

Ceramic type series questionnaire 2017

Please note that a Ceramic Building Material Type Series also exists, for more information please contact Dr Ian Betts: ibetts@mola.org.uk. The answers below are specifically for the MOLA pottery type series.

A The Type Series and its Curation

1 What is the name of the type series?

Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) Ceramic Fabric Reference Collection.

2 What does the type series cover?

Site

Various

Region / area / county / town

Greater London and relevant production site whose products are found in London/supplied this region.

Periods

Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval

Ceramic products (e.g. specific production sites / areas)

Pottery fabrics which are found in London but are nationally and internationally sourced.

3 Where is the type series stored?

In the Museum of London Archaeological Archive (MOLAA) at Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED.

4 Who curates it (who is responsible for its documentation, upkeep and development)?

Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA)

5 How large is the type series?

Exact / estimated number of specimens:

Total sherds: 3588 (across all periods). By period this is 1336 Roman sherds, 1219 Medieval sherds, 418 Post-medieval sherds and 615 sherds unassigned

Exact / estimated number of fabric types:

There are 340 fabric types (from all periods). These are subdivided as variants within fabrics and are given different numbers.

6 Who compiled the first version of the type series?

The type series was originally initiated and developed by Chris Green and Clive Orton of the Department of Urban Archaeology (DUA)(now MOLA)

7 How was the type series originated (e.g. within a local archaeology unit / by a museum / as part of a centrally funded research project)?

The type series was started within the DUA and was initially based on material found within the City of London

8 How did the type series come into your care and is it secure (e.g. was it set up in-house / is it owned by you / accessioned)

MOLA retains ownership of the type series which was initiated by its predecessor, the DUA. The type series is secure as it is located within MOLAA (formerly the London Archaeological Archive and Research centre (LAARC)).

9 When was the type series created?

In the mid-1970s

10 How are types defined?

By fabric codes

By ware names

Other

Fabric types are defined by fabric names which are assigned codes based on inclusions, manufacturing techniques and surface treatment. These are then searchable within the system

11 How are the type sherds stored (e.g. in drawers, in boxes)?

In drawers, in metal Polstore cabinets

12 How are the type sherds organised?

Type sherds are ordered by the characteristics of the fabrics: inclusions, manufacturing techniques and surface treatment, using alphanumeric codes that are not period-specific

In fabric number order

In ware type order

In fabric description order (e.g. all micaceous wares together)

13 How is the type series documented?

A paper list of fabric codes and names (if so, please could you supply a copy)

No

A detailed description (colour, texture, inclusions etc.) of every type on paper or card

Yes, using a card index

A digital list of fabric codes and names (if so, please could you supply a copy)

Yes (copy supplied)

A detailed description (colour, texture, inclusions etc.) of every type in digital form

No (part of prospective development)

14 Are there thin-sections or chemical analytical results for all or part of the type series?

For part of the type series (thin-section and NAA/ICPS samples)

15 Is there a concordance of this type series with others?

Not as far as we are aware

16 Is the type series described in a published catalogue (e.g. pottery monograph)?

No, however elements of the type series are included in various DUA/MoLAS/MOLA publications

17 When was the last time new material was added?

December 2016

18 Does the type series represent comprehensive coverage of the area or are there significant gaps, or new types that should be added?

Yes the type series represents comprehensive coverage of the area and there are new types to add, however there are practical difficulties in adding these new types; principally relating to time and funding.

19 Are you aware of any other type series that are used in the same area (e.g. privately held / contracting units: please provide contact details)?

Other type series which include London region fabrics;

Dartford District Archaeological Group (DDAG)

<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/02/DDAG/00.htm>

B Access and Use

20 Is the type series publically accessible?

Yes, on request

21 What are the procedures for accessing it?

Contact MOLA staff to book in a visit

22 Is there a charging policy?

There is no charge for consulting the type series

C Use

23 How often is the type series visited?

more than once a month

more than once every two months – the type series is visited by internal staff

twice a year

once a year

less than once a year – the type series is visited by external visitors

24 Who are the main users of the type series?

MOLA specialists, although it is open for external use

25 What is the main purpose of their visits (e.g. to identify pottery from an assemblage they are working on / to inform academic research)?

Mainly to identify pottery from assemblages they are working on

26 Do local project briefs specify the use of the type series in the compilation of pottery reports?

They do not specify the use of the type series itself but the receiving archive (MOL) requests use of the London Reference Collection fabric codes in reports.

27 Is the type series cited in Written Schemes of Investigation (including your own)?

No

D Online

28 Is there an online version of the type series?

No

29 If so, what does it include?

N/A

A simple list of types and descriptions

Photographs of fabrics

Detailed descriptions of types in a searchable database

Detailed descriptions of types in a searchable database with photographs

Any other comments, thoughts or suggestions about its development?

Please use this space to add any thoughts or ideas you have about how the type series could be developed in the future. What would you like to see achieved.

MOLA specialists have made draft proposals for auditing and updating the type series and preparation of a digital guide to London ceramics for which funding is being sought. This which would make the resource available for wider consultation and further development.