

## **Assessment of the Fired Clay from Church Lane, Alvingham, Lincolnshire (CLA04)**

### ***Alan Vince***

A small collection of fired clay from an archaeological excavation at Church Lane, Alvingham, was submitted for identification and assessment. The site was investigated by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) Ltd.

### **Description**

#### **Fired Clay**

Six fragments of fired clay were recovered from context 007, the fill of a linear feature, visible elsewhere in the village as an earthwork and thought to be associated with the Gilbertine Priory of Alvingham.

The fragments all have a similar fabric, containing moderate quantities of rounded chalk pellets up to 4.0mm across, sparse rounded quartz grains up to 0.5mm across, sparse angular bioclastic limestone with bivalve and ammonite fossils up to 10mm across and sparse rounded mudstone fragments up to 4.0mm across. The groundmass consists of baked clay with silt-sized quartz inclusions. There is no sign of organic temper.

The fragments have a variegated structure and have been roughly mixed by human agency. A few have original surfaces, which are concave, and there is no sign of wattle impressions, even though in places the fragments represent a thickness of at least 50mm.

Five of the fragments have been completely oxidized and one is completely reduced. This probably indicates burning after breakage and there is no sign of a temperature gradient from the original surface into the body of the clay.

### **Assessment**

The clay is clearly humanly worked and from its character appears to have been obtained from an outcrop of chalky boulder clay. The range of inclusions found in the clay are consistent with an origin in boulder clay deposited to the east of the Wolds since they are either derived from the chalk itself or from earlier Jurassic deposits (bioclastic limestone, mudstone) over which the southward-travelling ice would have passed.

The clay might be from the lining of a domed structure, although the surviving original faces are too small to prove this point and they could alternatively have been derived from a mud brick structure.

No further work is required on the fired clay at this stage but it should be retained for possible future study. At that point, it might be possible to determine more accurately how the clay was used.