

Sheffield Museum Excavations 1971



18th century Manors Ware
Museum Catalogue Number: 1982.51

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I. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

During the course of clearance by the mason at the end of the Long Gallery in the Wolsey Tower and the adjacent hexagonal shaped room, several features were discovered. The aim of the 1971 season was to investigate these structures. This began Phase II (Area 4) of excavations as outlined in 1968 (see *Sheffield Museum Excavations 1968-70*).

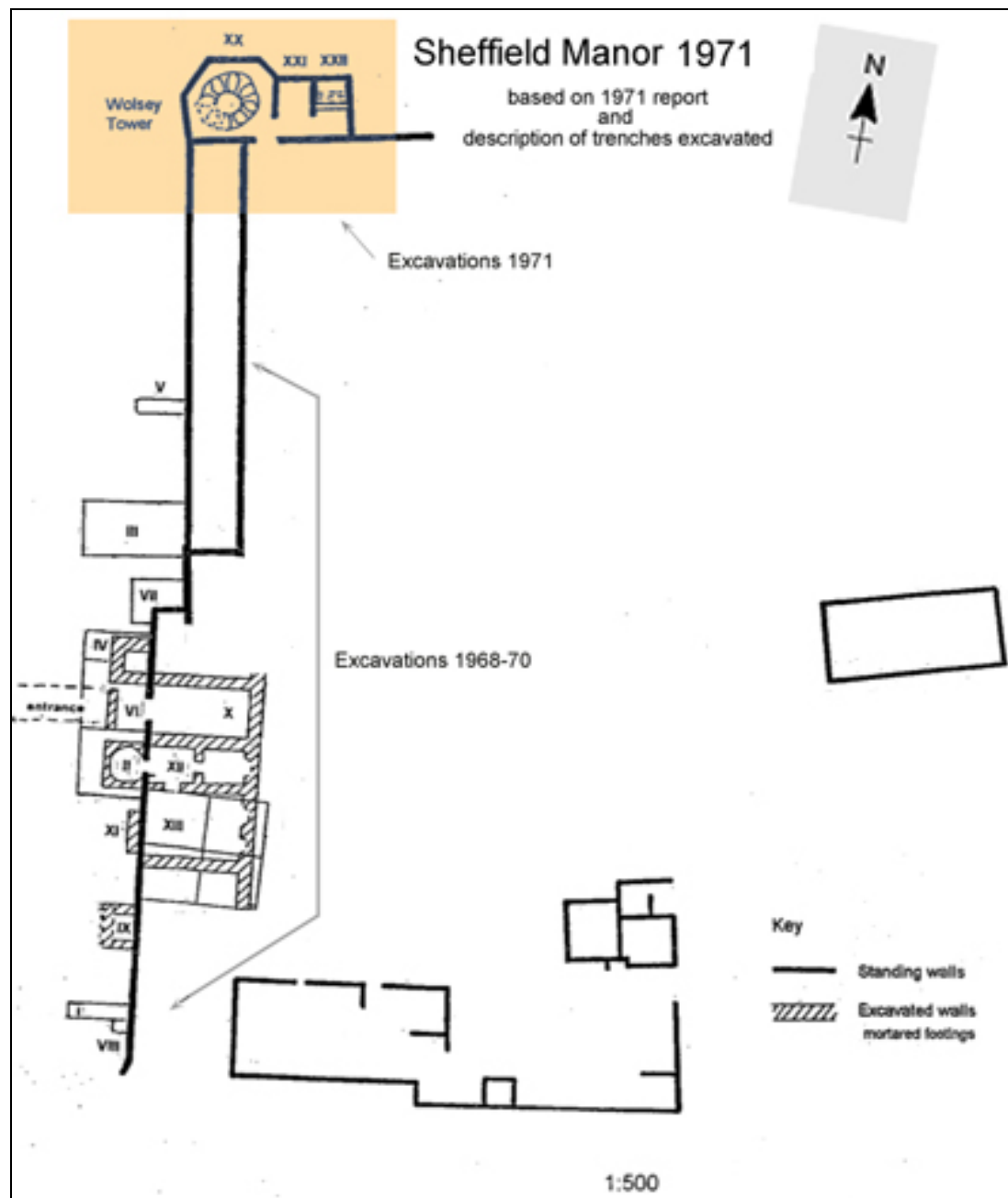


Fig. 1. Plan of Trenches (1968-71) with excavations in 1971 highlighted.

II. 1971 SEASON

P. Beswick directed the fourth year's archaeological season, between 28 June and 11 July 1971. Three "Sites" were defined and selected for excavation. The Sites correspond to architecturally defined rooms at the North end of the Long Gallery. They were numbered in the sequence, beginning with XX. Summary reports for the season's excavation were published in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* (Moorhouse 1972) and *Post-Medieval Archaeology* (Cherry 1972).

II.1 "SITE" LIST (See plan Fig. 1)

Site XX

The hexagonal room at the end of the Long Gallery was termed Site XX. When the mason removed modern debris in the structure, it was noted that quantities of saggars, wasters and burnt brick were disturbed. This suggested the location of a kiln in the near vicinity. Excavation revealed the foundations of a large, circular, multi-flued kiln within the room (Fig. 2).

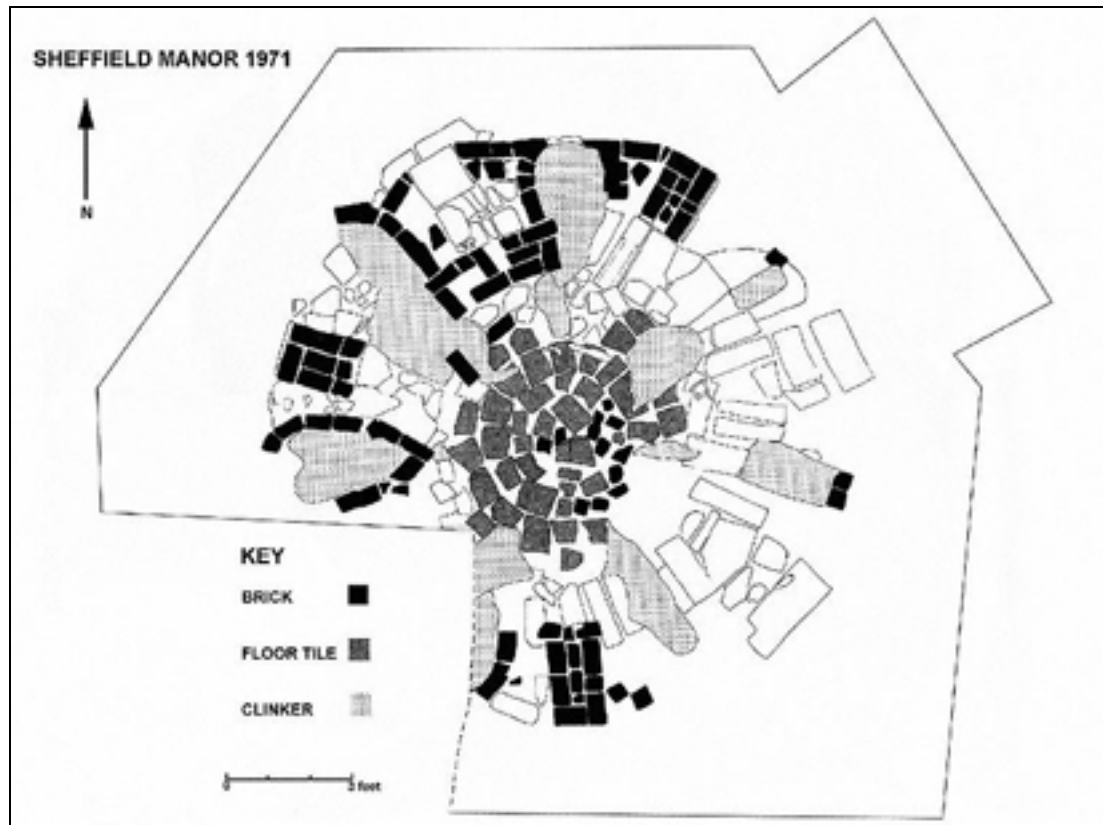


Fig. 2. Plan of the Kiln floor, showing its position within the hexagonal room.

The kiln had seven flues with brick as the preferred building material for this part of the kiln. The foundation, of stone, brick and floor tile from the ruined Manor buildings, was set into the original floor of the room (Fig. 3). Clinker was also found on parts of the foundation. In some parts, the kiln overlay fallen plasterwork from the demolition of the building c. 1706 indicating a date after this that the kiln was constructed.



Fig. 3. Excavation of the kiln in 1971 showing it in relation to the room floor (paving in upper left of the photograph).

See sections III. POTTERY and IV. KILN TECHNOLOGY for more information.

Site XXI

Adjoining the hexagonal room, Site XXI is the first rectangular room in “Wolsey’s Tower”. The name of the tower comes from the documented visit by Cardinal Wolsey in 1529, who was thought to have stayed in this part of the building. The original floor had not survived. The room was sectioned through the fill, which contained building rubble and 16th century pottery. Upper layers contained brick and coal, probably debris from the 18th century kiln. Significantly, this area demonstrated evidence for the construction of the tower. The south wall was constructed on an edge of natural sandstone outcrop with the north wall three feet lower. The north wall was set in a shallow trench, resting on natural clay. No evidence that there was building activity prior to the 16th century.

Site XXII

The second room in the Wolsey Tower was termed Site XXII. The room was also sectioned like Site XXI. The wall foundations were similar to those in the previous room. In the northern half of the room was a garderobe. The garderobe consisted of a dividing east-west wall with a load-bearing arch (Feature 1 – see Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). Beyond the arch was a cavity (6 by 5 feet) with a paved floor with sandstone flags (Fig. 6). The cavity sloped towards an opening in the north wall through which there was a drain. The flagged floor had been replaced once, but the area had subsequently been filled with ash, wasters and other material from the pottery kiln.



Fig. 4 Feature 1, Stone Arch in Room XXII

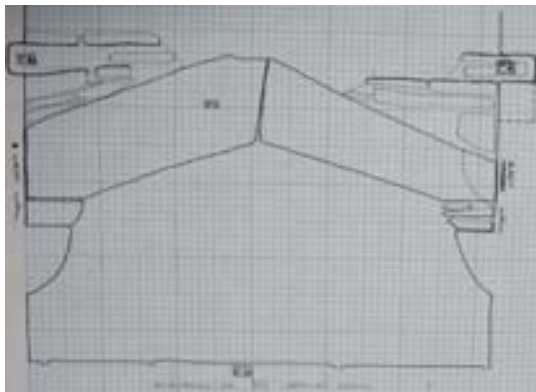


Fig. 5. Elevation of Feature 1, Stone Arch in Room XXII

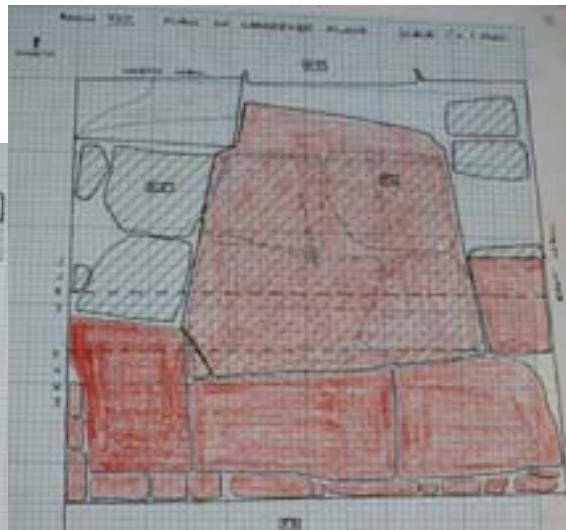


Fig. 6. Plan of Garderobe, showing paved floor (red=replaced floor, hatched=original floor) and location of stone arch.

III. THE POTTERY

In 2002, C. Cumberpatch produced an assessment of the pottery assemblage from Manor Lodge. Within the report was a section dealing with the early Modern assemblage (between the years c.1700 and 1750) that deals with the manganese-mottled wares produced at Sheffield Manor known as “Manor Ware”. Discussion of pottery here is based, primarily, on Cumberpatch 2002.

The early Modern period was defined as a time when the Manor ceased to be a manor and was in the process of being transformed into a series of domestic dwellings and sites of industrial activity. According to documentary evidence dating to 1738 (Sheffield City Library Archives TC 573), the potter, John Fox (1682-1738), leased part of the Long Gallery (referred to as the ‘late gallery of the Manor’). Prior to his activities at Sheffield Manor, John Fox ran the Bolsterstone glasshouse, one of the largest and earliest glass making establishments in the region, established by his family in the 17th century. The fragment of pottery bearing Fox’s initials (J.E.F.) and the date of 1715 was discovered in 1969 (see *Sheffield Museum Excavations 1968-70*) confirming his occupation of the site. Fox’s pottery has also been found in archaeological contexts in other places in the region.

Typical products of Fox’s Manor kiln were tablewares such as tankards with ribbed and corrugated decoration, porringer, posset pots, dishes and plates (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). He also produced utilitarian wares such as chamber pots. The evenly fired fabric is a pale, fine cream or pink. Grit filler is absent, allowing the bodies of the pottery to be very thin. The lead glaze produced a yellow-to-brown colour. Streaks of dark purple-brown were produced by an addition of manganese (Beswick 1978: 47).



Fig. 7. Posset Pot (left) and Tankard (right) from Sheffield Manor. Museum Catalogue No. 1982.51



Fig. 8. Porringer, cup and plate from Sheffield Manor.
Museum Catalogue No. 1982.51

Manganese mottled ware pottery is rare (nationally) in the early 18th century. Potteries producing similar wares tend to be later in date and mainly concerned with producing slipware or utilitarian wares. Archaeological evidence from the region indicates that regional potteries producing this type of pottery are later in date to the Sheffield Manor (Table 1). There is documentary evidence for others (Lawrence 1974). John Fox's mother, Mary Blackburn, along with her second husband was known to have set up potteries in Midhope in the 1720s.

Site	Dates	Products	Reference
Sheffield Manor	Post 1708-post 1715	Manganese Mottled Wares	Beswick 1978
Midhope/ Midhopestones	1720-c. 1845	Slipware, Brown glazed coarsewares, Redware	Lawrence 1974, Ashurst 1987
Swinton	1745-68	Slipwares, flatware, hollow ware	Cox and Cox 2001
Silkstone	1754-1802	Slipwares, Brown glazed coarsewares	Lawrence 1974
Bolsterstone	c. 1778-1796	Slipware, Black glazed coarsewares	Ashurst 1987

Table 1. From the 2002 unpublished Cumberpatch report:
Medieval and post-medieval pottery from Sheffield Manor.

Fox's pottery, given the early date and in the range of wares produced, is certainly of regional and possibly of national significance. It was at this time, early in the 18th century, that the Manor fell out of use as a manor house, was partly demolished and domestic dwellings and industrial establishments were set up at the site. It is also a time when the pottery production was changing from small cottage production sites to larger industrial establishments.

IV KILN TECHNOLOGY

The Hexagonal shape of the room in which Fox's circular kiln was placed was ideal, with the walls of the room (Fig. 9). This allowed control of the draught through the kiln and subsequently the temperature to ensure successful firing (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Kiln as it was being excavated, shown in relation to room walls.



Fig. 10. Photograph of the kiln floor taken just after a rain shower, highlighting the burnt red of the brick and floor tile.

The clinker found on the kiln gave some indication on the fuel used for the kiln. Clinker is a form of slag produced by the burning of coal. It is likely that the coal was sourced locally. The kiln probably had a clay dome shaped roof with vent holes, or possibly a chimney, to let the heat escape.

The pottery assemblage also included a large number of saggars (Fig. 11) and other kiln equipment as well as a quantity of wasters (Fig. 12). A fuller study of the kiln, together with the pottery and kiln equipment and waste, will provide insights to the technology employed by Fox.



Fig. 11. Excavated Saggars



Fig. 12. Crucible (left) and Waster (right)

V. CONCLUSIONS:

Three rooms ("Sites") were excavated in 1971, all located at the North end of the Long Gallery in the hexagonal shaped structure and the adjoining tower known as "Wolsey's Tower". A number of conclusions were made, based on this season's excavation:

- Structural finds from Wolsey's Tower demonstrated it to have been constructed in the 16th century. No earlier building activity was detected in this area.
- The construction of the Garderobe in Site XII was sophisticated for its day.
- The most significant find, however, was the pottery kiln discovered in the hexagonal room. This was confirmation of industrial activity – pottery production – at the site in early 18th century. All three rooms showed substantial evidence of this activity. Pottery production at the site is of great importance as it marks the beginnings of the change from small country potteries to a more industrial scale of production.

The current report is based on the published summary report with additional information contained in unpublished annual report for 1971 in the Manor Lodge archive at Museums Sheffield. The field notebooks provided further detailed information on the progress of excavation. The report written by C. Cumberpatch in 2002 is an appendix attached to an unpublished assessment of the Manor Lodge Archive written by P. Beswick. This material is also available in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). Photographs, unless otherwise indicated, are part of the Museum's Manor Lodge archive and are copyright of Museums Sheffield, many of them can be seen on the *I Dig Sheffield* web-site: <http://www.idigsheffield.org.uk/index.asp?menu=expl>. The site plan was extrapolated from the final 1980 plan and based on description of work carried out in 1971.

V. REFERENCES:

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