THE THREE MARINERS PUBLIC HOUSE, BRIDGE LANE, LANCASTER Lancashire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Oxford Archaeology North
May 2005

Tyler Designs
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SUMMARY

Following a request from Tyler Designs on behalf of Mitchell’s of Lancaster, Oxford Archaeology North undertook an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a foundation trench for a refuse bin storage yard at the Three Mariners public house, Bridge Lane, Lancaster, Lancashire, SD 476 619.

The watching brief was undertaken on the 2nd March 2005, within an area close to previous archaeological works at the site of the former Pye’s warehouse and Damside Street (OA North 2003). On the basis of previous archaeological interventions in the area, there was the possibility of encountering archaeological evidence for eighteenth century land reclamation along with industrial and warehouse development, but also of waterside activity dating to the Roman period.

Archaeological features observed within the 0.2m deep trench during the watching brief at the Three Mariners site included a demolished wall; the scar for this wall could be seen on the side of the main building and is probably a former garden wall. Evidence for a make-up layer was also observed, with the deposit producing bricks and stone, some post-medieval pottery, and animal bone.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to offer thanks to Tyler Designs for commissioning the project. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Three Mariners for their assistance on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jason Clarke. Jason Clarke compiled the report and Mark Tidmarsh produced the drawings while Jo Dawson examined the finds. The project was managed by Stephen Rowland who also edited the report along with Alan Lupton.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Tyler Designs on behalf of Mitchell’s of Lancaster to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the 2nd March 2005 at the site of the proposed location of the refuse bin storage area on the north-east corner of the Three Mariners public house, Bridge Lane, Lancaster (NGR SD 476 619).

1.2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 The Three Mariners public house is situated at the foot of Castle Hill. The pub probably dates to the mid- to late eighteenth century and is situated on former wetland which, at the time of building, had recently been reclaimed.

1.2.2 The geology of Lancaster consists predominantly of Silesian grey-brown or reddened medium to coarse-grained sandstones of the Pendle Grit Formation. The overlying drift geology deposits are somewhat mixed, and comprise predominantly fluvio-glacial sheet horizons of clayey sandy gravel and gravel (British Geological Survey 1992).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 Prehistoric: there is scant evidence for prehistoric activity in and around Lancaster. Bronze Age burials found in the immediate vicinity of King Street constitute some of the best evidence for this period, but only reflect the funerary activity and provide little information on settlement or other aspects of life (Penney 1981). Earlier Neolithic to Bronze Age finds of flints from Vicarage Fields show possible transient occupation of the area, which would potentially have exploited coastal and riverine resources and/or have reflected agricultural activity.

1.3.2 Roman: the Roman occupation of Lancaster originated in the late first century AD, when the military made use of the strategic position commanding a crossing point of the River Lune. A Roman fort was constructed on the hilltop where the castle and Priory Church now stand. Traditionally, the origin of this fort has been accredited to the Governorship of Agricola cAD 79, but recent work (Shotter 1996) has suggested that an earlier date, associated with Cerialis during the early AD 70s, is more likely. Following programmes of refurbishment during cAD 100 and AD 160s (Jones and Shotter 1988), the site was completely remodelled and a new fort was constructed during the fourth century on a different alignment, parallel to the river.

1.3.3 Recent evidence has highlighted the importance of coastal transport for the Roman military throughout this period, and Lancaster may have been used for re-grouping troops during transport. The association with the river was supported by the discovery upstream of a Roman altar stone (RIB 601), which indicated that a unit of sailors appeared to have been stationed at Lancaster (Dalziel and Whincop 1989, 4). The role of the fourth century fort is
particularly tantalising, as it appears to be of a ‘Saxon Shore’ type, suggesting that it was designed as an integral part of the Irish Sea defences. As such, the use of the Lune as an important harbour would seem highly likely and it has been argued that the realignment of the late Roman fort ‘may have been intended to protect harbour facilities and ships below’ (op cit, 6).

1.3.4 Trial excavations alongside Damside Street (LUAU 1992) have recovered Roman material along the old line of the Lune, comprising interleaved deposits of Roman occupation debris and river silts, perhaps indicating an extended river frontage at the base of Castle Hill. This suggests that in situ activity existed from the early Roman period, but subsequently the area became waterlogged, and perhaps subject to the tidal flow of the river. Sterile silts were clearly forming throughout the late Roman and early medieval periods, but by the twelfth century the area was settled, with the boundary of a burgage plot fronting Church Street being cut into the silts.

1.3.5 The principal development of the extramural settlement outside the forts took place along Church Street, with activity also identified in Penny Street and on the site of Lancaster Market (Drury forthcoming). The considerable Roman development of Church Street has been highlighted by the recent excavations on the site of the former Mitchells Brewery (Miller et al forthcoming). Present day Damside Street lies to the east of the Roman fort complex, below the bluff on which Church Street stands, and appears to be on the periphery of the Roman civilian settlement.

1.3.6 Early Medieval: following the end of Roman administration, cAD 410, little is known of Lancaster apart from isolated archaeological finds and place name evidence, although this gives some indication of the nature of the settlement. A church clearly existed within the fort area on Castle Hill by the ninth century (Newman 1996), and this formed the centre of a vill (Chercaloncastre or Church Lancaster) dependent on the manor of Halton by 1066 (Penney 1981, 13-4). In addition, another vill (Loncastre) existed, although its precise location has been disputed (White 1993, 11). There are suggestions that it was centred around Stonewell (Faull and Stinson 1986).

1.3.7 Medieval: knowledge of later medieval development has been largely derived from documentary sources, the archaeological record for this period in Lancaster being limited. The centre of the Lordship was moved to Lancaster soon after the Domesday survey (1086), Lancaster Castle being founded by 1094 (White 1993, 19). A borough was created in 1193 (ibid, 11-14) with Church Street, Market Street and Penny Street as its principal thoroughfares (ibid, 26-29). Church Street and Calkeld Lane, which are both located close to present day Damside Street, were clearly established by the thirteenth century (Penney 1981). Calkeld is a modern translation of the Old Norse words kaldr and kelda, meaning cold-well (Ekwall 1922), suggesting that this area was of some significance in the early medieval period (Penney 1981, 13).

1.3.8 The town corn mill, built by at least 1574 and demolished in 1769, was located opposite Calkeld Lane on a low-lying area of marshy wasteland known as the Green Ayre. The mill may in fact have been in existence by the twelfth century (Penney 1981, 19). The Green Ayre area was bounded by the Lune to the north, and by the mill leat and tail race to the south. The alignment of the leat probably echoes an earlier meander or course of the
Lune. The course of the old mill race survives, indeed, its northern extent, beyond Fleet Square, and was still open at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

1.3.9 The first reference to a bridge over the River Lune concerns the supply of wood for repairs in 1215 (ibid, 18). A stone structure was built during the fifteenth century and is depicted on John Speed's sketch map of the town in 1610. The bridge was situated to the north of Lune Square and was eventually demolished during the nineteenth century. Bridge Lane, which led from China Lane, past the Carpenter's Arms (now the Three Mariners public house) and under Pye's warehouse to Lune Square, was presumably developed in association with the earliest bridge. There are records of a port at Lancaster during the medieval period, although there are no details concerning the position or nature of early wharves (Penney 1981, 20). Both Docton's reconstructed map of 1684 (Docton 1957) and Mackreth's map of 1778 show an unnatural bend in the river immediately upstream from the bridge; the course of the river may in part have been affected by the position of the bridge or perhaps have reflected the use of the area as a quay.

1.3.10 Post-Medieval: by the seventeenth century there are cartographic representations which add another dimension to the understanding of the layout and development of the town. Speed’s map of 1610 and Docton’s reconstructed map of 1684 indicate that the area to the south of present day Damside Street comprised burgage plots associated with the properties erected along Church Street. The maps also indicate that the Green Ayre was undeveloped in this period, containing no buildings except for the mill. It is possible that there was industrial activity on the area during the medieval period, as the Lancaster Museum database refers to the Lune Foundry on, or close to, Cable Street (Price 1987).

1.3.11 It would seem that Lancaster passed through a period of stagnation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although the construction of Lawson’s Wharf on the riverside at the eastern end of Cable Street in c1680 (Dalziel and Whincop 1989, 13) perhaps marks the beginnings of Lancaster’s foreign trade during this period. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was a change in the fortunes of the town, marked by an increasing trade with the West Indies and Americas (Penney 1981, 29); the port took a significant share of this trade after Liverpool, Bristol and London. The end of the previous century had seen the beginnings of the growth of trade via the port, with the establishment of the first sugar refinery on the site now known as Sugar House Alley.

1.3.12 The Port Commission funded and constructed St George’s Quay in 1750, which could accommodate 300 ton vessels and was located downstream of the medieval bridge. Subsequently, as demand grew, the New Quay was built in 1768, further downstream again. The medieval bridge was superseded by Skerton Bridge in 1788, and the early bridge was partially demolished by Brockbanks shipbuilders on Green Ayre in 1802. These improvements to the port reflect a considerable boost from trade with the West Indies, and Lancaster entered a period of unparalleled prosperity during which many fine buildings were erected (Penney 1981, 29).
1.3.13 As the town prospered there was an increase in population and a subsequent increase in property development, particularly in the area of Green Ayre and St George's Quay. The economic growth of Lancaster in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries eventually led to the physical expansion of the town, and also to an increase in building density. By the time of Mackreth’s map of 1778, the Green Ayre had been developed for residential and industrial use and a series of new roads, such as Cable Street, Wood Street and Chapel Street, had been laid out. At this time Bridge Lane is shown as the main thoroughfare leading to the bridge, which was referred to from the thirteenth century onwards. Most of the redevelopment was accommodated by infilling previously open land, and the early property boundaries have largely survived. The original mid-nineteenth century warehouse, which lay at the core of the former Pye's feed mill, was built backing on to Bridge Lane, but by the late twentieth century the mill complex had expanded sufficiently to block off the lane.

1.3.14 During the 1930s many of the houses and industrial premises were demolished and the original bus station was erected, on the site of the current bus station, adjoining Damside Street and Cable Street.

1.4 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

1.4.1 The closest previous archaeological work in the area comprises evaluations at the site of the former Pyes Warehouse (OA North, 2003) and areas east and west of Damside Street (LUAU 1991; 1992), a little to the south-east of the Three Mariners. Although these sites lay in an area close to that of the proposed Roman harbour, this area was peripheral to the main contemporary settlement. Layers of Roman occupation deposits interleaved with river silts were recorded during evaluations at Damside Street, although there were no structural features. A thick layer of sterile silt had formed between the Late Roman and high medieval periods. Archaeological evidence from both sites indicated a programme of land reclamation in the mid-eighteenth century, with distinct tips of rubbish used as make-up layers.
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 The OA North project design for a permanent presence watching brief was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 A ‘Z’ shaped foundation trench 0.5m in width, 4m in total length and 0.2m deep was dug by hand using mattocks and shovels within a 3m² area. All archaeological data collected during the ground works was recorded in the standardised form. It comprised a full description of revealed features or structures on OA North pro-forma sheets, and their accurate location in plan and, where appropriate, section. Also, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled. All finds were collected on site and processed by OA North.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full and professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive includes pro-forma field recording sheets, a photographic archive and hand drawn plans.

2.3.2 The paper archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office in Preston. The finds will be deposited with the Lancashire Museums Service.
3. FIELDWORK RESULTS

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1.1 The area within which the foundation trench was dug (Fig 4) was covered by a layer of topsoil (01) and turf, which was removed prior to excavation of the trench proper (Plate 2). At the base of the 0.2m deep trench, evidence for a wall (03) was revealed, running north-east/south-west on the same alignment as the front of the pub building (Plate 2). The original height of this wall is indicated by a continuous scar visible on the corner of the main pub building which extends to height of approximately 1m above the exposed wall within the trench (Plate 3).

3.1.2 The deposit (02) above wall 03 was uniform throughout the trench. Deposit 02 consisted of a compacted mid-greyish-black mixed sandy-silt. It had large inclusions of stone and a mixture of handmade and factory-made brick, with occasional fragments of animal bone, one of which was recovered. One fragment of pottery and two fragments of glass were also found, and the finds recovered are catalogued in Appendix 3. Excavation stopped at the required depth of 0.2 metres, before reaching the base of either deposit 02 or wall 03.
4. DISCUSSION

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 Stone wall 03, seen in the base of the trench is probably a garden wall and could be contemporary with the building of the pub, as evidence for the wall being bonded to the side of the building could be seen. By measuring this wall scar it appears to have stood approximately 1m in height. Wall 03 was partially dismantled and then levelled, before being overlain by deposit 02, the depth and extent of which could not be ascertained within the limitations of the current intervention. It is possible that the wall was removed in order to improve access to the building from the direction of the river, but equally could have been dismantled at a later date, prior to the construction of the adjoining office buildings.

4.1.2 The fact that deposit 02 overlies and abuts the wall would indicate that make-up material continued to be added to the area even after the initial period of reclamation and development during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, deposits relating to which were not encountered due to the shallow nature of the current intervention. The recovery of a single sherd of post-medieval pottery from deposit 02 could be used to support an interpretation that wall 03 had been dismantled some time before the adjoining offices were constructed, but the premise that deposit 03 could be redeposited make-up material from the foundations of these later buildings cannot be discounted. The depth of the trench, 0.2m, was not sufficient to observe any earlier archaeology.
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Figure 1: Location Map
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APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Tyler Designs have, on behalf of Mitchells of Lancaster, commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake a watching brief of groundworks during redevelopment and refurbishment at the Three Mariners Public House, Bridge Lane, Lancaster. These supervised groundworks are scheduled to commence from 9am on the 2nd March 2005.

1.1.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, located at the foot of the hill occupied by the medieval castle and its Roman predecessors, and close to the banks of the river Lune. As such, the area is likely to have been subject to domestic and economic activity within the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLGY NORTH

1.2.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has considerable experience of the photographic recording of all types of sites together with undertaking watching briefs of all periods, having conducted a great number of small and large scale projects during the past 25 years. Fieldwork has taken place within the planning process and construction programmes, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.

1.2.2 OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following programme has been designed in accordance with OA North standards and with the Lancashire Council Archaeology Section document entitled General Conditions for Appropriate Archaeological Contractors in Lancashire.

2.2 Watching Brief: a watching brief will be maintained in order to determine the presence and state of preservation of previously unknown archaeology.

2.3 Report and Archive: a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990).

3. WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 In line with the objectives and stages of the archaeological works stated above, the following work programme is submitted:

3.2 Watching Brief: to be maintained during any ground disturbing activities within the project area.

3.3 Report and Archive: production of a suitably illustrated report and properly ordered archive.
4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 WATCHING BRIEF

4.1.1 A programme of field observation will accurately and systematically examine and record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features, horizons and/or deposits within the course of ground disturbance, along with any artefacts, identified during observation.

4.1.2 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

4.1.3 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.

4.1.4 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified during groundworks, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate, sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (i.e., selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).

4.1.5 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and LCAS and will require a variation to costing.

4.1.6 **Human Remains:** any human remains uncovered will be left in situ, covered and protected. No further investigation will continue beyond that required to establish the date and character of the burial. LCAS and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. An application will be made by OA North for the study area on discovery of any such remains and the removal will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations, and if appropriate, in compliance with the 'Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act, 1981.

4.1.7 **Recording:** all information identified in the course of the watching brief works will be recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features as well as the nature of the demolition work. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.

4.1.8 Results of the field investigation will be recorded using a paper system, adapted from that used by the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. The archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large-scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20, and 1:10). Levels will be tied into the Ordnance Datum. All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration.

4.1.9 **Treatment of finds:** all finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid For Finds*, 1998 (new edition) and the recipient museum's guidelines.

4.1.10 **Treasure:** any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be employed to protect the finds from theft.
4.1.11 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained on advice from the recipient museum’s archive curator.

4.1.12 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features or human remains being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Planning Archaeologist, as to the extent of further works to be carried out, and in agreement with the Client. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design.

5. **REPORT**

5.1 The results of the data gathered in 4.1 above will be collated and submitted in report format, illustrated with the relevant photographs and drawings. Where relevant, the report will attempt to relate any findings to the known history and archaeology of the sites, and to its local setting.

5.2 One bound and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the Client, and others in digital format will be submitted to the County Archaeologist and to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record together with an archive CD-ROM. Any subsequent work arising from this survey will be subject to separate consideration in liaison with LCAS and the Client.

5.3 The final report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above, and will include details of the final deposition of the project archive.

5.4 A brief summary of the fieldwork will be prepared and submitted to the Council for British Archaeology North West *Archaeology North West* within 12 months of the completion of the project.

6. **ARCHIVE**

6.1 The results of the photographic survey and watching brief will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of any features and finds recovered during fieldwork, in accordance with UKIC guidelines. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA, and arrangement to this effect will be made with the museum curator prior to the commencement of the project.

6.2 All finds will be treated in accordance with OA North standard practice, which follows current IFA guidelines.

7. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

7.1 OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.
7.2 The client would be asked to determine the nature of any utility services to the properties and site prior to any fieldwork being carried out.

7.3 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 The final report is designed as a document for the specific use of the Client, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

8.2 Any proposed variations to the project design will be agreed with LCAS in co-ordination with the Client. OA North will arrange a preliminary meeting, if required, and LCAS will be informed of the commencement of the project in writing.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

9.1 The following programme is proposed:

9.2 Photographic Survey: approximately one day would be required to complete all fieldwork elements of this part of the project.

9.3 Watching Brief: the duration of the watching brief will be dependent upon the progress of the contractor.

9.4 Archive/Report: the report and archive will be produced following the completion of all the fieldwork. The final report will be submitted within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork and the archive deposited within six months. An interim statement will be produced within ten days of completion of the fieldwork.

10. STAFFING

10.1 The project will be managed by Stephen Rowland BSc, MSc (Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

10.2 The watching brief will be undertaken by an OA North supervisor, suitably experienced in fieldwork techniques. Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing at this stage exactly who will be undertaking this element of the project.

10.3 The archaeological work will be monitored by LCAS, which will be arranged accordingly.
APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST

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APPENDIX 3: FINDS SUMMARY

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<td>Pottery</td>
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<td>Brown-glazed red earthenware crock or jar wall fragment, fabric laminated with buff-coloured clay</td>
<td>Late seventeenth - early twentieth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dark olive green wine bottle base fragment, and small chip conceivably from same bottle</td>
<td>Post-medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Animal bone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cow metacarpal</td>
<td>Not closely dateable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Blue rigid washer or similar</td>
<td>Late twentieth century?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>