

# The Fired Clay and Ceramic Building Material from Timberlands, Phases 1 and 2, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire (AGS 01 and TIM 05)

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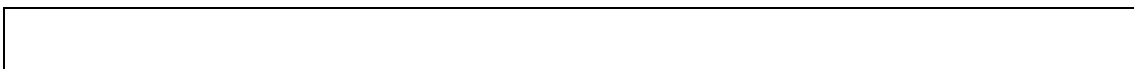
Archaeological excavations carried out by West Yorkshire Archaeological Service in advance of development at Timberlands, Scunthorpe, revealed rural settlement of Iron Age and Roman date. The work was carried out in two phases. Phase 1 (site code AGS 01) produced a small quantity of ceramic building material including both Roman and medieval pieces. Phase 2 (site code TIM 05) produced a larger assemblage including fired clay from Iron Age contexts as well as two fragments of Roman ceramic building material. This phase also produced a quantity of unworked stone fragments, submitted because of their similarity to fired clay but identified by the authors as lower Jurassic clay, shelly marl and limestone fragments. These are listed in the catalogue (App 1) but not described here.

## Description

### Fired Clay

Two hundred and eight fragments of fired clay were recovered. Most of these were small and featureless (Table 1, FCLAY) and have a mean weight of just over 6 gm.

Forty-two fragments, comprising no more than 4 objects, come from loom weights (mean weight 31gm). Those from contexts 169 and 209 can only be identified as loom weights by comparison to the better-preserved material from contexts 171 and 266=214. The latter (Fig 1) is a pyramidal weight with a horned top. This type is typical of the Iron Age, replacing the cylindrical form with a central hole, which was current in the Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The example from 266=214 does not have a surviving hole but the fragment from context 171 has a circular hole, 15mm in diameter, probably running horizontally about 2/3 of the way from the base to the top of the weight.



*Figure 1. Loom weight from context 266=214*

A single collection of fragments, from context 214, included pieces in which the surfaces had a white to yellow discolouration. This is due to contact during firing with brine and calcium carbonate, forming a sodium- and calcium-rich aluminosilicate. Such material is extremely common on salt-working sites of Bronze Age to early Roman date around the Lincolnshire coast. However, a sample of the fired clay from context 214, including pieces with "salt-surfacing" and others from artefacts, such a loomweight, and daub, indicate that all of the objects were made from the same, presumably local, clay. None of the fragments were large

enough to show the form of the objects they came from but it has been suggested that the discovery of similar material on Iron Age sites in Hampshire and neighbouring counties is due to the transport of salt in the containers in which it was produced. In this case, however, it appears to show that there is sufficient brine in the local clay to start this heat-calcium carbonate-brine reaction.

Eighteen fragments, from four contexts (160, 214, 214=266, 233), have a roughly flat surface and could either be fragments of loom weight or daub. However, only one fragment, from context 214=266, appears to come from a wattle and daub structure, bearing the impressions of two wattles.

*Table 1*

Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
DAUB	1	1	54
FCLAY	102	9	617
LOOMWEIGHT "SALT MAKING DEBRIS" (SUBSEQUENTLY TESTED AND OF LOCAL ORIGIN)	42	4	1338
SURFACE	45	45	149
	18	4	173
Grand Total	208	63	2331

## **Ceramic Building Material**

### Roman

A single definite fragment of Roman tile was recovered from Trench 7 in Phase 1 (unstratified). It was decorated with a two-finger signature mark. The purpose of such marks is not known and they occur on *tegulae*, bricks and *pilae*. In this instance, the thickness of the fragment and the presence of a corner indicates that the tile was either a brick or *pilae* tile. In either case, this indicates that the structure from which it came had mortared walls or a hypocaust. This tile appears to have been subjected to burning after firing leaving a circular area unburnt. This is probably due to reuse to support a jar on a fire but might be evidence for the use of the tile in a hypocaust.

Five fragments from two Roman tiles were recovered from Phase 2 (contexts 317 and 324). The piece from 317 is definitely from a *tegula* whilst those from 324 probably also come from a *tegula* and have a signature mark produced with two or more fingers. These fragments come from a structure with a tiled roof.

### Medieval

A single fragment of flat roof tile, 20 mm thick, was recovered from Trench 17 in Phase 1 (context 1704). A fragment from context 1706 in the same trench might be either Roman or medieval in date. Flat roof tiles were introduced to England in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century but then

continued to be produced into the post-medieval period. The fabric of the piece from 1704 is similar to that of medieval pottery from North Lincolnshire of 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>-century date (kindly shown to me by Dr A Boyle, then of Scunthorpe Museum).

### Appendix 1 Catalogue of Tile from Phase 1

Trench:	Context:	Cname:	SUBFABRIC:	Description:	Form:	PART:	Nosh:	NoV:	Weight:	Thickness:	CONDITION:
17	1706	RTIL/MTIL			FLAT? TEG?	FRAG	1	1	48	16	
7	U/S	RTIL		2 FINGER SIGNATURE; UNID IMPRESSION ON BASE	BRICK	FRAG	1	1	546	23	RE-USED TO HOLD BASE OF POT IN BONFIRE
17	1704	MTIL	MIXED CLAYS		FLAT	FRAG	1	1	418	20	

### Appendix 2 Catalogue of Fired Clay and Tile from Phase 2

REFNO:	Action:	Context:	Cname:	Description:	Form:	PART:	Nosh:	NoV:	Weight:	Class:
		160	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	2	1	5	FCLAY
25		214	FCLAY		SURFACE	PART	5	1	23	FCLAY
25		214	FCLAY	36 LARGE FRAGS AND MANY MORE SMALL	FCLAY	PART	36	1	446	FCLAY
		233 END RING GULLY	FCLAY		SURFACE	PART	1	1	96	FCLAY
		233 END RING GULLY	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	4	1	43	FCLAY
		217	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	7	1	13	FCLAY
		169	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	27	1	37	FCLAY
		209	FCLAY		LOOMWEIGHT	PART	4	1	13	FCLAY
		181	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	3	1	6	FCLAY
	DR	266=214	FCLAY	HORNED IA ;26 LARGE FRAGS AND MANY MORE SMALL; 3 PIECES FIT TO SHOW FORM	LOOMWEIGHT	PART	26	1	960	FCLAY
		160	FCLAY		SURFACE	PART	1	1	1	FCLAY

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	214=266	FCLAY		SURFACES	PART	11	1	53	FCLAY
	317	RTIL		TEG	PART	1	1	294	CBM
25	214	FCLAY	SOME SALT SURFACING	"SALT MAKING DEBRIS" (SUBSEQUENTLY TESTED AND OF SAME, LOCAL ORIGIN AS REST OF TESTED CLAY)	PART	45	45	149	FCLAY
	169	FCLAY		LOOMWEIGHT	PART	3	1	129	FCLAY
	169	FCLAY	7 LARGE FRAGS AND MANY MORE SMALL	LOOMWEIGHT	PART	8	0	172	FCLAY
	169	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	3	1	25	FCLAY
	171	FCLAY	HOLE IN LOOMWEIGHT 15 DIA	LOOMWEIGHT	PART	1	1	64	FCLAY
	171	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	6	1	11	FCLAY
	214=266	FCLAY	TWO SIGNS OF WATTLE	DAUB	PART	1	1	54	FCLAY
	214=266	FCLAY		FCLAY	PART	14	1	31	FCLAY
	324	RTIL	2 FINGER PLUS SIGNATURE	TEG?	PART	4	1	436	CBM