

(8 Feb 2011 with postscript 16/7/13)

Scan assessment of the pottery from Crossrail, Soho (XR10)

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Introduction

A total of 1,292 sherds of pottery weighing 31.914 kg. was recovered. Apart from a small number of Roman sherds (identified by Paul Booth) and three or four medieval sherds the assemblage is all 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 fragmentary but fairly fresh condition with many large fresh sherds present. A few contexts (probably rubbish pits) contain complete reconstructable vessel profiles or near-complete profiles. The average sherd weight is 24.7 g. which reflects the large size of many of the sherds here.

Postscript (July 2013)

Subsequent to this assessment a further 233 sherds of pottery was produced by Watching Briefs - bringing the site total to 1525 sherds. This additional material will be reported on in the grey literature reports. Any significant items however may be considered for academic journal publication and any intrinsically interesting items will appear in the popular publication.

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 (LAARC 2007). Sometimes the full name was also recorded. The types occurring here are listed below in roughly chronological order.

ROMAN: Miscellaneous Roman pottery, c AD 43-410.

LOND: Fine London-type ware (high medieval fabric), c 1140-1375.

CBW: Coarse Border ware, c 1270-1500 but not common in London until c 1350. Surrey/Hampshire border.

TUDG: Tudor Green ware, c 1375-1550. Surrey/Hampshire.

PMSRG: London area post-medieval slipped redware with green glaze, c 1480-1650. Formerly Guy's Hospital ware.

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

BORD: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, unglazed, c 1550-1700.

BORDG: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, green-glazed, c 1550-1700.
 BORDY: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, yellow-glazed, c 1550-1700.
 BORDO: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, olive-glazed, c 1550-1700.
 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.
 METS: Metropolitan slipware, c 1615-1750. Essex.
 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.
 STMO: Staffordshire-type mottled brown-glazed earthenware, c 1680-1800.
 STSL: Staffordshire-type combed slipware, c 1680-1900.
 ENPO: English porcelain, c 1745-1925+.
 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.
 BONE: Bone china, c 1794-1900+.
 ENGS BRST: English stoneware with Bristol glaze, c 1835-1900+. Bristol, London, etc.

Summary

The earliest pottery recovered is represented by twelve sherds of Roman date which, though very worn, occur with no later pottery. Two of the sherds are from Context (815) and ten are from Context (817) including a very worn handle fragment from a Dressel 20 amphora, a decorated Samian bowl rim and later greywares and colour-coated wares dating to the early to mid 3rd century. The latter context, however, also produced a small piece from the corner of a tile which appears to be a post-medieval peg tile, so it is possible that all the Roman material is redeposited.

Medieval pottery is limited to just four sherds which are all residual in 17th-18th century contexts. These include a sherd from a 13th-century London-type ware jug (LOND) with decoration in the highly decorated/North French style (5275) and a sherd of green-glazed Coarse Border ware (CBW) which probably dates to c 1350-1500 (5133). Two small sherds possibly of Tudor Green ware (TUDG) date to c 1375-1550 (5089, 5182).

The bulk of the pottery from the site dates to the 17th and early 18th centuries although there is one large context assemblage of later date. The commonest pottery types here - post-medieval redwares (PMR) and the mostly green- or yellow-glazed Border wares (BORDG, BORDY), plus some other types, have broad date ranges spanning the period c 1550-1750 but the typology of the forms present plus their association with more closely datable wares places the dating of nearly all contexts to after c 1600. One fairly large assemblage, however, from Context (5268) has been dated to c 1575-1620? This produced several near-complete drinking jugs in green-

glazed Border ware plus two possible candlesticks and two condiment dishes or 'salts' in BORDY and red Border ware (RBOR). The character of this material suggests it might be derived from a tavern. Most of the 17th- and early 18th-century contexts produced diagnostic types of English tin-glazed wares (TGW) datable after c 1620 such as 'chargers' (wide dishes), or sherds of brown-glazed Border ware (BORDB) also datable after c 1620. The range of 17th- and early 18th-century wares present is typical of London assemblages at this time. The presence of several sherds of Staffordshire butterpot (MPUR BUTP) is of some interest.

Context (5362, with cross-joins with 5363) dates to c 1680-1710 on the basis of decorated TGW. This context produced at least ten vessels - some nearly complete including a TGW jug and cups with Chinese-style decoration, also a few tankards (WEST, STMO) and several chamberpots (BORDG, BORDY, PMR). These have potential for illustration or display. The character of the assemblage suggests a garderobe deposit either from a house or perhaps a tavern.

The largest and one of the latest context assemblages is from (5375) dated to c 1810-1830 but containing much late 18th-century material. This produced 377 sherds of pottery including industrialised tablewares from the Staffordshire and Midlands potteries such as Creamware (CREA) and Pearlware with distinctive blue transfer-printed decoration (PEAR TPW). Several late PMR chamberpots in this context also suggest a possible garderobe deposit. Only a very few sherds from the site post-date c 1830. In general the range of pottery from this site is typical of many post-medieval domestic assemblages from London but the condition is generally good.

Bibliography

LAARC, 2007 Post 1992 Museum of London code expansions: Post-Roman pottery. http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F0118AAF-EF24-4228-A07A-39F89E6F092E/0/post92mol_post_roman.pdf