

Assessment of the Finds from 110 High Street, Rawcliffe, North Yorkshire (OSA07 WB09)

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A small collection of finds was recovered from a watching brief carried out at 110 High Street, Rawcliffe, undertaken by On-Site Archaeology Ltd. The finds are mainly of post-medieval and later date but include sherds of later medieval pottery and a worn late medieval floor tile, possibly imported.

Description

Thirty-five objects were submitted for identification and assessment (Table 1). They were quantified by count (Nosh), the number of objects represented (NoV) and weight in grams.

Table 1

class	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
CBM	25	9	792
POTTERY	9	8	438
STONE	1	1	0
Grand Total	35	18	1230

Ceramic Building Material

Twenty-five fragments of ceramic building material, representing 9 objects with a total weight of 792 grams were submitted. Two were too small for identification and the remainder consisted of two fragments of flat roof tile; a floor tile; ten fragments of brick and ten fragments of pantile.

Flat roof tiles were used in the Humber estuary from the mid 12th century onwards but were joined by and partially replaced by pantiles in the post-medieval period. The earliest archaeologically documented pantiles in eastern England probably date to the later 16th century and a site on the Humber could well have received imported pantiles from the low countries at that date. Bricks too were used in the Humber estuary from the later 13th century onwards, although they only came into common use at a much later date, later 14th century for higher status structures and 16th century for more modest dwellings.

The floor tile is apparently square and has a square nail hole in one corner, a characteristic of Low Countries tiles of later medieval and early post-medieval date but one which was then adopted by tilers in England. The tile is c.119mm square, has no knife-cut bevel to the sides and has moulding sand on the base and sides. The fabric is silty and fine-textured with lenses of lighter-coloured clay and rounded dark brown clay/iron inclusions. All these

features are consistent with a Low Countries, probably Flemish, origin. However, a similar brick and tile fabric has recently been found on a pottery production site at West Cowick and a local source cannot be discounted without analysis of the fabric. Fig 1 shows the result of factor analysis of chemical composition data for samples of the West Cowick pottery and ceramic building material and Flemish tiles. It shows that the ceramic building material from West Cowick is made from a different clay from that used for the West Cowick pottery but that these two groups are much closer in composition to each other than to Flemish floor tiles from Hull and St Peter's Church, Barton-upon-Humber, whilst Flemish tiles from York and Launceston Castle (Cornwall) form distinct groups. This indicates that there is a strong likelihood that chemical analysis would be able to determine the source of the Rawcliffe floor tile.

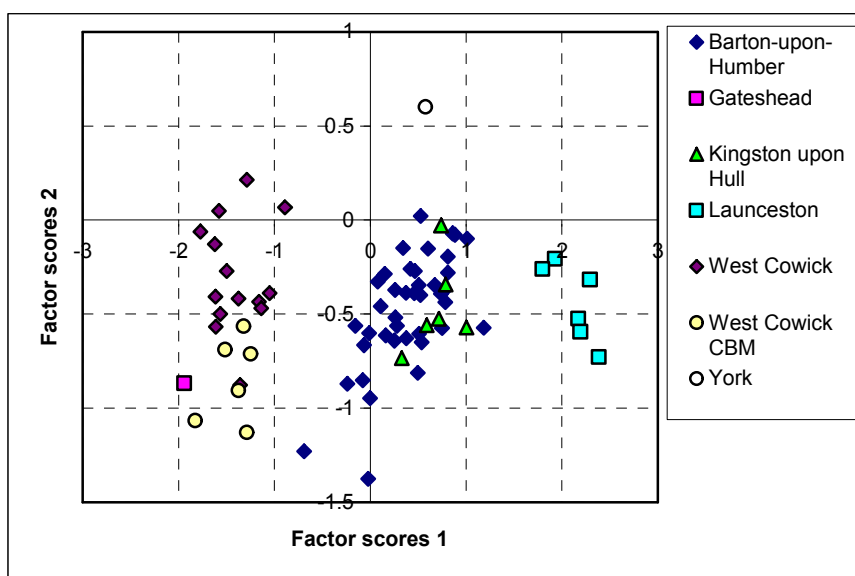


Figure 1

Pottery

Nine sherds of pottery were recovered, from eight vessels and weighing in total 438 gm (Table 2).

Table 2

cname	Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
BL	POSS	1	1	92
BL Total		1	1	92
ENPO	CUP	1	1	1
ENPO Total		1	1	1
GRE	CANDLESTICK	1	1	69
	JAR	1	1	18
	STORAGE JAR	3	2	198
GRE Total		5	4	285
HUM	JAR	1	1	20
	JUG	1	1	40

HUM Total	2	2	60
Grand Total	9	8	438

Two of the sherds are of Humberware (HUM) which, considering the proximity of Rawcliffe to West Cowick, a major production site of this ware, are probably West Cowick products. This ware was made from the mid 14th to the early 16th centuries.

Five of the sherds come from glazed red earthenwares (GRE) which are probably of later 16th to 18th century date and of local manufacture (waste from the manufacture of similar vessels has been found at West Cowick and at Selby).

One sherd comes from a blackware (BL) which was probably made outside the immediate area (for example in West Yorkshire or Staffordshire) but of similar date to the glazed red earthenware and the final sherd is a fragment of porcelain cup (ENPO), probably of later 18th-century date or later.

Stone

A single fragment of a micaceous sandstone flagstone was recovered. It is of Millstone Grit or Coal Measure age and was probably quarried from an outcrop rather than obtained from local glacial gravels.

Assessment

Trench 1

All of the finds from Trench 1 come from the backfill of a series of trenches which contained mortary rubble. There is not a large amount of material from any one context but there is no reason not to think that all of these fills are not contemporary. They include the very worn floor tile and therefore at least some of this material is demolition rubble. One possible interpretation might be that the material was the backfill of robbed foundation trenches.

The finds: the floor tile; two bricks; the glazed red earthenware candlestick and storage jar sherds and the two sherds of Humberware, suggest a date in the later 16th century or later and this suggests the presence on the site of an early post-medieval brick building which had a ceramic tile floor, in other words a structure of at least middling status.

Trench 2

The material from Trench 2 comes from two contexts: a sand deposit built up against a tree stump (206) and a deposit of brick rubble and overlying tarmac surfaces (210 and 204). The former, 206, contains fragments of two pantiles and a stone flagstone. Both could have come from a post-medieval or modern outbuilding as easily as from a dwelling. No close date can be given the material is clearly of later 16th century or later date.

The brick rubble and overlying surface make-up deposits includes the fragment of porcelain cup and is therefore of later 18th century or later date. Several of the finds, however, are clearly residual and probably of similar date to those from Trench 1 and context 206.

Interpretation

The finds probably indicate the presence of a structure on the site in the later medieval period which was demolished at some point in the later 16th century or later. The only later activity recorded in the watching brief probably consists of modern disturbance and the laying down of a tarmac surface.

Further work

The identity of the floor tile affects our estimation of the date and status of the structure it came from. An imported tile is probably both earlier and higher in status than one from West Cowick. It is therefore recommended that thin section and chemical analysis be undertaken of the tile. No further work is recommended on the other finds at this stage.

Retention

The finds are capable of further study which might lead to closer dating and a better understanding of the regional contacts of this site. They should therefore be retained for future study.

Costing

One thin section and one inductively-coupled plasma spectroscopy analysis, together with comparison with data from West Cowick and elsewhere and production of a report - £50.00 plus VAT. This costing is valid until 1st April 2008.

Appendix 1

Context	class	period code	Action	cname	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Use	L	B	TH
102	POTTERY	PMED		GRE	STORAGE JAR		BS	2	1	168				
102	POTTERY	PMED		GRE	STORAGE JAR		BS	1	1	30				
102	CBM	PMED		CBM	?	FRAGS	BS	2	1	25				
104	POTTERY	PMED		GRE	CANDLESTICK		B	1	1	69				
105	POTTERY	PMED		HUM	JUG	HANDLE BASE	BS	1	1	40				
105	POTTERY	PMED		HUM	JAR		BS	1	1	20				
108	CBM	PMED		PMTIL	BRICK	FRAG SENT	BS	1	1	0			120	50
108	CBM	PMED		PMTIL	BRICK	FRAG SENT	BS	1	1	0			120	50
112	CBM	PMED	TS;ICPS	MTIL	FLOOR		BS	1	1	375	HEAVILY WORN		117	37
204	CBM	MOD		MTIL	FLAT		BS	2	2	36				
204	CBM	MOD		PMTIL	BRICK		BS	8	1	280				
206	CBM	PMED		PMTIL	PANT		BS	1	1	41				
206	CBM	PMED		PMTIL	PANT		BS	9	1	35				
206	STONE	PMED		FLAG?		FRAG SENT	BS	1	1	0				35
210	POTTERY	MOD		BL	POSS		B	1	1	92				
210	POTTERY	MOD		GRE	JAR		BS	1	1	18				
210	POTTERY	MOD		ENPO	CUP	OVERPAINTING IN RED/MAUVE/GREEN	R	1	1	1				

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