

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

‘GREENACRES’, THE STREET, WEYBREAD

WYB 055

A REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2004

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Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

© August 2004

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List of Contributors

All Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS hereafter) unless otherwise stated.

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Acknowledgements

No archaeological condition was attached to the planning consent in this case. Consequently the recovery of the artefacts and information was completely down to the goodwill of the owners of the property, Mr and Mrs Johan van den berg-Hider, who conscientiously reported their discovery to the SCCAS Field Team.

Finds processing was carried out by Sue Anderson and Kelly Powell, who also wrote the specialist finds report.

Summary

Weybread, 'Greenacres', The Street, Weybread (TM 2497 7975; WYB 055). During the construction of an extension to the rear of the property a large quantity of pottery was reported to the SCCAS by the owners of the house. No archaeological condition had been attached to the planning consent and the goodwill of the owners enabled the SCCAS Field Team to record the finds. A single large pit was recorded and over 300 sherds (representing more than 50 vessels) of late medieval and transitional ware pottery were recovered from its partially excavated fill. Jug forms predominated and it is likely that the majority were wasters from a single firing, suggesting that a kiln site lies close by.

(Rhodri Gardner, SCCAS, report no: 2004/91)

SMR information

Planning application no. None
Date of fieldwork: 14th June 2004
Grid Reference: TM 2497 7975
Funding body: N/A

Introduction

Construction of an extension to the rear of 'Greenacres', The Street, Weybread did not have an archaeological condition attached to its planning permission. However, during excavation of the required strip foundations the owners of the property (Mr and Mrs Johan van den berg-Hider) became concerned when a quantity of pottery was recovered. They then contacted the SCCAS Field Team to enquire about whether they should continue with the work and a site visit was arranged.

The site lies on level ground at *c.* 47m AOD and is centred approximately on NGR TM 2497 7975. The site's location suggested significant archaeological potential as it is directly alongside the Roman road that runs north-west from Peasenhall to Pulham in Norfolk. This location is also notable for the large number of known medieval sites in the vicinity. For example, within a 500m radius the following sites are recorded in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR):

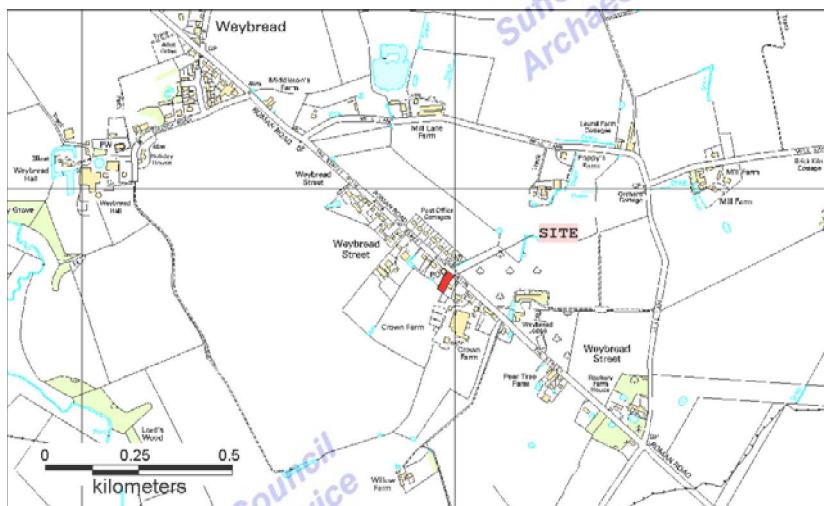


Figure 1. Site location

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- **WYB 019** A medieval moated site at Poppy's Farm *c.* 270m to the north-east.
- **WYB 015** Medieval kiln debris found in 1970 *c.* 480m to the south-east along The Street.
- **WYB 004** Medieval pottery found in 1976 *c.* 200m to the south-east in the ditch parallel to the lane that runs to the south-west between Crown Farm and Pear Tree Farm.
- **WYB 005** Medieval pottery found *c.* 420m to the west in the 11 acre field belonging to Fonnereau Farm.
- **WYB 006** A second findspot of medieval pottery in the 11 acre field belonging to Fonnereau Farm. In this case *c.* 190m west of the present site.
- **WYB 051** A dense scatter of late medieval pottery found *c.* 400m to the north-west.

Although these known sites are numerous, none is within sufficient proximity to have alerted the Planning Authority to the fact that any planning decision should have involved archaeological consultation. Therefore planning permission was granted without an archaeological condition. Consequently the information recorded and recovery of artefacts from the site was only possible due to the good will of the site's owners, to whom gratitude is acknowledged. It is also recognised that the finds remain the property of the landowners, Johan and Dawn van den berg-Hider.

Methodology

A single visit was made on the 14th of June 2004. Strip foundations had already been excavated using small tracked 360^o mechanical excavator (minidigger). All trenches were 0.7m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.2m below the existing ground level. A total length of *c.* 15m of trench was observed. The base of the foundation trenches and upstanding soil sections were hand cleaned where necessary to further define any archaeological features or

stratigraphy. All the deposits encountered were individually described and allocated context numbers in a continuous numbering system. The site was assigned the SMR number WYB 055. A written and drawn record of all recorded deposits was maintained throughout. The finds were examined by in-house staff, with the data then input onto a Microsoft Access97 database (see Appendix 1).



Figure 2. Site detail

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Results

Throughout the trench a uniform 0.45m thick layer of topsoil (0002) was recorded. This was a soft mid greyish brown loam with moderate modern brick/tile fragments and occasional flint pebbles. In most of the trench this directly overlay undisturbed natural Boulder Till deposits.

In the western corner of the trench a large pit, 0004, was partially revealed. This was some 4.8m long and at least 0.7m wide, as it extended for the full width of the trench. It was only excavated for 0.85m and appeared to have smooth near vertical sides, although its shape was impossible to discern given the small amount of the feature exposed. A single fill, 0005, was recorded within the pit. This was very soft dark grey silty clay with abundant large pottery fragments (including several near-complete pots) along with occasional burnt/fired clay pieces.

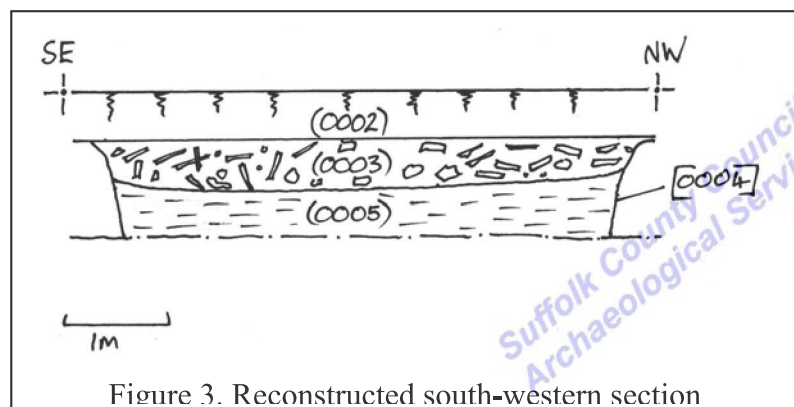


Figure 3. Reconstructed south-western section

The pit was sealed by make-up deposit 0003, a soft mid brownish grey silty clay with frequent crushed brick/tile fragments and occasional modern pottery (e.g. ceramic marmalade pots). This

most likely represented an attempt to consolidate the “soft spot” caused by the presence of pit 0004 that had later slumped into the upper level of the pit itself.

The Finds

by Sue Anderson, July 2004

Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected during the building works. All finds were assigned to context 0005, but it is clear that a few are later and probably intrusive.

| Find type | No. | Wt/g |
|------------------|------------|-------------|
| Pottery | 305 | 19186 |
| CBM | 3 | 187 |
| Fired clay | 28 | 261 |
| Glass | 2 | 135 |
| Coal? | 1 | 83 |

Table 1. Finds quantities.

Pottery

Introduction

A large assemblage of pottery from a single pit was analysed. Of the 305 sherds, 303 were late medieval and transitional ware (LMT), one was part of a late 19th/early 20th century English stoneware marmalade jar (ESW), and one was unidentified but possibly a piece of kiln furniture. A full quantification is included in Appendix 1.

Methodology

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (eve). A full quantification by fabric, context and feature is available in the archive. All fabric codes were assigned from the Suffolk post-Roman fabric series, which includes Norfolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Midlands fabrics, as well as imported wares. A $\times 20$ microscope was used for fabric identification and characterisation. Form terminology follows MPRG (1998). Recording uses a system of letters for fabric codes together with number codes for ease of sorting in database format. SCCAS pottery quantification forms were used and the results were input onto an Access 97 database.

Late Medieval and Transitional Ware

As far as possible, sherds were grouped to estimate a minimum number of vessels, which suggested that at least 57 were represented in this assemblage. Unassigned sherds were not included in this count, but they could add a further 52 vessels to the total. However, it is likely that many belong to some of the less complete vessels. The eve for this group was 11.9. The assemblage included two near-complete jugs, and a further four jugs were at least two-thirds complete, although broken.

The majority of vessels in this assemblage were jugs (Plate 1). They were fairly uniform in form and design, although varying in size and decoration. It is likely that they represent the wasters from a single kiln firing. The fabric consisted of a medium sandy matrix with few other inclusions. The sand grains were rounded and white or clear, the white ones being visible to the naked eye. Most were well-sorted and around 0.25mm in diameter, but occasionally they were much coarser (up to 1-3mm in diameter).

The basic form was a globular vessel with sagging base and collared rim. Strap handles were applied just below the collar at the top end, and at the widest part of the body at the bottom end. They were all plain and varied from narrow to wide straps. The width of the handle appeared to bear some relationship with the size of the vessel, with narrower handles generally on smaller jugs, but this was not always the case. Most of these vessels were reduced to a light or dark grey,

but a few had pale orange or buff surfaces and this was probably the intended colour. Lead glaze was applied to the upper half of the vessel and was generally green or brownish in colour, except where the vessel was badly overfired, in which case it was sometimes dark red (Plate 2).

To this basic design was applied a limited range of decorative techniques. All jugs had a central band of combed or incised horizontal lines around the widest part of the body, and this was probably functional — it would have aided attachment of the base of the handle. At least fourteen vessels in this assemblage had been painted with a red slip which, under the green glaze, appeared dark brown (Plate 3). The design was always the same, consisting of vertical lines either side of the handle, a central vertical line below the spout, and curvilinear lines to either side extending from a horizontal line at the waist, and another smaller one closer to the neck. Most of the other jugs were plain, but one had incised decoration in the form of a very crudely drawn wavy line which had oval rings at each of the points (Plate 4). Three bases had thumb areas which would have been at three places around the base; only one was complete and had groups of six, seven and eight thumbings (Plate 5).

The smaller of the two complete jugs was 190mm high, 170mm in diameter at the widest part, and had a rim diameter of c.90mm. The larger was 240mm tall, 210mm in diameter and had a rim diameter of 100mm. A larger jug was incomplete, but was at least 270mm in diameter, again with a rim diameter of 100mm. Of the 24 jugs for which rim measurements could be recorded, eight were 90-95mm, thirteen were c.100mm, two were 110mm and one was 120mm.

Fragments of other vessel types were identified, but these were generally represented by single sherds and were probably residual (Plate 6). It seems unlikely that they were wasters from the same firing which produced the large group of jugs. Identifiable forms were all typical of the LMT industry and included a handled jar with incised wavy line decoration, a jar with thumb decoration below the rim, a small dish and a bung-hole cistern.

A small fragment of a possible kiln spacer ring was also recovered (Plate 7), although this is in a fabric similar to the local medieval wares and may simply be a fragment of handle (although it would be unusually narrow for this purpose). It has slight thumbing on one side and a spot of clear glaze. However, it is not as highly fired as would be expected for kiln furniture. A piece of tile may also be kiln furniture as it is covered in thick brown glaze.

Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and fired clay

One fragment of post-medieval peg tile and one fragment of a late brick, both in medium sandy red fabrics containing ferrous inclusions, were collected. There was also one piece of grey/black brick or tile which may have been part of a kiln.

Twenty-eight fragments of buff/pink fired clay with abundant straw impressions and chalk tempering may have been part of a kiln or oven dome (Plate 8).

Miscellaneous

One fragment of burnt coal and two pieces of a pale green glass bottle were also collected. The bottle was moulded with the word 'WORKS' on the side and is probably a late 19th or early 20th century milk bottle.

Discussion of the finds evidence

The LMT industry was originally described based on finds in Norwich (Jennings 1981), and all the vessels found at this site are typical of the forms illustrated there. Some of the decorative techniques from this site have not previously been published however. Although it has often been suggested that Norwich was the main market for this industry, LMT has also been found in

most of the major Suffolk towns. It is present in Ipswich, although there the Essex industries were significant competitors. It is interesting to note that the form of curvilinear decoration on some of the jugs in this assemblage is similar to examples found in Colchester (Cotter 2000), although there the red-firing pots were decorated with white slip designs.

LMT pottery kilns have been excavated at Hopton and Rickinghall (Anderson et al. 1996), and several potential production sites have been identified both in the parishes around Rickinghall and along the Waveney Valley. No kilns have yet been identified in Weybread, although wasters have been found at other sites in the village. This assemblage is likely to be very close to a kiln site as it is unlikely that imperfect pots would have been transported very far for disposal. The presence of other residual vessels and fragments of fired clay, which presumably entered the pit from scattered deposits close by, must add further weight to this interpretation.

Conclusions

A single substantial pit was recorded less than 3m from the rear of the extant building within strip foundation trenches excavated for the construction of an extension. A large quantity of late medieval and transitional ware pottery was recovered. Jug forms were dominant and a number could be identified as kiln wasters. Small fragments of possible kiln furniture and a spacer ring were also recorded. It was notable that the pit contained no other finds such as animal bone, which might be expected in a domestic refuse context. The evidence therefore clearly suggests the presence of a kiln nearby, with pit 0004 being dug to dispose of the unwanted products of an unsuccessful firing.

References

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Rhodri Gardner, for SCCAS, August 2004.



Plate 1. Four of the more complete jugs from Weybread.



Plate 2. Overfired waster.



Plate 3. Brown slip decoration under green/brown glaze.



Plate 4. Incised decoration on upper half of body.



Plate 5. Jug base showing thumbing technique and surplus glaze.



Plate 6. Fragments of other vessel types (jars, handled jar and dish).

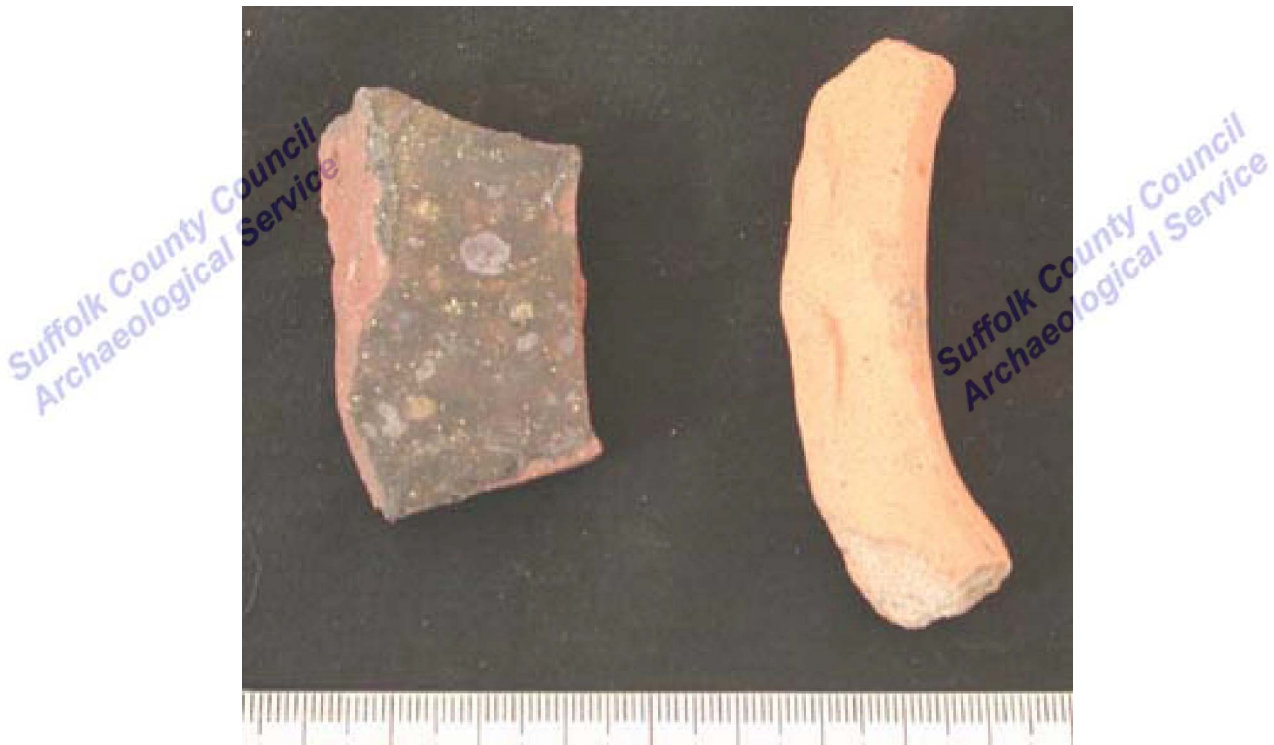


Plate 7. Possible kiln tile fragment and spacer ring fragment.

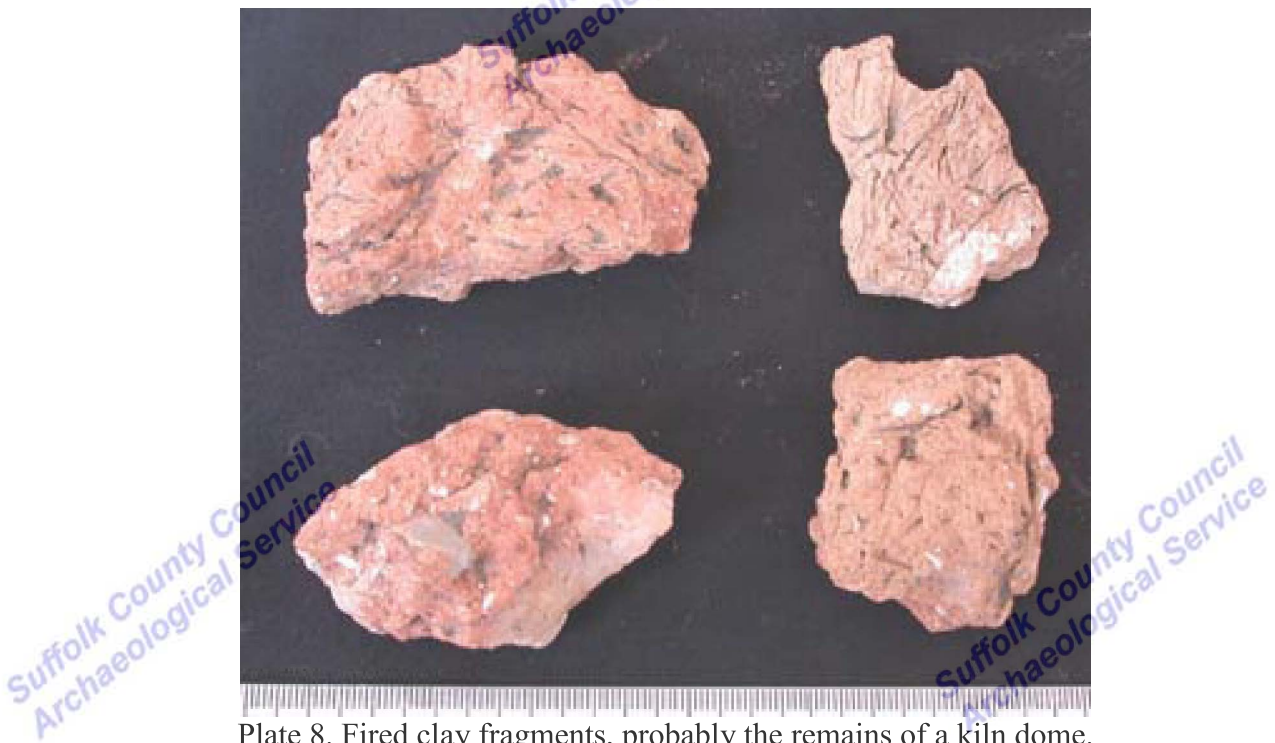


Plate 8. Fired clay fragments, probably the remains of a kiln dome.

Appendix 1

Pottery by Fabric

| Fabric | Type | Form | Rim | Base | Handle | No. | Wt/g | MNV | Rim Diam | Rim % | Decoration | Glaze int ext | Ab. | Oxid/reduc | Draw | Notes | Spotdate |
|--------|------|------|-----|------|--------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------|-------------------------|---------------|-----|------------|------|--|-----------|
| ESW | R | JR | | | | 1 | 89 | 1 | | | | W W | | | | straight-sided marmalade jar | 19th/20th |
| | | | | | | 1 | 89 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| LMT | B | | | S | | 1 | 14 | 1 | | | | G | | O | | | |
| | B | | | S | | 1 | 152 | 1 | | | SG, TB x 8 in one third | | | R | | | |
| | B | | | S | | 1 | 125 | 1 | | | SG ext | | | R | | | |
| | B | | | S | | 3 | 26 | 1 | | | SG ext | | | O | | | |
| | B | | | S | | 8 | 318 | | | | SG | G/B | | R | | c.5 vessels, all overfired | |
| | B | | | S | | 1 | 81 | 1 | | | SG ext | DB | | O | | | |
| | B | | | S | | 4 | 206 | 1 | | | | ? | | O | | internal glaze not properly set | |
| | BD | CS | | S | | 4 | 406 | 1 | | | thumbled bunghole | G | | O | | 1-2 vessels | |
| | BU | | | S | | 4 | 160 | 1 | | | SG | | | R | | | |
| | D | | | | | 4 | 106 | 1 | | | COHL | B | | R | | overfired | |
| | D | | | | | 15 | 82 | | | | | G | | R | | various vessels | |
| | D | | | | | 3 | 103 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | G | | O | | | |
| | D | | | | | 6 | 204 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | G | | O | | | |
| | D | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | SLLB RILL | Y | | O | | | |
| | D | | | | | 1 | 4 | 1 | | | | G | + | R | | | |
| | D | | | | | 1 | 62 | 1 | | | SLLB | G | | R | | | |
| | D | | | | | 21 | 638 | | | | SG | G/B | | R | | all very overfired, various vessels | |
| | D | | | | | 2 | 43 | 1 | | | | ? | | O | | internal glaze not properly set | |
| | D | | | | | 4 | 59 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | G | | O | | | |
| | D | | | | | 2 | 162 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | G | | R | | | |
| | D | | | | | 1 | 38 | 1 | | | | G | | O | | flatware? | |
| | DB | JG? | | S | | 9 | 450 | 1 | | | IWL with incised rings | G | | O | Y | | |
| | DB | JG | | S | | 8 | 479 | 1 | | | COHL | G | | R | | | |
| | DH | | | | NS | 4 | 125 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | G | | O | | finer fabric, prob 1 vessel | |
| | DH | JG | | | NS | 2 | 240 | 1 | | | COHL | G/B | | R | | overfired, warped | |
| | DH | JG | | | WS | 12 | 865 | 1 | | | SLLB COHL | B | | R | | overfired, prob 1 vessel | |
| | DU | | | | | 15 | 299 | | | | SLLB on some | G | | O | | | |
| | FP | JG | H1 | S | NS | 1 | 1001 | 1 | 90 | 80 | COHL | G/B | | R | Y | small globular jug, near-complete | |
| | FP | JG | H1 | S | NS | 1 | 1569 | 1 | 100 | 85 | IHL band of 3 lines | G/B | | R | Y | medium globular jug, near-complete, kiln scar on body, impression of another rim at base | |
| | FP | JG | H1 | S | NS | 11 | 1195 | 1 | 110 | 80 | COHL, TB (6 thumbs | G | | R | Y | medium jug, about a third of body missing | |
| | FP | JG | H1 | S | NS | 17 | 1224 | 1 | 90 | 100 | COHL | B/G | | R | Y | medium jug, prob 1 vessel | |
| | FP | JG | H1 | S | NS | 13 | 1230 | 1 | 95 | 100 | COHL | G | | O | Y | medium jug, burnt glaze | |
| | H | JG | | | NS | 1 | 31 | 1 | | | | G | | R | | | |