

Assessment of Finds from Merton Priory, Merton, Surrey (MMA05)

Alan Vince and Kate Steane

A small collection of finds was recovered in 2007 from an archaeological watching brief carried out at Merton Priory by Geoff Tann on behalf of Lindsey Archaeological Services (Site Code: MMA05). The finds include a single fragment of 11th or 12th-century pottery, fragments of medieval roof tile and fragments of dressed building stone.

Description

Animal Bone

A single unidentified fragment of animal bone was recovered from context 7032.

Ceramic Building Material

Fifty-three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered, from contexts 7006, 7018 and 7026. All the tiles have a similar fabric, containing moderate rounded quartzose sand and oxidized surfaces, sometimes with a grey core. The tiles were dusted with quartzose sand before being turned out of the mould to dry. Most of the fragments came from roof tiles of which four have circular pegholes. Two of these pegholes had measureable diameters (10mm and 17mm). One tile had impressions of a deer or sheep hoof indicating that the tiles were laid flat in a space open to its surroundings to dry. One of the tiles has knife trimming of excess clay on the underside (the site with a coating of moulding sand. Seven tiles might have either been warped flat tiles or fragments of curved tile (such as ridge tiles or hip tiles). One of these tiles also has knife trimming on the underside.

Splashed glaze was present on four fragments, one of which was definitely from a curved tile. These tiles may have been used as ridge tiles although glaze was also used on Roman-style imbrex tiles and on flat roof tiles.

Pottery

A single fragment of handmade, shell-tempered pottery visually similar to London's Early Medieval shelly ware was recovered (Vince & Jenner 1991 #9923, EMSH). This ware was used in the City of London from the mid 11th to the mid 12th centuries.

Stone

A single fragment of shale from context 7006, probably from the Coal Measures, is probably evidence for the use of coal.

Two fragments of dressed stone were recovered, from contexts 7006 and 7026. They were examined at x20 magnification and provisionally identified as being Reigate/Merstham stone, quarried about 13 miles to the south of Merton.

Four fragments of stone from context 7032 are interpreted here as being unworked pebbles from local gravels.

Assessment

All the datable finds are consistent with a medieval date and the potsherd is of a type which was current at the time of foundation of the abbey, although it could pre-date it. The ceramic building material includes none of the distinctive types which were introduced in the 12th century (Roman style tegula and imbrex tiles and shouldered peg tiles made as skeuomorphs of wooden shingles, {Armitage, Pearce, et al. 1981 #29943}). A handful of tiles were glazed, another early feature. The tiles might therefore be of any date from the foundation of the abbey through to its dissolution.

Further work

None of the finds are recommended for further work.

Retention

Since all of the finds come from stratified contexts and no detailed analysis of the tile fabrics has taken place, it is recommended that all of the finds are retained.

Appendix 1

Context	class	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition
7006	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	36	
7006	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	2	2	84	TRACES OF ASHY DEP FRONT
7006	STONE	COAL WASTE			COAL WASTE	BS	1	1	11	
7006	STONE	STONE	REIGATE		STONE	BS	1	1	35	
7018	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	59	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	19	18	1067	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	4	4	253	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	82	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	39	
7026	CBM	MTIL		ROUND PEG HOLE DIA 10; KNIFE TRIMMING BACK OF TILE	FLAT	BS	1	1	38	
7026	CBM	MTIL		ROUND PEG HOLE DIA 17	FLAT	BS	1	1	49	
7026	CBM	MTIL		ROUND PEG HOLE	FLAT	BS	1	1	22	
7026	CBM	MTIL		ROUND PEG HOLE	FLAT	BS	1	1	19	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	144	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	2	2	195	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	46	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	122	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	1	1	62	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	2	2	169	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT	BS	2	2	105	
7026	CBM	MTIL		DEER/SHEEP FOOT PRINTS ON BACK OF FLAT	FLAT	BS	1	1	121	
7026	CBM	MTIL		SPLASH GLAZE	RIDGE/CURVED	BS	1	1	90	ASHY DEP BACK/BREAKS

The Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy, 25 West Parade, Lincoln, LN1 1NW

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

A copy of this report is archived online at

<http://www.avac.uklinux.net/potcat/pdfs/avac2008010.pdf>

AVAC Report 2007/10

Context	class	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition
7026	CBM	MTIL			RIDGE/CURVED	BS	1	1	124	
7026	CBM	MTIL		SPLASH GLAZE	FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	126	ASHY DEP BACK/BREAKS
7026	CBM	MTIL		SPLASH GLAZE	FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	49	
7026	CBM	MTIL		SPLASH GLAZE	FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	103	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	30	ASHY DEP BACK/BREAKS
7026	CBM	MTIL		KNIFE TRIMMING ON BACK	FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	37	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	28	
7026	CBM	MTIL			FLAT/CURVED	BS	1	1	58	
7026	POTTERY	EMSH			JAR	B	1	1	18	
7026	STONE	STONE	REIGATE		STONE	BS	1	1	50	
7032	ANBN	ANBN			BONE	BS	1	1	17	
7032	STONE	GEO	CONCRETION		GEO	BS	4	1	74	