

Assessment of the Pottery, Ceramic Building Material, Fired Clay and Glass from Park Place, Knaresborough, West Yorkshire (OSA06 WB44)

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A small collection of finds from an archaeological watching brief at Park Place, Knaresborough, West Yorkshire, undertaken by On-Site Archaeology Ltd, was submitted for identification and assessment (Site Code: OSA06 WB44). The finds date to the medieval and late medieval to early post-medieval periods.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

A single fragment of flat roof tile was recovered. The tile has a fabric which contains angular fragments of quartz, probably derived from the Millstone Grit, and rare red mudstone, of Millstone Grit or Coal Measures origin, in a fine red-firing sandy groundmass. It was probably produced from a Quaternary clay on the west side of the Vale of York and could therefore be of local origin. Flat roof tiles of this sort were in use from the mid 12th to the 17th century and in some areas their production continued even later.

Fired Clay

A single fragment of fired clay was recovered. The fragment has two original, roughly smoothed, faces and is c.35mm thick. The fabric contains moderate fragments of heat altered limestone, angular quartz grains of probable Millstone Grit origin, moderate burnt out straw voids and a fine sandy groundmass. The fragment is almost completely oxidized with a light grey core. The colour and the alteration of the limestone inclusions suggests a firing temperature in excess of 850 degrees C, which raises the possibility that the object was deliberately fired rather than accidentally burnt in a domestic fire or conflagration. It may therefore be waste from some industrial process (a kiln, hearth or oven) or it may be a fragment of daub infill from a panel within a timber-framed building.

Glass

Three fragments of light green window glass were recovered. They have patches of black decay with some areas of the original glass surviving to the surface. Their appearance suggests a late medieval or early post-medieval date (i.e. mid 14th to mid 17th century). However, before the later 16th century window glass would have been used only in relatively high status structures.

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<http://www.postex.demon.co.uk/index.html>

A copy of this report is archived online at

<http://www.avac.uklinux.net/potcat/pdfs/avac2007031.pdf>

Pottery

Seven fragments of pottery were recovered. All were of medieval date and are of Northern Gritty ware (NGR). This ware was produced at several centres on the western side of the Vale of York, utilising weathered Carboniferous mudstones and a quartz sand almost entirely derived from Carboniferous sandstones. Detailed study of Northern Gritty ware from Inganthorpe Manor on the A1 north of Wetherby, and its comparison with material from other sites, including Knaresborough, indicates that the Inganthorpe manor pottery was probably made somewhere to the west of the site, the nearest source of suitable clays, and that the Knaresborough samples were probably produced in the same centre. Samples from medieval production centres at Baildon, Grantley, Follifoot and Winksley were analysed and were not the source of the Knaresborough and Inganthorpe Manor pottery (Vince 2005).

The pottery consisted of fragments of jars, some with internal plain lead glaze, used for cooking and with sooting on the exterior, and jugs, with an external plain lead glaze. In some cases the glaze appears to have been applied together with a red iron-rich slip, or the vessels were red-slipped before glazing. This is also a feature of the Inganthorpe Manor NGR pottery.

Assessment

The finds come from two deposits, 307, which produced the fired clay and pottery, and 311, which produced the flat roof tile and the glass. Deposition dates of late 12th to early 14th century or later and mid 14th to mid 17th century could be assigned to these two deposits.

Further Work

No further work is recommended on any of the finds although it would be useful for the author to retain a fragment of the fired clay for scientific analysis, since it is presumably produced from clay obtained locally.

Context	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
307	NGR		UNGLAZED	JAR	BS	2	2	9		
307	NGR		PLAIN INT GL	JAR	B	1	1	42		SOOTED EXT
307	NGR		PLAIN EXT GL	JUG	BS	3	3	18		
307	FCLAY	FINE SANDY GROUNDMASS; M LST	OXID ON BOTH SIDES WITH LIGHT GREY CORE;PROBABLY A PANEL INFILL	DAUB	BS	1	1	53		
311	MTIL	SAQ	MOULDING SAND ON BASE	FLAT	BS	1	1	73		
311	PMGL	LTGR	SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT THICKNESSES; CONDITION IS CONSISTENT WITH LATE MED/EARLY POST-MED DATE	WIND	BS	3	2	3	MODERATELY DECAYED	

Bibliography

Vince, Alan (2005) *Characterisation Studies of locally-produced Wares from the A1, near Wetherby*. AVAC Reports 2004/54 Lincoln, Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy