

Assessment of finds from Merton Priory 2005 (MMA 05)

Alan Vince

A small collection of finds from Merton Priory collected by Geoff Tann for Lindsey Archaeological Services Ltd was submitted for identification and assessment. They consist of medieval roof tile and, probably, building stone, 19th-century brick and late 20th century building material and a plastic object, embossed "Merton" with a coat of arms.

Description

Bone

A single fragment of bone, a femur head, was submitted. It should be shown to a zoo-archaeologist for identification.

Ceramic Building Material

Five fragments of flat roof tile, eight fragments of brick and seven fragments of wall tile were recovered. The flat roof tiles are of two fabrics: (a) containing moderate rounded sand, mostly composed of quartz grains with some calcareous grains, and (b) containing rounded quartzose sand in a silty groundmass. One of the examples of the first fabric has a runnel of lead glaze, appearing brown but probably as a result of iron adsorbed from the body.

In the City of London, flat roof tiles were in use from the mid 12th to the 17th centuries, if not later and without further work these examples cannot be closely dated.

The brick fragments are also of two fabrics: (c) being a red/black vesicular clay which was probably originally calcareous, with few inclusions over 0.1mm across. Fabric d is a poorly mixed calcareous clay with angular fragments of yellow and red-firing clay in a red-firing calcareous groundmass. The second fabric is visually similar to those produced at Fletton from Oxford Clay.

One of the fabric d bricks has a moulded frog, indicating a mid 19th century or later date, but with no signs of lettering and several of the fabric c bricks have handmade frogs, probably indicative of an early to mid 19th-century date.

The wall tile fragments are all made from refined whiteware clay and their glazes and, in one case, decoration, indicate a late 20th century date.

Iron

A fragment of wire with a circular cross-section was recovered.

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Plastic

A fragment from an opaque light brown/yellow plastic object was recovered. It has the inscription "Merton" below a coat of arms (although not that of the borough of Merton). The object appears to be the tip of a circular object although its original form is unclear.

Pottery

Three fragments of pottery were recovered. All have a refined whiteware body. One, the rim of a plate, has concentric blue lines on the interior and the others, a jar or chamber pot body sherd and a body sherd from a rectangular disk, are both transfer-printed.

Stone

Two fragments of Reigate Stone were recovered. This stone, is a soft, glauconitic, calcareous fine-grained sandstone which was mined in the Reigate area during the medieval period and traded widely for use as ashlar or detailing in medieval masonry buildings.

Assessment

Further Work

None of the finds require further work.

Spot-dating

The finds come from five contexts which can be assigned a terminus post quem on the basis of the finds (Table 1). Contexts 305 and 520 could date to any part of the medieval or early post-medieval period, later than the mid 12th century.

Table 1

Context	ANBN	CBM	IRON	PLASTIC	POTTERY	STONE	Spot Date
305		1					Mid 12th C+
510		1			3		19th C +
520	1	4				2	Mid 12th C+
540		7	1				L20th C +
613		7		1			L 19th C +
Grand Total	1	20	1	1	3	2	

Appendix 1

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Object	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Part	Action	Description	diameter	L	B	TH	Condition
613	PLASTIC	PLASTIC	YELLOW	OBJECT	1	1	3	BS		EMBOSSSED "MERTON"	0				
305	CBM	MTIL	MODERATE MIXED QUARTZ/CALCAREOUS SAND	FLAT	1	1	65	BS		RUNNEL OF GLAZE	0			17	
520	STONE	STONE	REIGATE/MERSTHAM	BUILDING STONE	2	1	72	BS			0				
510	CBM	PMTIL	CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	18	BS		MODERN	0				
540	CBM	WHITE		WALT	2	1	18	BS		GREY GLAZED;L20TH C	0				
540	CBM	WHITE		WALT	2	1	26	BS		CREAM GLAZED;L20TH C	0				
540	CBM	WHITE		WALT	3	1	10	BS		PINK WAX-RESIST DEC WITH WHITE GL;L20TH C	0				
510	POTTERY	WHITE		PLATE	1	1	5	R		BAND OF BLUE LINES, POSSIBLY TRANSFER PRINTED	0				
510	POTTERY	TPW		JAR/CHP	1	1	6	BS			0				
510	POTTERY	TPW		RECT PLATE	1	1	7	BS			0				
540	IRON	IRON		WIRE	1	1	11	BS			4	115			
520	CBM	MTIL	MODERATE MIXED QUARTZ/CALC SAND	FLAT	1	1	84	BS			0				
520	CBM	MTIL	SPARSE QUARTZ SAND IN SILTY GROUNDMASS	FLAT	3	3	91	BS			0				
520	ANBN	ANBN		BONE	1	1	22	BS	SPEC	POSSIBLY HUMAN	0				
613	CBM	PMTIL	COARSE CALCAREOUS GROUNDMASS	BRICK	1	1	169	BS		FROGGED	0			65	
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	765	BS		HAND-FROGGED	0		103	65	GREY MORTARED
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	189	BS			0			65	

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Object	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Part	Action	Description	diameter	L	B	TH	Condition
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	355	BS			0		87		
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	1963	BS		HAND-FROGGED	0	215	94	64	
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	2941	BS		HAND-FROGGED;PARTS OF TWO BRICKS PLUS MORTAR	0	209	95	70	
613	CBM	PMTIL	FINE VESICULAR CALCAREOUS	BRICK	1	1	1009	BS		HAND-FROGGED	0		92	63	