Assessment of the Ceramic Building Material from the E-Campus Site, Sheffield, South Yorkshire (ECA 07)

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A collection of 227 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing in total 222.506 Kg, recovered during archaeological investigations of the E-Campus site in Sheffield was submitted for identification and assessment.

The finds are probably all of late 19th century and later date and include several architectural features which are consistent with use in a late 19th-century factory building.

Factual Data

Two hundred and twenty fragments of ceramic building material were submitted for assessment. They were recovered from thirty-five contexts and provide broad dating evidence for the deposition of these contexts. All material of mid/late 19th-century or later date is classed in Table 1 as “MOD” and all others as “PMED”. It should be noted, however, that much of the latter consists of unfrogged bricks and pantile fragments which could easily be of similar date, but could potentially be earlier.

Table 1

Context	MOD	PMTIL	Grand Total
103	1		1
105		2	2
150	1		1
159	1		1
193		1	1
194		5	5
197	3		3
205		2	2
266		7	7
272		4	4
311	4		4
442		2	2
473	4		4
490		4	4
497		1	1
507		2	2
1000	5	2	7
1010		1	1
1503	3	2	5
1506	2		2
1511	1		1
1523		1	1
1537	3	3	6
1545		1	1

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1546	1	2	3
1553		1	1
1558	3	4	7
1561		1	1
1569		1	1
1699	2	1	3
1715	1		1
1757		2	2
1802		5	5
1862		1	1
1869		1	1
1914		1	1
1926		1	1
1976		3	3
2012		1	1
2015		2	2
2018		2	2
2026		1	1
2071		23	23
2074		3	3
2109		63	63
2114		1	1
2116		1	1
2118		1	1
2131		4	4
2133		2	2
2134		5	5
2149		1	1
2151		1	1
2170		1	1
2229		5	5

The fabric was examined visually and 34 fabrics were identified. In addition, fragments of stoneware drainpipes, sinks and drains were present and some fragments could not be assigned a fabric (Table 2).

Table 2

subfabric	NoSH	NoV	Weight
ENGS	9	8	11813
FAB01	2	2	3725
FAB10	1	1	216
FAB11	1	1	413
FAB12	2	2	7546
FAB13	2	2	3977
FAB14	1	1	3471
FAB15	1	1	3993
FAB16	1	1	4026
FAB17	3	3	1014
FAB18	1	1	162

FAB19	1	1	776
FAB02	6	6	6298
FAB21	1	1	3396
FAB22	1	1	4370
FAB23	1	1	3572
FAB24	2	2	7636
FAB25	1	1	4341
FAB26	2	2	8612
FAB27	1	1	3210
FAB28	1	1	2943
FAB29	1	1	2000
FAB03	34	32	75153
FAB03?	3	3	17
FAB30	1	1	2809
FAB31	1	1	1123
FAB32	1	1	3976
FAB33	1	1	591
FAB34	2	2	440
FAB04	54	49	18494
FAB05	23	22	4612
FAB06	3	3	10767
FAB07	3	1	2453
FAB08	1	1	3725
FAB09	49	49	10405
PMTIL	2	2	14
Grand Total	220	209	222089

The fragments could almost all be assigned to a form (Table 3). In most cases an illustration and/or photograph is required to explain the form precisely. In several cases, the exact manner in which the object was used cannot be determined without examining standing structures incorporating the same forms, or by examining photographs of such structures.

Table 3

Form Code	Description	NoSH	NoV	Weight
No form	No form	1	1	413
BRICK	Brick	95	88	168401
BRICK/SKIM	Brick with plaster skim	2	1	7
BULLNOSED BRICK	Bull nosed brick	2	2	3888
CHIMNEY POT	Chimney pot	1	1	776
CURVED BRICK	Curved brick	1	1	3572
DRAIN	Drain	3	2	770
FIRE BRICK?	Fire brick?	2	2	4809
GROOVED BRICK	Grooved brick	1	1	1123
GUTTER/DRAIN	Gutter or drain	2	1	600
PANT	Pantile	97	96	21206
PENTANGULAR BRICK	Pentangular brick	1	1	3993
RIDGETILE	Ridge tile	1	1	642
SEMI-CIRCULAR BRICK	Semi-circular brick	4	4	3768
SINK	Sink	6	6	7905
SURROUND	Surround	1	1	216
Grand Total		220	209	222089

Thirteen bricks have manufacturer's names or other inscriptions impressed or moulded into the surface (Table 4). The named manufacturers were mainly located in Sheffield but include one Leeds brickworks. With some research, it should be possible to establish the location of each brickworks, its period of activity and, with luck, the date range of individual dies.

Table 4

Form	Description	NoSH	NoV	Weight
BRICK	FROGGED TOP AND BOTTOM; 'KAYE & DARWIN WINCOBANK' MOLDED INTO BRICK; SHEFFIELD BRICKWORKS	1	1	3725
	FROGGED TOP ONLY WITH RECT SCOOP ' ROBINSON SHEFFIELD'	2	2	8612
	FROGGED TOP WITH 'ROBINSON SHEFFIELD' AND SLIGHTLY FROGGED BASE	1	1	4026
	OVAL FROGGING 'WOODSIDE' IN RAISED LETTERING	1	1	4370
	OVAL SCOOPED FROGGING WITH 'ROBINSON SHEFFIELD' IN RAISED LETTERING; SLIGHT SCOOP IN BASE	1	1	4341
	RECT FROGGED BRICK WITH BAR ACROSS; 'FARNLEY' STAMPED DIAG ONE PART; 'IRONCo..' DIAG OTHER WITH 'LEEDS' MOULDED ACROSS BAR: OTHER SIDE SAME FROGGING ETC	1	1	3300
	RECT FROGGING 12 DEEP TOP WITH 'ROBINSON SHEFFIELD' STAMPED INTO IT; SLIGHT FROG BASE	2	2	7636
	RECT FROGGING TOP AND BOTTOM; 'W 2 2 S' ALONG AND 'INO:I' ACROSS	1	1	3471
	RECT FROGGING WITH 'GREGORY' IMPRESSED IN IT	1	1	3977
BULLNOSED BRICK	BULLNOSED WITH 100 DIA; FROGGING WITH 'GREGORY' IMPRESSED	1	1	0
CURVED BRICK	SLIGHT CURVE FOR OVER A DOOR/WINDOW; FROGGING WITH '24' IMPRESSED; LGTH 185-220	1	1	3572
Grand Total		13	13	47030

Statement of Potential

There is clearly considerable variability in the E-campus ceramic building material and further study could establish how the various forms were used; their sources and their periods of use.

Without a detailed understanding of the stratigraphy of the site, its history and the architecture of the factories which stood on it, however, it is not possible to say how much of this potential information is actually already available from other sources. However, it remains the case that the ceramic building material has the potential to enrich our knowledge of the structural history of the site.

It is certain, in addition, that characterisation of the clays used in the various brickworks would be useful both to enable bricks and other products which were not marked to be assigned to a brickyard and, more generally, as a means of establishing the character of

clays in Sheffield and Leeds for comparison with ceramics of unknown origin. Therefore, charactering the fabric of the stamped bricks certainly has potential for further study on a local/regional scale (given that bricks from Leeds were used on this site). It would also be possible to compare a sample of pantiles with the marked bricks to see whether or not these were made in the same brickyards.

[ADDED FOLLOWING SUPPLY OF PHASING INFORMATION 10/09/2008]

Forty-nine fragments of brick and tile were recovered from Area A/D Phase 1 deposits (Table 5). Three of these have typological features worthy of illustration (the semi-circular brick and two of the pantile fragments) and they include examples of a range of fabrics, although the bricks are predominantly Fabric 3 and the pantiles predominantly Fabric 9 (Table 6).

Table 5

Form	context group	Total
BRICK		2
	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	1
	BRICK STRUCTURE OF CULVERT 010	3
	BRICK SURFACE, ELEMENT OF GROUP 011	2
	FILL OF POSS FURROW 2169	1
	POST-PACKING IN PH 2152	1
	RED BRICK IN CULVERT 010	5
	SURFACE	2
	UPPER FILL OF PIT 2125	4
PANT		2
	BACKFILL OF PH 2113	1
	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	20
	ORGANIC FILL IN THE "TANK"	2
	POST-PACKING IN PH 2115	1
SEMI-CIRCULAR BRICK	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	2

Table 6

subfabric	BRICK	PANT	SEMI-CIRCULAR BRICK	Grand Total
FAB2	1		2	3
FAB3	14			14
FAB3?	1			1
FAB4	3	2		5
FAB5		8		8
FAB6	1			1
FAB9		16		16
PMEDTIL	1			1

Eighty-three fragments were recovered from Area A/D Phase 2 contexts (Table 7). They include more examples of the semi-circular bricks, also from the backfill of the “tank” but from contexts phased to Phase 2. By and large, the same range of fabrics is present as in Phase

1 but with the addition of Fabric 17. Seven of the pantiles have moulded nibs worthy of illustration.

Table 7

Form	context group	Total
BRICK	BACKFILL OF DRAIN 1830 UNDER CELLAR 11 FLOOR	1
	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	3
	BRICK FROM DRAIN STRUCTURE	3
	BRICK STAIRWELL LEADING TO CELLAR 8	1
	LEVELLING LAYER WITHIN BACK YARDS/LIVING AREAS	1
	MADE GROUND FOR RIVER STREET	11
GUTTER/DRAIN	BEDDING LAYER FOR COBBLE ROAD 1635	2
GUTTER/DRAIN Total		2
PANT	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	58
	BEDDING LAYER FOR COBBLE ROAD 1635	1
SEMI-CIRCULAR BRICK	BACKFILL OF THE "TANK" STRUCTURE 009	2

Table 8

subfabric	BRICK	GUTTER/DRAIN	PANT	SEMI-CIRCULAR BRICK	Grand Total
FAB17			1		1
FAB2	1			2	3
FAB3	7				7
FAB4	11	2	20		33
FAB5			13		13
FAB6	1				1
FAB9			25		25
Grand Total	20	2	59	2	83

Twelve fragments of brick were recovered from Area A/D Phase 3 deposits. Most of these were samples from structures (Table 9). They were assigned visually to eight fabric groups, five of which were not recognised in earlier phases. The bricks include frogged examples with press-moulded inscriptions, all saying “ROBINSON SHEFFIELD”. These should be compared to see if they come from the same moulds and examples of each moulded type drawn. In addition, a bull-nosed brick was recovered and should be drawn.

Table 9

Form	context group	Total
BRICK		1
	BACKFILL OF DRAIN 1912	1
	DRAIN STRUCTURE IN CUT 1954	1
	FLOOR OF CELLAR 4	4
	RED BRICK WALL BETWEEN TENEMENT YARDS 4 AND 5	1
	RED BRICK WALL BETWEEN TENEMENT YARDS 5 AND 6	1
	RED BRICK WALL OF TENEMENT YARD 6	2
BULLNOSED BRICK	FLOOR OF CELLAR 4	1

Table 10

subfabric	BRICK	BULLNOSED BRICK	Grand Total
FAB3	5		5
FAB4	1		1
FAB6		1	1
FAB12	1		1
FAB16	1		1
FAB25	1		1
FAB26	1		1
FAB32	1		1
Grand Total	11	1	12

Most of the ceramic building material from Area A/D Phase 4 comes from backfill of features and presumably dates to Phase 3. It includes types not actually found stratified in Phase 3 or earlier deposits, such as fire bricks, a pentangular coping brick, a ridge tile, and fragments of a sink and ceramic surround. In addition, the bricks include examples of press-moulded frogged brick with stamps not found in earlier deposits. All these types should be illustrated and, in the case of those marked “ROBINSON SHEFFIELD” the dies should be compared with those found in Phase 3 deposits.

Six bricks were recovered from Phase 5 deposits. These include bricks and fire bricks from the backfill of a furnace. The brick is press-moulded with a stamp not recorded in earlier deposits and should be illustrated.

Storage and Curation

The ceramic building material is stable and could be stored indefinitely in archive boxes with no special storage conditions or packaging. No detailed information on the archaeological context of the material was available but it is not considered to be an important fact when considering the retention of the collection (MAP2 A4.3.1).

It is suggested that only one example of each specific form type or fabric is retained and that the remainder, mostly undiagnostic brick and pantile fragments, is discarded. This suggestion is based solely on our assessment of the archaeological potential of the collection and does not take into account the views of the eventual recipient of the archive, the legal owners of the material or those responsible for the care of the excavated site (MAP2 A4.3.2).

Our suggestion for which material should be retained and which could be discarded is given in the accompanying database.