

12 Goslett Yard, WC2 (TCG09) (2nd Phase)

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Summary note on firebricks and other building materials

A total of 15 fragments of firebrick were recovered from the second phase of TCG09 (contexts [146] and [148]) along with a wall tile (context [131] and a glazed pantile (context [127]).

Most of the firebricks have been recorded, but work is required to establish the fabric types used by the various firebrick manufacturers. When this is complete the building material records can be added to the Oracle database.

Firebrick

The material from context [148] comprises of various shapes of firebrick used principally in kiln construction and what may be kiln shelving made from the same material. It is not always apparent whether certain individual items were part of the kiln structure itself or from the interior of the kiln. The use of certain items may have been interchangeable.

Products from E J & J Pearson Ld, Stourbridge, West Midlands

Firebricks from this manufacturer were found during the first phase of excavation at TCG09. These date from 1852 to around 1900. A number of different products are present.

Standard firebricks measuring 222–227 x 107–111 x 74–76mm stamped E J & J PEARSON LD / STOURBRIDGE (contexts [146] <47> and [148] <48>–<49>). Those from [146] have soot blackened stretcher faces. One firebrick from [148] (<48>) is unusual in having the lettering in a slightly raised rectangular border with screw holes clearly visible at each end. This indicates the firebrick was impressed with a wooded stamped with the letters screwed into place on two metal plates. The words Pearson and Stourbridge are closer together in this firebrick so it was clearly marked with a different stamp to the other Pearson firebricks.

Semi-circular firebrick stamped E J & J PEARSON (LD) / STOURBRIDGE (context [148] <44>). Above the stamp is what appears to be batch or production mark with the number 5 followed by what may be a faint letter I or number 1. This was added by a separate stamp. The firebrick measures 226 x 113 x 73mm in size.

Large rectangular firebrick with a partial semi-circular curved face and rounded end. The curved surface is stamp E J & J PEARSON L(D) / STOURBRIDGE. Above (but upside down) is another stamp, with larger letters, with what appears to be the word SHORT (perhaps the size of the product). This firebrick measures 296 x 227 x 220–225mm.

Product from Poultons, Reading, Berkshire

There are a number of large rectangular firebricks with a curved end ([context 148] <40>-<43>). These are stamped on the upper face:

POULTONS
PATENT
CURVILINEAR
READING

The lower faces are deeply stamped 5A with the letters LONG in a separate stamp below. Again the former seems to be batch or production mark, with the word LONG perhaps representing the size of product. These firebricks probably date from the second half of the 19th to the early 20th century.

Other products

Perhaps the most unusual unmarked product is a fired clay 'stopper' (context [148] <40>). This measures 160mm diameter by 160mm in length. The top of the stopper has an indented circular area with a bar across the middle to enable the stopper to be turned when in place.

From the same context ([146] <45>) are a number of square shaped firebricks with a curved end. These measure 109mm square by 68mm in thickness. All are stamped on the upper/lower face with the number 6 or 9.

Part of a square of rectangular firebrick measuring 298mm in breadth by 80mm in thickness (context [148]). This may be kiln shelving as definite shelving measuring 295mm in breadth by 60mm thick was found 9 Albert Embankment (AEB01) the site of one of Douulton's Lambeth pothouses -although these were pierced.

Thin rectangular firebrick measuring 230 x 114 x 24mm (context [148]). Again this may be kiln shelving although there is no indication it was ever used in a kiln. Mortar of the top and base would suggest use as brick walling.

Other building material

Two pieces of black glazed pantile were found in context [127]. The glaze is in pristine condition suggesting they may not have actually been used on a roof. These tiles are probably 18th or 19th century.

There are four pieces of wall tile, possibly all part of the same tile, from context [131]. These are machine-made products made with a black speckled light grey firing clay. They are marked on the back, but most are obscured by hard mortar, although the numbers, 1, 2, 3 and 4 are visible. This tile is probably mid-late 19th century, or later, in date.

Discussion

The second phase of the site has produced a fascinating array of stamped and unstamped firebricks in a variety of different shapes and forms. More work is required to determine the precise use of the various firebrick types, although all were presumably

indented for a kiln or oven structure, although not all firebricks seem to have been used for this purpose. Of particular importance are the large rectangular firebricks with semi-circular ends made by Poultons of Reading. This is the first recorded occurrence of firebricks from this manufacturer in London.