Assessment of the finds from Cawood, North Yorkshire (OSA04EV07)

Alan Vince and Kate Steane

Seventy six finds from an archaeological evaluation at Cawood, North Yorkshire, recovered from an archaeological evaluation carried out by On-Site Archaeology Ltd (site code OSA04 EV07). They represent no more than 75 artefacts and weigh in total 1.180Kg.

The finds range in date from, possibly, the Roman period to the late 18th or 19th century and include waste from the production of flat roof tiles.

Description

The finds consist mainly of fragments of ceramic building material, with some pottery and a single iron nail shaft (Table 1).

Ceramic Building Material

Fifty-nine fragments of flat roof tile and a single fragment of brick were recovered. The flat roof tile consists in the main of small spalled fragments but includes overfired, vitrified and distorted pieces, some of which have oxidation patterns showing that they were re-fired in the kiln after breakage. These are clearly production waste and include fragments which could not have been used, even as seconds. This waste comes from three contexts: 203, 206 and 207, whilst the remaining tile includes pieces from contexts 204, 205, 208, 210, 212 and 215.

The thickness of the fragments was measured (Table 2) and indicates that the definite waste fragments have a wider thickness range than the remainder. This may be due to the bloating of the clay. The mean thickness of the waste tiles was 14.62mm whilst the remainder have a mean thickness of 13.42mm.

The tile fabric contains sparse to moderate inclusions of quartz sandstone, probably mainly of lower Carboniferous Millstone Grit, up to 0.5mm across, in a groundmass of fine, calcareous clay. The surface sometimes has a thick white ‘salt surface’ caused by the reaction of the carbonate inclusions with clay minerals in the presence of brine. This fabric is found in the City of York in the late medieval period. The calcareous body, and the presumed presence of brine, points to the use of an estuarine or marine clay, which discounts the local boulder clay although the underlying Mercian Mudstone might have been used. The sand inclusions, however, are identical to those found in glacial till and fluvioglacial sands in the southern Vale of York. No sign of either nibs or pegholes were present.

The brick fragment, from context 204, has a very sandy fabric without a calcareous matrix and is probably of post-medieval date.

Iron

The shaft of an iron nail was recovered from context 210.

Pottery

Roman?

A fragment of sandy greyware from context 203 and a bead rimmed jar from context 209 are probably of Roman date. The latter, a rim sherd, is tempered with a coarse mixed sandstone sand and has a black fabric. It is likely to be of early Roman date (i.e. 1st to early 2nd century).

Medieval

A sherd of Staxton-type ware from context 203, a sherd of York glazed ware jar from context 207 and an unidentified sand-tempered ware from context 205 probably date to the later 12th to 14th centuries.

Later Medieval

Sherds of Humberware of late 14th to 16th-century date were recovered from contexts 207, 211 and 213. They include sherds of large closed vessels with sparse suspension glaze (either jugs or jars) and of unglazed drinking jugs. The latter, from contexts 207 and 213, are likely to be of late 14th century date.

Post-medieval

Sherds of glazed red earthenware were recovered from contexts 203, 206 and 214. They include a fragment with a whitish internal deposit. This is interpreted as a chamber pot sherd. The remaining sherds are probably from bowls. All probably date from the later 17th or 18th centuries.

Early Modern

A sherd of transfer-printed ware bowl was recovered from context 215. It can be broadly dated between the later 18th and late 19th centuries.

Assessment

The pottery indicates activity in the area in the Roman period and then again from the later 12th century through to the 19th century. This is typical of the sort of assemblage found on

rural sites where the finds are present as a result of manuring, including the spreading of night soil of urban origin (in this case presumably York or Selby).

The flat roof tile production waste is an unlikely component of either farmyard manure or night soil. It is therefore either likely to indicate the local presence of tile manufacture or, perhaps, the use of tile waste as metalling. In Essex, for example, tile waste from a production site at Danbury was traded, as waste, as far as Chelmsford, a distance of about 10-15 miles. Although it might date to any period between the mid 12th and the 17th centuries, it is might be of late medieval date, based on the similarity in fabric with tiles of this date from York.

Since all the finds are stratified they should be retained for potential future study.

Analysis of the tile fabric might establish whether or not they are waste from a York tilery or indicate local production.

Costing

Thin section and chemical analysis of a sample of tile would cost £46.00 plus VAT, inclusive of a report.

Tables

Table 1 Summary of finds

class	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
CBM	60	60	993.5
IRON	1	1	12.0
POTTERY	15	14	175.0
Grand Total	76	75	1,180.5

Table 2 Incidence of flat tiles by thickness

THICKNESS	not waste	waste	Grand Total
12	2	2	4
13	1	4	5
14	1	1	2
15	3	2	5
16	3	1	4
17	1	1	2
18		1	1
19		1	1

Grand Total	11	13	24

Table 3 Catalogue of finds

Context	class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight	Use	TH	Condition
203	POTTERY	MEDLOC	1.2	ROM?	JAR	1.00	1.00		1.00			
203	POTTERY	STAXT	12.2		JAR	1.00	1.00		1.00			
203	POTTERY	GRE	16.2		CHP	1.00	1.00		3.00	HEAVY WHITISH DEPOSIT INT		
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00		1.00		FRAG	
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00		3.00		12	
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITFIFIED; DISTORTED	13.00		6-10	WASTE
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED	6.00		19	WASTE?
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED	19.00		16	WASTE?
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED	15.00		13	WASTE?
203	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED	9.00		12	WASTE?
204	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	13.00	13.00		45.00		FRAG	
204	CBM	MTIL	12.2		BRICK	1.00	1.00		12.00		FRAG	

Context	class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Weight	Use	TH	Condition
205	POTTERY	MEDLOC	12.2	A RQ <1.0MM;OXID	JAR	1.00	1.00		6.00	BS		
205	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00		0.50	BS		
206	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	2.00	2.00		2.00		FRAG	
206	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00		19.00		16	
206	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED	59.00		12	WASTE?
206	POTTERY	GRE	16.2		BOWL	2.00	1.00		9.00			ABRA
206	POTTERY	GRE	16.2		BOWL	1.00	1.00		68.00			ABRA
207	POTTERY	YORK	12.2		JAR	1.00	1.00	INT GLAZE	4.00			
207	POTTERY	HUM	14.2		DJ	1.00	1.00		11.00			
207	POTTERY	HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1.00	1.00		29.00			
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	2.00	2.00		3.00		FRAG	
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	3.00	3.00		11.00		FRAG	
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00		167.00		17	

Context	class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Use	Weight	TH	Condition
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			31.00	16	
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			16.00	15	ABRA
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			94.00	14	
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			18.00	12	
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED		19.00	18	WASTE?
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED		36.00	17	WASTE?
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED; SEALED BREAK		54.00	15	WASTE
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED		83.00	15	WASTE?
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED; DISTORTED; SEALED BREAKS		42.00	14	WASTE
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED; DISTORTED		29.00	13	WASTE?
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED EXT; DISTORTED		33.00	13	WASTE?
207	CBM	MTIL	12.2	waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00	VITRIFIED; SEALED BREAK		34.00	13	WASTE
208	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	5.00	5.00			9.00	FRAG	

Context	class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Use	Weight	TH	Condition
208	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			10.00	15	
208	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			14.00	15	
208	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			21.00	13	
209	POTTERY	RPOT	1.2	MIXED SST SAND	JAR	1.00	1.00	BEAD RIM	R	3.00		
210	IRON	IRON	nd		NAIL	1.00	1.00			12.00		
210	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	3.00	3.00			5.00	FRAG	
211	POTTERY	HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1.00	1.00	INT/EXT GLAZE		4.00		
212	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	2.00	2.00			5.00	FRAG	
212	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	1.00	1.00			51.00	16	
213	POTTERY	HUM	14.2		DJ	1.00	1.00			3.00		
214	POTTERY	GRE	16.2		BOWL	1.00	1.00			25.00		
215	CBM	MTIL	12.2	not waste	FLAT	2.00	2.00			5.00	FRAG	
215	POTTERY	TPW	18.2		BOWL	1.00	1.00			8.00		