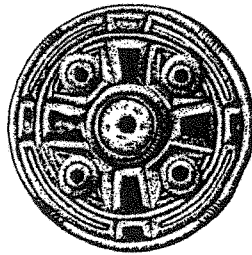


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Potters Lane, Ely
Post-Excavation Updated Project Design**

Paul Spoerry

January 2000

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. PXA17

Commissioned by English Heritage

Potters Lane, Ely

Updated Project Design

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Cascade chart

Site plan

Location plan

Example ceramic quantification form

Potters Lane, Ely 1995 (ELYPL95)

Updated Project Design

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1 Background

i) Original academic objectives

The research design for the fieldwork was of necessity minimal, it being a stock response to the need to design a small-scale evaluation. The recognition and dating of any archaeological deposits, and awareness of the potential for remains pertaining to ceramic manufacture, being the only stated objectives.

ii) Summary of results to date

The site is composed of two evaluation trenches within which occupation features and features backfilled with waste products from pottery manufacture were revealed.

Trench A

The majority of pottery from the site derives from four features excavated in Trench A. At least one of these may have been dug specifically for the disposal of pottery waste, the fill being composed of almost nothing else. The pottery in these features appears to be, almost without exception, examples of late medieval Ely ware, dating generally to the period 1350-1500. Ely ware is a term coined *after* this small excavation was executed.

Other finds from Trench A include a green-glazed roof tile and roof (peg?) and floor tiles in similar fabrics to the wasters, plus lumps of kiln lining and unfired and fired clay. The presence of tiles may suggest their manufacture here as well, a point that needs clarification in the analysis stage.

Trench B

A smaller amount of pottery, some of it apparently seconds or wasters, was recovered from Trench B. This mostly derives from a clayey silt dump layer deposited adjacent to a small group of features (a pit, ditch and beamslot) which themselves contained Ely ware and other cultural material. The cut features were probably primarily derived from occupation, rather than being specifically related to ceramic production. The pottery-rich dump layer adjacent may have been make-up for a lost surface/structure, but the inclusion of so much pottery, including wasters, into this dump shows that manufacture waste was utilised during the occupation period and that ceramic production had probably previously occurred on, or very close to, the site. Whether the ground make-up and occupation represents domestic waste and structures associated with a

continuation in manufacture, or whether it represents a hiatus in production, is not known. All features in this trench appear to date to the period 1200-1350 and therefore provide a sizeable assemblage of pottery waste from an earlier phase of manufacture, when compared with Trench A.

The pottery from the dump layer in Trench B is probably in secondary deposition, but the many large pieces and fresh breaks suggest that it was laid down quite quickly. The pottery from features in Trench B is mostly composed of large pieces, with some almost complete vessels, and is probably primary waste from the immediate post-firing period.

Other finds from Trench B are unremarkable, mostly represented by a small box of animal bone, and imply domestic activity.

2 Summary Statement of Potential

2.1 Material of critical importance to interpretation of the site (as defined in the assessment report)

- i) The stratigraphic data, for which a draft report is complete.
- ii) The pottery assemblage, 44.7kg of kiln waste. This derives from 21 excavated contexts. Of these six contexts, 10.4kg, are medieval, ten contexts, 26.8kg, are late medieval and five contexts, 7.5kg, are mixed or early post-medieval in date.
- iii) The tile and kiln waste products, that may demonstrate ceramic building materials were also manufactured here. There is 2485g of fired clay/kiln waste and 3037g of brick, some of which may be kiln superstructure. There is also 8624g of tile (mostly roof, a little floor), of a fabric range so similar to pottery vessels that it must be made locally, if not in the same kilns.

2.2 Perceived academic potential of the above

- i) The stratigraphic data is fundamental to recognising any sequence on-site, provided it is considered critically alongside dating provided by the ceramic assemblage. Most of this work is completed.
- ii) The pottery is the most important element in this project, the latter being specifically designed to analyse and represent this assemblage in its regional context. The production and distribution of Ely ware is a fundamental element in study of internal trade and economic contact across the Fenland; it being the only identifiably Fenland artefactual category currently known for this period. Questions regarding dating, duration of production, the range of products and stylistic affinities will all be addressed by a study of this material.
- iii) Evidence that ceramic building materials were also manufactured here helps to widen the consideration of industry and economy in this part of medieval Ely to

include a less portable, and more often commissioned, artefact class, which was primarily related to building construction, rather than domestic consumption.

3 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Research Design

i) Specific Research Questions

1. What date(s) can be assigned to the pottery production here?
2. What is the range of vessel types represented?
3. What can be learned about the potting technology used here?
4. What stylistic affinities can be recognised when placed in context with other production sites/traditions?
5. Can the fabric(s) used here be adequately described and recognised elsewhere?
6. Do the features in Trench B represent domestic activity related, or unrelated, to ceramic manufacture?
7. Were ceramic building materials also produced close by?

At the local level, the Potters Lane site represents the only assemblage of Ely ware products available for investigation from the production site itself. Robinson's model for the archaeological deposits of Ely (1993) includes recognition that investigation of the economic zone between the Monastic precinct and the waterside, of which this site forms part, is key to building a corpus of data on which to base interpretation of the town's developing fortunes following the putative 12th century river diversion.

Recent study of ceramics from medieval sites in several towns on the Fenland river system (Cambridge, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Peterborough, Swavesey, Wisbech, as well as Ely) has resulted in the recognition of probable Ely products across the region. This fen-wide distribution, and its relationships with other activities, can only be fully explored against a background of solid investigation, characterisation and, hopefully, dating of the pottery at the kiln source. It seems very probable that Grimston software, as defined at Kings Lynn (Clarke and Carter 1977) is in fact also Ely ware.

The Research Frameworks for the Eastern Counties 2 (Agenda and Strategy) recognises industrial production as a key area requiring further investigation in medieval towns in the region, in respect both the *social organisation* and *economy* research topics.

The 1994 EH/MPRG report by M. Mellor 'Medieval Ceramic Studies in England' identified Cambridgeshire as a 'ceramic void'. It also laid down basic requirements for future medieval ceramic research which include producing more published information on production sites, especially in areas like Cambridgeshire where such information is virtually absent.

ii) Data collection and objectives

Data collection will be primarily identification and quantification of ceramic fabric and form traits, in the normal manner for material of this period. The analysis of this data will enable most elements of Research Questions 1-5 to be answered.

Study of the site stratigraphic documents will help resolve Research Question 6, whilst basic study of the other ceramic artefact types will enable Research Question 7 to be addressed.

iii) Integration with other research / linked projects

This project is proposed as the first element in three linked projects, the second will study the phenomenon of Ely ware at consumption sites in the town and as distributed across the region, whilst the third will characterise ceramic manufacture, use and distribution around the Fenland basin and within the limits of the modern County of Cambridgeshire. All of these projects build on the opportunity presented by the explosion in ceramic assemblages from developer-funded sites across Cambridgeshire, and they address, at different levels, the problem of a lack of synthesis and an increased fragmentation of data and knowledge that is an effect of greater levels of work executed by increasingly diverse organisations.

iv) Integration with non-archaeological research

The second and third projects in the linked proposal offer potential for the study of historic documentation with a view to recognising references to pottery production, movement and consumption in Ely, and Cambridgeshire as a whole. There is limited scope for such additional work in this first proposal, provided that appropriate documentation is assessed as part of the second, Ely ware project.

All work that addresses the use of, and movement through, the Fenland waterways, needs to incorporate awareness of up to date information regarding changes and developments in the river system.

3.2 Publication and Presentation.

The report will mostly consist of a consideration of the pottery assemblage as this is the reason the project has been taken forward. Prior to this, however, the basic site narrative, explaining the urban and modern development context, the results from trenching and a general interpretation of the excavated sequence. will be presented, with a location plan.

There will then be an introduction to the pottery assemblage, followed by a discussion of its content and its affinities; cultural, stylistic and technological, and its place in the regional assemblage. Where there are differences that appear to have temporal significance, if the variation can be quantified and presented in tabular form, this will be done. In addition a summary table of the ware attributes, with a temporal dimension if possible, will be produced to act as a simple *aide memoir* for pottery analysts.

Each recognised vessel type will be described and defined and all fabrics described verbally, and presented as thin sections where appropriate. The full range of pottery vessels types, and stylistic details will be illustrated, and photographs of surface treatments and details used where appropriate.

Any evidence for ceramic building material manufacture will be produced as separate sections at the end of the textual, descriptive and illustrated sections, as appropriate.

Bibliography, Acknowledgements.

The list below is a very rough estimate.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Intro | 250 words |
| Stratigraphic context | 500 words |
| Intro to pottery | 250 words |
| Assemblage content description | 500 words |
| | 2 tables |
| Style and technology | 1000 words |
| | c.10 photos |
| Vessel category descriptions | 1000 words |
| Fabric descriptions | 500 words |
| | thin section photographs |
| Evidence for ceramic building materials production; all aspects including fabric description | 500 words |
| Conclusions; affinities, duration | 500 words |
| | 1 table |
| Pottery illustrations | 250 |
| Pottery illustration text | 250 entries |
| Other objects illustrations and text | 23 entries |
| c 5,000 words | |

4 Methods Statement

- 4.1 All pottery from this site will be fully quantified by weight, count and rim EVES, individual entries being inputted into a data base using a standard form (see example). There will, however, be a difference in emphasis from the normal approach on non-production sites, whereby technological and stylistic traits will be described in greater detail, with all differing examples being fed into a corpus of types and styles. Pottery *form* information is inputted using codes conforming to types identified in the MPRG Guide to the Classification of ceramic forms.

Pottery data will be directly inputted onto a database. The AFU's standard pottery quantification program (Dataease procedures) will be utilised for analysis of the assemblage.

Pottery will be counted, weighed, and rim EVES measured. Statistics will be investigated through use of these different methods before presentation as required.

Representative examples of each major fabric division will be subjected to thin section analysis as well as macroscopic description using a low-power binocular microscope.

Similar techniques of description will be applied to ceramic building materials, particularly in respect of fabric.

Pottery illustrations will be all drawn by one illustrator.

4.2 Health and Safety Statement

CCC AFU conforms to all appropriate Health and Safety legislation and guidance in the execution of Archaeological work. Risk Assessment is conducted at the outset of all new projects, with appropriate mitigation steps taken as part of this process. The AFU has an up to date Health and Safety policy which can be examined/ supplied on request.

5 Resources and Programming

5.1 Staffing and equipment

There will be three key AFU staff utilised in this project, plus an external thin section specialist.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Dr Paul Spoerry | Medieval Ceramics Specialist (Project Manager) Pottery specialist with research (incl. PhD) and publications stretching back over 15 years. |
| Ms Carole Fletcher | Ceramics Assistant / Finds Supervisor HND and Degree in Archaeology plus 9 years of fieldwork and, more recently, finds and pottery support for the AFU. |
| Mr Jon Cane | Illustrator (also a craft potter) Degree in Archaeology, several years fieldwork, several years illustration work in archaeology, plus several years as a craft potter. AFU illustrator for the last 3 years. |

The thin section specialist will be Dr Alan Vince. Dr Vince has recently conducted thin section and ICPS work, funded by English Heritage, on pottery from Forehill in Ely, which represent the products of this industry. Dr Vince has been able to describe the local product using a combination of thin section work and ICPS. The Potters Lane study will enable a comparison to be made between kiln waste and products.

Liaison with David Williams has confirmed his support for the continuing involvement of Dr Vince in this work.

The Specialist photographer will be Gwil Owen, photographic technician for the University of Cambridge McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

ii) Tasks

| Task No. | Task | Key Staff | Duration | Cost (£) |
|----------|--|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Identify/define fabrics | PS CF JC | 1 day 0.5d 0.5d | 133.1 46.85 54.55 |
| 2 | Thin section and ICPS programme | Consultant (+PS) | Up to 18 sections/samples | 378 |
| 3 | Identify/define form and style traits | PS CF JC | 3 days 0.5d 0.5d | 399.3 46.85 54.55 |
| 4 | Quantify pottery in line with 1 and 2 and place on database | CF | 12 days | 1124.4 |
| 5 | Analyse database | PS | 1 day | 133.1 |
| 6 | Study ceramic building materials | PS | 1 day | 133.1 |
| 7 | Write all text sections | PS | 2 days | 266.2 |
| 8 | Produce pottery and other illustrations Photograph selected pottery | JC Photo Specialist | 8 days 25 shots | 872.8 657.5 |
| 9 | Internal and external reading/editing | Field Unit Manager | 0.5 day | 90 |
| 10 | Respond to editorial (internal and external) | PS | 1 day | 133.1 |
| 11 | Project management/administration | PS | 3 days | 399.3 |

iii) Materials and equipment

No new purchasing is required, although a range of consumables, plus microscope, computer software and hardware, will be utilised.

5.2 Timetable

The suggested duration of all tasks is given in the table above.

The project gannt chart is attached.

Timeframe

Project initiation 1 March 2000

Tasks 1-4 Complete by mid April 2000

Tasks 5-8 Complete by mid May 2000

Tasks 9-10 Complete by mid June 2000

Publication draft submitted to EH for Publication Grant following completion of Ely ware project (late 2000).

5.3 Budget

Costs are calculated based on 99-2000 prices. The staff costs include a multiplier that accounts for non-productive time at a factor of 85/260 days per annum, on a pro-rata basis. This includes provision for all holidays, sick leave, training, maternity etc. Administrative overheads are calculated at 25% of in-house costs and 10% of external specialist costs. Equipment and consumable costs are calculated as 5% of itemised project costs and in this case represent the cost of bagging and boxing the assemblage to professional standards, wear and tear on optical equipment and general office provisioning. All overheads percentages represent pro-rata costs for the AFU based on budget projections.

The days required for each named staff member are divided by task as shown on the table in section 5.1 above. The totals for each individual are as follows:-

| Unit Staff | | Per day | Days | Cost | Total |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---------|------|--------|--------|
| FUM | | 180.0 | 0.5 | 90.0 | |
| PM | | 133.1 | 12.0 | 1597.4 | |
| ILL | | 109.1 | 9.0 | 982.3 | |
| SUP | | 93.7 | 11.0 | 1030.2 | |
| Total salary costs for project | | | | | 3699.9 |
| Specialist Fees | | | | | |
| Ceramics | per sample | 21.0 | 36.0 | 756.0 | |
| Photographer | per shot | 26.3 | 25.0 | 656.3 | |
| Total specialist fees for project | | | | | 1412.3 |

Non-staff costs

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Transport | 0.0 |
| Equipment consumables | 244.9 |
| Graphics materials | 30.0 |
| Plant/storage/accommodation | 0.0 |
| Hire | |
| Insurance | 0.0 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Total non-staff costs | 276.4 |
|-----------------------|-------|

Overheads

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Unit overheads @ 25% | 994.1 |
| Overhead on specialist fees @ 10% | 141.2 |

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Total overheads | 1135.3 |
|-----------------|--------|

Capital Equipment

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Description | 0.0 |
| Description | 0.0 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Total capital equipment | 0.0 |
|-------------------------|-----|

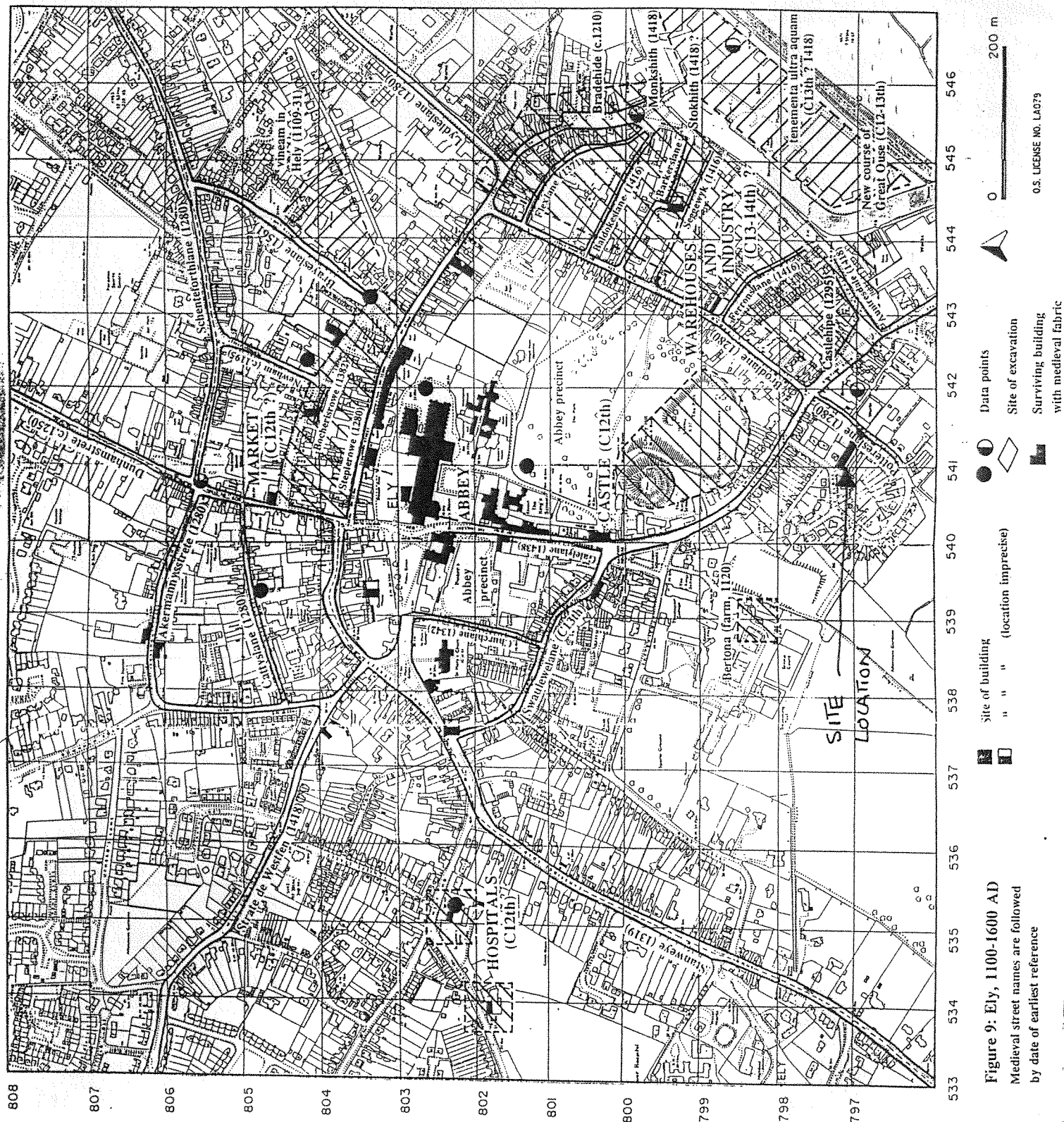
| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Gross total for project | 6591.2 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|

| Potters Lane, Ely; Cascade Diagram | | # | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 | Week 8 | Week |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Task No | Task | Resource | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | ID fabrics | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| | | CF | 0.5d | | | | | | | | |
| | | JC | 0.5d | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Thin section & ICPS | PS | 0.5d | | | | | | | | |
| | | Consult | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | ID form/style traits | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| | | CF | | | 0.5d | | | | | | |
| | | JC | | | 0.5d | | | | | | |
| 4 | Quantify pottery | CF | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Analyse database | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Study CBM | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | text sections | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Illustrations | JC | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Internal Editing | TM | | | | | | | | | |
| | External editing | Eng Her | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Edits | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Project man/admin | PS | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1.5 hours per week admin | | | | | | | | |

| 9 | Week 10 May | Week 11 | Week 12 | Week 13 | Week 14 June | full time | |
|---|----------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | | | | | part time | Task |
| | | | | | | | ID fabrics |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Thin section |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | ID form/style |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Quantify pott |
| | | | | | | | Analyse data |
| | | | | | | | Study CBM |
| | | | | | | | text sections |
| | | | | | | | Illustrations |
| | | | | | | | Internal Editi |
| | | | | | | | External editi |
| | | | | | | | Edits |
| | | | | | | | Project man/ |



EL YPL 95 Trench and feature location plan



| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|------------|------|-------------|--|----------|------|--------|----|
| Site: | WISMM96 | Context: | 0040 | Cut: | 3 | Group: | 001 | Phase: | 10 |
| Material: | MPOT | Fabric: | OSW | E. Date: | 1350 | L. Date: | 1500 | | |
| Vessel: | J | Form Code: | J5 | No. Sherds: | 35 | Weight: | 672 | | |
| Manufacture: | W | Abrasion: | | Deposit: | | | | | |
| Rim: | 1A | Rdiam: | 9 | REves: | 0.29 | | | | |
| Base: | | Bdiam: | | BEves: | | | | | |
| Other: | H1 | Int.ST: | | Ext.ST: | G | Decor: | RIL | | |
| Ref.No. | | Illust: | yes | Comments: | LOOK FOR XFITS. BONB/ LINC'S STYLE...REC | | | | |

example of computer-form for ceramic quantification

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