

Assessment of the Finds from Blooms Garden Centre, Bicester, Oxfordshire (BGC-16)

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A small quantity of finds from archaeological fieldwork carried out at Blooms Garden Centre, Bicester, Oxfordshire, undertaken by Network Archaeology Ltd, was submitted for identification and assessment.

The finds are mostly of very modern date (including a pottery vessel dated "1974") but a small quantity of medieval and post-medieval pottery was also present.

In 2008 further finds were submitted, from topsoil stripping. These have been incorporated into the original assessment report.

Description

The finds were identified and recorded (App 1). They consist of ceramic building material and pottery.

Ceramic Building Material

Medieval

A single fragment of flat roof tile was recovered (GPS 5104). Such tiles were used in Oxfordshire from the 12th into the 17th centuries (if not later).

Four further fragments were recovered in 2008. Three of these had unremarkable sandy red earthenware fabrics but the fourth fragment was made from poorly-mixed light-firing and red-firing clays with very little sand temper visible. Similar fabrics are known from Potterspury, about 20 miles northeast of Bicester, but more local sources of similar clay probably exist.

A fragment of glazed, white-slip-decorated floor tile was also recovered in 2008. This was very abraded and it was not possible to determine whether the white slip had been applied in a pattern or was the remnants of a complete cover of slip. The fabric of the tile was similar to those produced in Penn, Buckinghamshire, in the late 14th and 15th centuries, but a more local source cannot be discounted without further analysis. Such tiles were used both in religious and secular contexts, but the structure from which the tile came would nevertheless have been of higher status than a standard peasant or burgage tenement (perhaps even the Augustinian priory?).

Post-Medieval/Early Modern

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A fragment of brick was recovered (GPS 4097). The fabric (poorly mixed with large fragments of micaceous, bedded mudstone) suggests the use of a local Jurassic clay and a probable date of 15th to 19th centuries.

Modern

A fragment of brick and a fragment of plain white-glazed wall tile were recovered (GPS 4097 and context 1000 respectively). Both are probably of 20th-century date.

Pottery

Medieval

An abraded sherd of sand-tempered pottery was recovered (GPS 5103). It is only broadly datable, to the 12th to 14th centuries.

Post-Medieval

The handle of a black-glazed jar or jug was recovered (GPS 4096). The fabric of the vessel is similar to that of Post-Medieval Blackware from the Harlow/Stock potteries of Essex, containing abundant quartz silt. However, it contains less muscovite than either of those wares and is probably from a more local source. The fragment comes from the rim/handle join and was luted onto the body, a post-medieval feature. The vessel is probably of 16th or 17th-century date.

A sherd from a similar blackware vessel was recovered from topsoil stripping in 2008 together with three glazed red earthenware sherds (GRE) and the rim and neck of a London stoneware vessel (LONS). One of the glazed red earthenware vessels has a similar appearance to Ashton Keynes ware, but since that pottery is 51 miles to the southwest of Bicester a more local source is much more likely. The stoneware vessel has close-set grooves on the neck and similar vessels from Fulham occur in two sizes: jugs and drinking mugs (1999, Nos. 303, 304, 311). Both forms are found in the 18th century.

Modern

Five vessels of refined whiteware were recovered (contexts 1000 and 1001). All appear to be of recent date and include one pottery bell marked on the inside as a piece of Royal Worcester fine bone china, dated 1974. One of the fragments appears to be from the outflow of a toilet bowl. All the sherds are fresh and include the complete profile of a cup of 1970s style.

Assessment

The finds suggest sparse activity on the site in the medieval and post-medieval period, probably in the form of agriculture, followed by activity in the late 20th century.

Bibliography

Green, C. (1999) *John Dwight's Fulham Pottery: Excavations 1971-79*, English Heritage,
London

Appendix 1

Context	REFNO	class	Description	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	Northings	Eastings	Diam	Siteco
4105		POTTERY		LONS		JAR	R	1	1	21					0	BGC-
4109		POTTERY		GRE		BOWL	BS	1	1	24	ABR				0	BGC-
4106		POTTERY		GRE		BOWL	B	1	1	39					0	BGC-
4108		POTTERY		GRE	ASHTON KEYNES	BOWL	BS	1	1	14					0	BGC-
4100		CBM		MTIL		FLAT	BS	1	1	58					0	BGC-
4107		CBM		MTIL		FLAT	BS	1	1	52					0	BGC-
4103		CBM		MTIL		FLAT	BS	1	1	24					0	BGC-
4104		CBM		MTIL		FLAT	BS	1	1	11					0	BGC-
4101		CBM	PATCHY REMAINS OF WHITE SLIP OVER TOP UNDER CLEAR GLAZE	MTIL		FLOOR	BS	1	1	57					0	BGC-
4102		POTTERY		BL		JAR	BS	1	1	4					0	BGC-
	GPS 4096	POTTERY	LUTED R/H;OVAL CROSS SECTION WITH 4 GROOVES DOWN BACK;BLACK GL	PMBL	NO LARGE INCLUSIONS;SILTY BUT NOT V MICACEOUS	JUG/JAR	H	1	1	34					0	BGC-
	GPS 4097	CBM		PMTIL	A MICACEOUS MUDSTONE	BRICK	BS	1	1	8					0	BGC-
	GPS	CBM		MOD		BRICK	BS	1	1	25					0	BGC-

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	GPS 5103	POTTERY		MEDLOC	A SAQ	JAR	BS	1	1	5	ABR	SOOTED EXT	0	BGC-
	GPS 5104	CBM		MTIL		FLAT?	BS	1	1	8			0	BGC-
1000	GPS 85	POTTERY		WHITE		BOWL	R	1	1	36			0	BGC-
1000	GPS 86	POTTERY	MARKED "(R) ROYAL WORCESTER FINE BONE CHINA/ MADE IN ENGLAND/1974 ROYAL WORCESTER/ARDEN"	TPW		BELL	BS	1	1	69			0	BGC-
1000	GPS 90	POTTERY	CLOSED VESSEL WITH LIGHT BLUE EXT SLIP	WHITE		-	BS	1	1	22			0	BGC-
1000	GPS 91	POTTERY	CORRUGATED CYLINDER, POSSIBLY OUTFLOW FROM TOILET	WHITE		TOILET BOWL?	BS	1	1	76			0	BGC-
1001	GPS 92	CBM		WHITE		WALT	BS	1	1	3			0	BGC-
1001	GPS 92	POTTERY	PURPLE LINES AROUND RIM;TRACE OF BLACK INK MARK ON BASE	WHITE		CUP	PROF	4	1	128			0	BGC-

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