

CONSERVATION NOTE FOR 12 Goslett Yard, WC2 (TCG09)

p/camd/1144/na/finds/cons01.doc

Liz Barham

January 2010

Summary of items considered in conservation note

(All bulk)	Material	No. at evaluation	No. with labels
Inorganics	Ceramic	c.120	10
	Glass	c.40	7
	+ two bags of corks and composite glass, rubber and metal stoppers		

The following assessment of conservation needs for the finds from the evaluation 12 Goslett Yard, WC2 encompasses the requirements for long term curation of the finds retrieved at evaluation as well as any analytical or investigative work recommended by the finds specialist, and its implications for similar finds from further excavation work. Work outlined in this document is needed to produce a stable archive in accordance with MAP2 (English Heritage 1992) and the Museum of London's Standards for archive preparation (Museum of London 1999).

There were no accessioned finds from the evaluation. Besides building material and pipes, the finds to date consist of c. 160 fragments of ceramic and glass vessels from [14] and [19] as well as a large bag each of corks and stoppers. The stoppers include a few metal covers embossed with lettering. The ceramics, glass and their associated stoppers and corks were reviewed with reference to the site visit note by Nigel Jeffries. A potentially large number of pot fragments from the pits described in the site visit note are expected to be recovered during a future phase of excavation. The sampling strategy is not yet defined but those retrieved at evaluation are thought to be broadly representative of condition.

It is not anticipated that there will be further investigative or analytical work to be carried out. The exception could be the few metal covers from the stoppers which are not very legible. They are not mentioned by the finds specialist but they could be X-rayed to clarify the lettering if required. If more of these are retained after subsequent excavation, as a guide, it is estimated 15 could be X-rayed in 0.25 day.

Some of the labelled fragments would be appropriate for photography for publication. Some work is necessary to make the labelled fragments stable for archive.

Condition

The pottery and glass fabrics themselves are sound. Of the c. 120 fragments of pottery recovered, about 10 fragments, which all come from [19], have the remains of labels adhered to them. Of the c. 40 fragments of glass recovered, about 7 fragments, all from [19], have label remains. The labels are very worn with considerable losses, but significant, legible text on them survives. Most of the labels' fabric is firmly attached, but is soft and can be abraded easily through poor handling or by other

sherds rubbing up against them. There are a few small, very vulnerable fragments that are lifting from the “Cross & Blackwell” labels from three sherds of pottery in [19].

Work recommended prior to photography/display

It is recommended prior to photography that there should be some light cleaning to reduce the mould and dirt that obscures some of the text on the pottery labels. This should be done using conservation materials because of the fragility of the labels. The few vulnerable fragments should also be reattached (see note below regarding preparation for archive). Some of the bases with batch numbers would also benefit from further cleaning prior to photography/display. It would be best to estimate for any cleaning work when the eventual quantity from the anticipated excavation work, and the nature of any publication is known, but as a guide, it is estimated that if the evaluation samples are representative, 6-8 items could be cleaned per 0.25 day.

The site visit note by the finds specialist mentioned the possibility of on-site display. The above cleaning is likewise recommended prior to a display. Given the fragility of the labels, if the labelled vessel fragments were to be considered for an “on-site” display for longer than a day, a conservator should be consulted over appropriate lighting and display case conditions at an early stage.

Work necessary for archive

It has been agreed with the Finds Manager that when packing the sherds, the fragments with labels will be bagged individually with foam backing to reduce movement and abrasion. This approach to packing would be necessary for any similar labelled sherds recovered at subsequent excavation.

Prior to photography, display or long term archive storage, the most vulnerable label fragments should be reattached to their vessels to reduce the risk of losses to the legibility of the print text, especially during handling. Given that further excavation is anticipated during 2010, this can wait until it is known how many other examples are to be retained, as this consolidation work can be done in batches. As a guide, if labels in similar condition to the evaluation samples are recovered, it is estimated that approximately eight items could be treated within 0.25 day.

Bibliography

English Heritage 1992 *Management of Archaeological Projects II*

Museum of London 1999 *General standards for the preparation of archaeological archives to be deposited with the Museum of London*