

(7 June 2011 with postscript 16/7/13)

Scan assessment of the pottery from Crossrail, Bond Street (XSC10)

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Introduction

A total of 756 sherds of pottery weighing 27.787 kg. was recovered. All of this is of post-medieval date, and mainly dates to the 18th and 19th centuries. The character of the material is entirely domestic. In general the pottery is in a fragmentary but fairly fresh condition with many large fresh sherds present. A few contexts (probably rubbish pits and garderobes) contain complete reconstructable vessel profiles or near-complete profiles. Some of the higher context numbers however contain only a few small worn sherds. The average sherd weight is 36.8 g. which reflects the large size of many of the sherds here.

Postscript (July 2013)

Subsequent to this assessment a further 31 sherds of pottery was produced by Watching Briefs - bringing the site total to 787 sherds. This additional material will be reported on in the grey literature reports. Any significant items however may be considered for academic journal publication and any intrinsically interesting items will appear in the popular publication.

Methodology

All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc.). Individual pottery fabrics were not quantified at this stage although a rough idea of the frequency of individual types is given below for the commonest or rarest types.

Pottery Fabrics

These were recorded in the comments field using the codes of the Museum of London (LAARC 2007). Sometimes the full name was also recorded. The types occurring here are listed below in roughly chronological order.

SIEG: Siegburg stoneware, c 1500-1630. Import, Germany.

BORDG: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, green-glazed, c 1550-1700.

BORDY: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, yellow-glazed, c 1550-1700.

BORDO: Surrey/Hampshire white Border ware, olive-glazed, c 1550-1700.

OLIV: Spanish olive jar, c 1550-1750.

RBOR: Surrey/Hampshire red Border ware, c 1550-1900.

PMR: Post-medieval red earthenwares, c 1550-1900. Mainly local.

WEST: Westerwald stoneware, c 1590-1750. Import, Germany.

TGW: English tin-glazed earthenware, c 1575-1825. London, Bristol etc.
STRE: Staffordshire-type redware, c 1600-1800.
MPUR BUTP: Midlands Purple ware butterpot, c 1620-1725.
CHPO: Chinese porcelain, c 1600-1900+ (mainly c 1725-1900). Import, China.
ENGS: English brown salt-glazed stoneware, c 1670-1900. London, Staffordshire, Bristol etc.
LONS: London stoneware, c 1670-1900.
STMO: Staffordshire-type mottled brown-glazed earthenware, c 1680-1800.
STSL: Staffordshire-type combed slipware, c 1680-1900.
NOTS: Nottingham stoneware, c 1700-1800.
REST: Red stoneware, c 1730-1780.
ENPO: English porcelain, c 1745-1925+.
SWSL: Staffordshire-type white dipped stoneware, c 1710-1760.
SWSG: Staffordshire-type white salt-glazed stoneware, c 1720-1780.
STGR: Staffordshire-type glazed redware (Astbury-type), c 1720-1750.
STSG: Staffordshire-type red slipped ware with sgraffito decoration, c 1720-1760.
CREA: Later Creamware, c 1770-1830. Staffordshire, Leeds, etc.
PEAR: Pearlware, c 1780-1830. Staffordshire etc.
PEAR TR: Transfer-printed Pearlware, c 1780-1830. Staffordshire etc.
TPW: Transfer-printed refined whitewares, c 1780-1900+. Staffordshire etc.

Summary

All the pottery is of post-medieval date. The earliest piece recovered is a sherd from the moulded base of a pale grey Siegburg stoneware tankard from Germany which dates to c 1575-1620. This has traces of decoration including an inscription. The context however is of 18th-century date (2006). Wares dating to the later 16th and the first half of the 17th century are generally rare and in many cases probably residual. Most of the pottery would appear to date from the late 17th and the 18th century in particular.

The commonest pottery type here is the post-medieval redwares or red earthenwares (PMR). Most of these are typical of London products of the later 17th and 18th centuries including those produced at Woolwich - mostly large bowls and dishes and deep conical bowls and storage jars with pair of horizontal or arched lug handles. Also handled cooking pots or pipkins, and jugs.

There are several fairly large context groups dating from the 18th century. These contain complete or reconstructable vessel profiles including a high proportion of decorative tablewares and chamberpots in tin-glazed earthenware (TGW) and other wares. Some of these assemblages have the character of garderobe or latrine groups. A high proportion of these contexts also produced high quality dishes, teabowls and other forms in Chinese porcelain (CHPO) suggesting their owners were relatively well off.

Possible garderobe groups of the first half of the 18th century include Context (3030) with a small number of complete or near-complete vessels including a tall near-complete London brown stoneware tankard (LONS) with a crowned 'WR' excise mark for William III (these were used throughout the 18th century). A separate tankard rim from the same context is part-inscribed with the name 'Tiller-' who was

probably the owner and possibly even the owner of a local tavern (this would need to be researched). The bases of two conical Staffordshire butter pots (MPUR BUTP) in this context are also of interest and some pieces of high-quality Chinese or Japanese 'Imari'-style porcelain.

There are several other possible garderobe groups of the late 18th or early 19th century dated by the presence of mass-produced Staffordshire-type creamwares and whitewares. The largest of these is from Context (3022) which produced 120 sherds of pottery dated to c 1780-1800. This included a complete highly decorated Creamware teapot with lid and a complete miniature chamberpot in tin-glazed earthenware. It also included a rare lobe-handled dish or porringer in Staffordshire white stoneware (SWSG, c 1720-1780) with unusual moulded decoration including the royal arms of France and possibly Great Britain, and also a sherd from a sugar mould (PMR). Another large but more fragmentary assemblage of 190 sherds came from Context (3001, Structure 3006) which has a closing date of c 1810-1830. Most of the sherds of late TGW dishes here have a brown/cessy staining suggestive of a garderobe group. Notable items in this group include a Staffordshire-type glazed redware sugarbowl (STGR) of c 1720-1750 with the Hanoverian arms embossed in white slip.

As at the Tottenham Court Road site (XRX10), only a very few sherds from the Bond Street site appear to post-date c 1830. These include a pair of unusual brown salt-glazed stoneware 'stoppers' or plugs (Ctxs 3199 and 3200) which probably come from Victorian brown stoneware drainpipes in the same material and perhaps should be regarded therefore as ceramic building material rather than vessel pottery. Ultimately some of the more interesting and complete items from this site would be worth illustrating and publishing. In general the range of pottery from the site is typical of many post-medieval domestic assemblages from London but the condition is generally good.

Bibliography

LAARC, 2007 Post 1992 Museum of London code expansions: Post-Roman pottery. http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F0118AAF-EF24-4228-A07A-39F89E6F092E/0/post92mol_post_roman.pdf