1.1 Assessment of Fired Clay

by Susan Pringle

Introduction

1.1.1 A small quantity of fired clay was recovered during excavation and strip, map and sample works at West of Blind Lane.

1.1.2 The material was mostly hand retrieved on site, with smaller quantities recovered during sieving of samples.

1.1.3 The material was recovered in accordance with the Landscape Zone Priorities and Fieldwork Event Aims for the site, which are set out in section 2 of the main report, above. It was hoped that it would provide evidence for structures on the site.

Methodology

1.1.4 All the fired clay was examined. The fragments have been counted and weighed, and notes made of the most distinctive fabrics and any unusual inclusions. The material has been examined for signs of exceptionally reduced (blackened) or vitrified material and the presence of original surfaces, imprints and tempering. No analytical work has been carried out on the fabrics.

Quantifications

1.1.5 A small quantity of fired clay, weighing 0.754 kg, was recovered during the excavation from two pits and a modern ditch (Table 1.5). There were no distinctive features present through which the material might be dated, but its context suggests that it is late Iron Age-early Roman in date.

Provenance

1.1.6 The fired clay was recovered from three features: pit 2217 (middle fill 2217) in the southern corner of the area of detailed excavation, pit 1015 (middle fill 1018) not far away in the eastern SMS area, and in modern ditch 3003 (context 2035) where it was probably residual. The material is fairly abraded, but there is no risk to its preservation.

Conservation

1.1.7 The material should not be placed in long term storage until it is certain that no further analysis will need to be carried out. 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, it can be discarded unless further analysis of the site indicates that it may be of interest.

Comparative Material

1.1.8 It is unlikely that further insights would be provided by comparisons between this small assemblage of fired clay, probably deposited as a result of field marling, and other assemblages.

Potential for Further Work

1.1.9 Although the fired clay and daub is a potential source of information on the types of structure associated with middle-late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements, the material here is likely to have been deposited through processes such as marling.

The nature and quantity of the material would not justify further analysis unless other evidence is available that shows it to be of particular significance.

Table 1.5: Summary of fired clay

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Type	Period	Comments
1018	9	500	Fired clay	?	Conjoin to form shapeless lump with abraded surface; some areas reduced - part of hearth?
2035	2	102	Fired clay	MO?	Conjoin; orange clay with poorly sorted rose qtz sand.
2217	6	152	Fired clay	LIA; ERO?	Orange to light brown clay with poorly sorted rose qtz sand - friable.