

## **Assessment of Plaster and Mortar from Lincoln Constitutional Club, Lincoln (LCCL 07)**

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An archaeological watching brief carried out in the cellar of Lincoln Constitutional Club by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) Ltd produced a fragment of wall plaster and mortar both of which were submitted to the author for identification and assessment. Both probably come from relatively high-status structures of Roman date.

### **Description**

#### **Wall Plaster**

The fragment of wall plaster comes from context 510 and is approx 35mm by 20mm and 18mm thick. The backing consists of a sandy mortar (Fig 2) and there is a flat, sandy surface where the plaster was attached to the wall (Fig 3). The backing was applied in two stages, of similar thickness but this was probably only to allow the mortar to dry rather than representing a secondary application. There is a thin skim of inclusionless plaster, less than 1.0mm thick and the whole is covered with an even, matt red paint (Munsell 1969 10YR 5/6).

The sand consists of subangular quartz, many grains of which are coated with red iron-rich material. This is typical of terrace sands in the Lincoln area. There is no obvious evidence of relict limestone fragments from the lime.

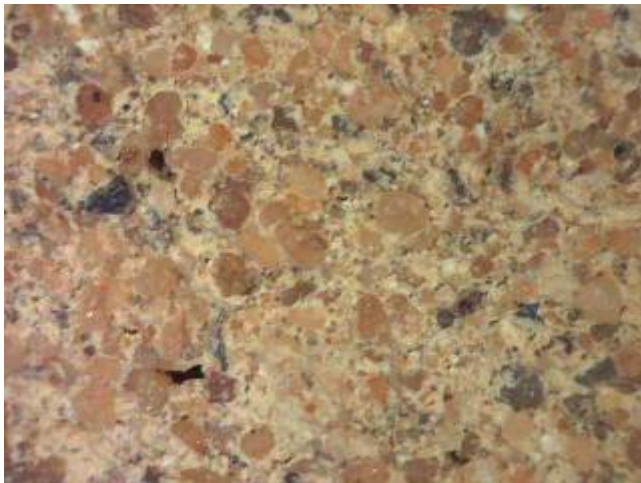
Similar wall plaster is found on most sites of Roman date in Lincoln and the use of red paint, sometimes in simple panels and sometimes as a complete coating, is also common.



*Figure 1*



*Figure 2*



*Figure 3*

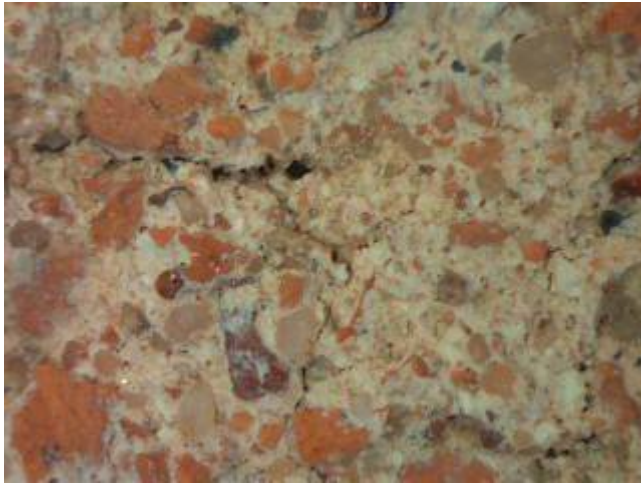
### **Mortar**

The mortar fragment, also found in context 510, is a rough cube 600mm by 600mm by 500mm (Fig 4). One face appears to be flatter than the others and might reflect an original surface. The mortar has a pinkish tinge and contains abundant angular fragments of tile with smaller quantities of subangular quartz sand (Fig 5).

The mortar is of the hydraulic mortar type, called *Opus Signinum*, which is of pozzolanic mortar, which can set under water and is water-resistant. Such mortars were used in places where the mortar had to have contact with water, such as hypocausts, baths and water-pipes, fonts and the Lincoln aqueduct.



*Figure 4*



*Figure 5*

### Assessment

Both fragments are of Roman date and come from Romanised structures. The *Opus Signinum* fragment implies the existence of a relatively high status structure as opposed to the commercial strip buildings examples of which were found in the southeast quarter of the lower city before the construction of the defenses in the later 2<sup>nd</sup> century. However, such structures were the norm in the Lower City from that time onwards until the end of the Roman occupation (2003).

### Bibliography

Jones, M. J., Stocker, D., and Vince, A. (2003) *The City by the Pool*, Oxbow Books, Oxford

Munsell (1969) *Munsell Book of Color*. Baltimore, Maryland