

(Jan 13th 2016)

**Scan assessment of the pottery from the watching-brief stage, Crossrail, Soho (XRX10 WB)**

*by John Cotter*

***Introduction***

A total of 226 sherds of pottery weighing 5.193 kg. was recovered from the Watching Brief stage of the excavation (65 contexts). The assemblage is entirely of post-medieval date, and mainly dates to the 17th and early 18th centuries. The character of the material is entirely domestic. In general the pottery is in a much more fragmentary and scrappy, or worn, condition than pottery from the main excavation (see elsewhere). The average sherd weight is 23g (compared to 24.7 g. from the main assemblage). If the near-complete vessel from Context (5814) were excluded, the average sherd weight would be only 20g.

***Methodology***

All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc.). Individual pottery fabrics were not quantified at this stage although a rough idea of the frequency of individual types is given below for the commonest or rarest types.

***Pottery Fabrics***

These were recorded in the comments field using the codes of the Museum of London (MoLA 2014). Sometimes the full name was also recorded. The types occurring here are listed below in roughly chronological order.

PMRE: London area early post-medieval redware, c 1480-1600.

FREC: Frechen stoneware, c 1525-1750. Import, Germany.

BORDG: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, green-glazed, c 1550-1700.

BORDY: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, yellow-glazed, c 1550-1700.

RBOR: Surrey/Hampshire red Border ware, c 1550-1900.

BORDB: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, brown-glazed, c 1620-1700.

PMR: Post-medieval red earthenwares, c 1550-1900. Mainly local.

PMBL: Post-medieval black-glazed redware, c 1600-1900. Essex.

WEST: Westerwald stoneware, c 1590-1750. Import, Germany.

TGW: English tin-glazed earthenware, c 1575-1825. London, Bristol etc.

VERW: Verwood -type ware, 1600-1900. Dorset/Hampshire.

MPUR BUTP: Midlands Purple ware butterpot, c 1620-1725.

CHPO: Chinese porcelain, c 1600-1900+ (mainly c 1725-1900). Import, China.

ENGS: English brown salt-glazed stoneware, c 1670-1900. London, Staffordshire, Bristol etc.

LONS: London stoneware, c 1670-1900.

STMB: Staffs-type marbled slipware, c 1680-1800.  
STRSB COAR: Staffs-type red-slipped glazed coarseware, c 1700-1800.  
SWSG: Staffordshire-type white salt-glazed stoneware, c 1720-1780.  
CREA: Later Creamware, c 1770-1830. Staffordshire, Leeds, etc.  
PEAR: Pearlware, c 1780-1830. Staffordshire etc.  
PEAR TR: Transfer-printed Pearlware, c 1780-1830. Staffordshire etc.  
TPW: Transfer-printed refined whitewares, c 1780-1900+. Staffordshire etc.  
YELL: Yellow wares, c 1790-1900. Staffordshire, Derbyshire, etc.  
ROCK: Rockingham mottled brown-glazed ware, c 1800-1900, Yorkshire etc.  
LUST: English lustreware, c 1805-1900.

### ***Summary***

Most contexts produced just a handful of sherds each, apart from Context (5563) which produced 31 sherds, mostly fairly small sherds. Unlike the main assemblage (see elsewhere) the WB produced no Roman or medieval pottery. The earliest fabric present is a single sherd of early post-medieval redware (PMRE, c 1480-1600), which is probably residual (5537).

Predictably, the WB produced a very similar range of post-medieval fabrics and vessel forms to the main assemblage, with just a few minor additions. The bulk of the pottery dates to the 17th and early 18th centuries and perhaps mainly from the later 17th century onwards. The commonest pottery types here (as before) are post-medieval redwares (PMR) and green- or yellow-glazed Border wares (BORDG, BORDY). English tin-glazed wares (TGW, here mainly c 1650+) are also common. Most other fabrics are represented by just 1-8 sherds. The best-preserved vessel is a near-complete tripod pipkin in PMR which shows very heavy external sooting from use as a cooking vessel (5814). Most other vessels are very fragmentary in comparison, and mostly unremarkable (see spreadsheet for details).

Context (5457) produced part of a tin-glazed ware 'charger' dish identifiable as a 'William and Mary' commemorative portrait dish. This is fairly crudely painted in dark blue on a pale blue-tinted background. Only the left shoulder of the king showing his ermine cloak and hair survives, with his initial 'W' to the left of this. The dish dates from c 1689-1702. Similar examples from London are known (Britton 1986, Pl. 110). This date accords well with most of the pottery from the site. A sherd of Verwood-type ware (VERW) from the Dorset/Hampshire border is a fairly rare type to find in London (from Context 5545, a mixed 17th to 19th century assemblage). A ?dish base sherd from (5467) has a very unusual style of white and brown slip-trailed decoration, resembling wood grain, on a red fabric. This might be an example of Staffordshire-type marbled slipware (STMB, c 1600-1800), or perhaps a late 18th/19th-century product of the Brede/Chailey potteries in East Sussex? Either way it is a very unusual type for London.

Pottery after c 1750 is rare. These include a few pieces of Pearlware with distinctive blue transfer-printed decoration (PEAR TPW), mainly datable c 1800-1830. The latest item is a oblong pot-lid from a cosmetics pot, or box, in transfer-printed whiteware (TPW), datable c 1875-1900 (5688). It bears a finely detailed scene in the Romantic style (probably taken from a painting), in polychrome colours, showing a hunting

group (of c 1700) with dogs and horse riders relaxing in a classical landscape with follies and fountains in the background.

### ***Bibliography***

Britton, F, 1986 *London Delftware* (Jonathan Horne, London).

MoLA 2014 Medieval and post-medieval pottery codes

(<http://www.mola.org.uk/resources/medieval-and-post-medieval-pottery-codes>)