

8. 44-50 Derby Street, Prescott, Merseyside (Site 5).

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Site

The site lies on the north side of Derby Street, west of the junction with Knowsley Park Lane, Prescott, within a Conservation Area (Fig. 1.3). It was originally occupied by a terrace of four small cottages, built in 1830. These buildings had been scheduled for demolition and reconstruction as four housing units by Knowsley Borough Council. A survey of the site revealed original foundations which were insufficient to support the proposed reconstructed buildings, and new, deeper foundations were required.

In 1981 contractors' excavations for these new foundations revealed quantities of pottery sherds, which had apparently been used to infill the original (i.e. 1830) foundation trenches. This latter was the only stratified material recovered from the site.

Finds consisted of sherds of rather coarse black-glazed red ware, suggesting a range of at least four different vessel forms; sherds of salt-glazed stoneware, mainly from large "flagon" type vessels; and from the stratified material, large sherds of extremely coarse saggar rims, bases and bodies. Very few sherds of black-glazed fine ware were found. Finger-impressed fired clay, separators and stilts were also recovered.

All the finds are deposited with the Prescott Museum.

The Pottery

Earthenware - Coarse Black-Glazed

Body sherds	121
Rims	49
Bases	32
Handles	5
Clay spacers	2
Clay spacer adhering to rim	1
	—
TOTAL	210

Earthenware - Fine Black-Glazed

Body sherds	3
Rims	7
Bases	3
	—
TOTAL	13

Black-Glazed Redwares Total 223 sherds

Coarse Black-Glazed Redwares - Rim Types

1 "Pan Mug" Type

Rims of this type recovered from the site often have horizontal strap handles still attached. The width of the rims vary and diameters fall mainly between 32 and 37cm. One rim of 48cm diameter compares almost exactly with that of a complete profile found at "Twist's House" (Site 28).

The run of glaze on some recovered rims, together with rim indentations on finger-moulded clay spacers one of which still adheres to a rim may indicate that the pots were stacked rim to rim during firing.

2 "Pancheon" Type (deep)

This type displays some variation in width of rim and diameter of vessel and slight variation in rim form. Some of these rims compare with that of a complete profile recovered from "Twist's House" site (cf. Fig. 12.3, p. 98).

3 Large "Pitcher" Type

A rim and handle compare with a complete profile from "Twist's House" (cf. Fig. 12.5, p. 102).

4 "Pancheon" Type, but smaller, shallower

A complete profile of this type was recovered from the site. Three rims not conforming to these types were recovered.

Fine Black-Glazed Redware - Rim Types

Only seven fine ware rims were recovered. These were of three types. One "bowl" type rim compares to that of a complete profile of a fine ware bowl from the "Twist's House" site.

<u>Salt Glazed Stoneware</u>	<u>Nos.</u>
Body sherds	44
Rims	11
Bases	35
	—
TOTAL	90

Base diameters

5.2cm	1
6.0cm	2
7.0cm	1
14.0cm	7
16.0cm	11
18.0cm	9
20.0cm	4

Neck diameters

2.2cm	3
2.4cm	2
2.6cm	3
2.7cm	2
2.8cm	1

The majority of the sherds of stoneware recovered appear to belong to large "flagon" type vessels. Many of these vessels exhibit incised ring decoration in the area of the handle. There are slight variations in rim and neck forms.

Base diameters of these stoneware vessels range from 5.2cm (one small vessel) to 20cm. Internal neck diameters range between 2.2cm and 2.8cm. The number of rings in the incised decoration also varies.

Stratified Material

Stratified material all came from the north, south and east trenches. This consisted of large sherds of very coarse salt-glazed saggars, some complete profiles of unglazed earthenware saggars and a large

quantity of finger moulded fired clay fragments, probably separators or bungs.

Stoneware Saggars

Bodies	2
Rims	10
Bases	1
TOTAL	13

Only one complete profile of salt-glazed stoneware saggars was recovered, which measured as follows:

Rim - internal diameter 30cm; external diameter 36cm

Base - internal diameter 24cm; external diameter 30cm

Height approximately 32cm

This complete profile has oval apertures approximately 13cm high, at least two, probably three, situated close to the base.

The internal rim diameters of the rest of the salt-glazed stoneware saggars range from 24cm to 36cm. The external diameters of the bases are approximately 32cm.

Unglazed Earthenware Saggars

Complete profiles	5
Rims	1
Bases	8
Lids	1
Props	10
TOTAL	25

In addition, 42 pieces of fired, finger moulded clay, some with evidence of glazing were recovered. These are probably mostly separators or bungs.

Five complete profiles of earthenware saggars were recovered.

Discussion

The finds from this site raise a number of questions. First, it is not at all clear from which pottery the material, which was obviously redeposited, came. The

bulky nature of the waste recovered from the site would seem to argue a nearby source for the material. The nearest known production site would appear to be the Brook Pottery, which was situated south of the site on the opposite side of Derby Street. At the moment nothing is known about the type of vessels produced at the Brook Pottery, but it was in production at the relevant date (Davey 1978a, 56-7).

Comparisons can, however, be made with other material found in the area. The rims of some of the coarse black-glazed redware and one fine ware rim found on this site can be compared with those of some complete profiles recovered from "Twist's House", a site two or three hundred yards to the north (Site 28). As it was possible to reassemble a number of almost complete vessels from "Twist's House", the pottery from that site would appear to be from an undisturbed dump. The production site of the "Twist's House" pottery has not yet been identified.

A large proportion of the recovered material consists of saggars of extremely coarse fabric with very large inclusions, coarse black-glazed earthenware and fired clay spacers. It is interesting to speculate how far this material was pre-selected, either by the 1830 builder or originally, by the potter. It is perhaps possible that some types of wasted material were re-usable, for example wasted fine wares may have been ground down for use as grog. Selection by either builder or potter could perhaps explain why so little fine ware was recovered from the site.

It is assumed that fine wares were produced at the source site, as earthenware saggars were recovered which were too shallow to have contained the coarse black-glazed redwares. These shallow saggars could have been used to hold small fine ware vessels during firing.

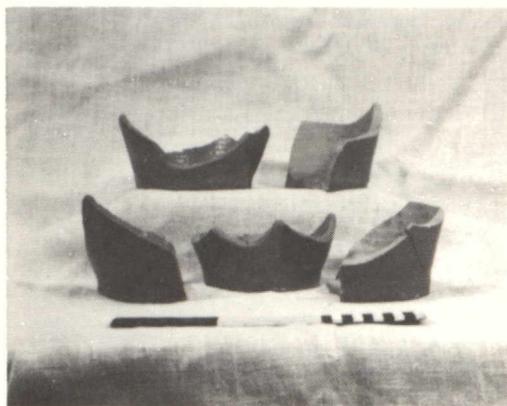
Examination of the run of glaze on "pan-mug" type vessel fragments and rim indentations on fired clay spacers suggest that these particular vessels were fired stacked rim to rim and then, possibly, base to base.

The recovered fragments of large salt glazed stoneware saggars pose a problem as to their use. The majority of stoneware fragments belonged to large "flagon" type vessels. It seems unlikely that such large vessels were fired in these saggars, yet only two bases of small stoneware vessels were found.

A number of complete necks of flagons were found, many of them displaying incised ring decoration. The decoration varied in numbers of rings, depth of incision and width between incisions. There did not appear to be any correlation between variety of decoration and the size of vessel.

It would appear that wasted pottery and kiln furniture was used as foundation material for other buildings in the immediate area. A former stable block to the rear of nos. 44-50 Derby Street was refloored a few years ago by the owner, Mr Lumley, of 52 Derby Street. Mr Lumley discovered large quantities of pottery waste beneath the original floor surface. This material is very similar to that recovered from this site. Whether this particular use of pottery waste was common elsewhere in Prescott remains to be seen, but it was obviously used for more than one building in this area.

The production site of the Derby Street material cannot now be identified. These finds, however, indicate a range of pottery produced, certainly in Prescott and presumably close to the site and give a *terminus ante quem* for the vessel types recovered.



8.1 Saltglazed stoneware flagons