded.
7034	2	3	Fired clay	Abraded.