

EOXP TEST PIT 33

24 Abberbury Road, Iffley: Back Garden

Date of Excavation: 10-11 April 2012

Area Excavated: 1m x 1m in rough ground surface area in back garden.

Weather conditions: Variable- sunny with showers and hail

Excavators: Christopher Lewis, Rob McLean, Ruth Barker and Joanne Robinson.

Report by: R Barber with contributions and additions from other excavators

GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5293 0366, 82m OD

Summary of excavation

A test pit was dug to a depth of 0.45m and to 0.50m in a sondage. The natural geology was reached at 0.50m below ground surface, exposed within the sondage. All excavated soil was sieved for finds. No soil samples were taken.

Context 101 was visible as a loose layer under the turf (the turf is recorded as context 100). The soil was a dry, mid yellowish brown silty clay with inclusions of well sorted smooth rounded pebbles (<5%), charcoal flecks and occasional angular flint. The context extended to a variable depth of 110mm to the north and west, 150mm to the east and 90mm to the south. Finds included probable 19th and 20th century white and colour glazed pottery sherds, some degraded iron nails and small fragments of shattered Bakelite. The Bakelite was much less frequent in this test pit than the other two test pits in this area. Context 101 was hand troweled and contained occasional roots and worms. Its boundaries were diffuse to both the upper (100) and lower (102) contexts.

Context 102 was friable, mid-greyish brown sticky clayey sand containing frequent pieces of charcoal and 10% well sorted pebble and stones that were greater in size to context 101. Disturbance by roots and worms was more frequent and the context was loosened by spade and heavily trowelled. Context 102 was 160mm thick and finds included a single bone fragment, small shattered pieces of Bakelite, two pieces of mortar and a substantial piece of tile measuring 0.18mm x 0.12 mm x 0.01 with an embossed star shape.

Context 103 was friable light yellowish brown clayey sand. It had a clear boundary with context 102 and measured 180mm thick. It contained frequent pieces of charcoal, large rounded pebbles and angular stone, all of around 5%. Finds included pottery sherds, shattered Bakelite, glass fragments, degraded iron nails and a well preserved fragment of clay pipe complete with bowl. Context 103 was heavily rooted and loosened by spade before being heavily trowelled.

Context 104 was a sondage placed in the south/west corner of the test pit to identify the interface between context 103 and the natural ground surface level. The sondage was 50mm in depth and was dug quickly with a mattock and spade. The soil was a compact mid yellowish brown clayey sand containing large sub-angular lime stone chunks, occasional charcoal, rounded pebbles and flint. Context 104 had occasional rooting and an indistinct boundary with context 103 above. There were no finds.

Interpretation

The test pit was located in this area due to local claims of an Anglo Saxon burial, associated with a brooch now held in the British Museum, thought to have been found in this garden or more likely in this approximate location. However, this test pit appeared to be comprised of disturbed soil containing semi-modern material prior to reaching the natural ground surface.

Context	Type of Deposit	Description	Soil Sample	Drawings
100	Turf removed by hand.			
101	Layer below turf (100) and above (102)	90-130mm deep. Dry mid yellowish brown silty clay. Well sorted pebbles and charcoal flecks. Finds: Pottery sherds, iron nails, small fragments of Bakelite.		Sketch on context sheet.
102	Layer below (101) and above (103)	270mm below context 100 (turf). Friable, mid greyish brown, sticky clayey sand. Greater percentage and size of pebbles, stones and charcoal flecks than context 101. Finds: Bakelite, mortar, pottery sherds, single bone fragment, electrical wire, large piece of tile.		Sketch on context sheet (101)
103	Layer below (102) and above (104)	180mm below context 100 (turf). Friable light yellowish brown clayey sand. Charcoal, pebbles and stone (<5%). Finds: Pottery sherds, iron nails, glass and a large clay pipe fragment.		Sketch on context sheet (101)
104	Layer/natural below (103)	Natural reached at a depth of 50mm below context 100		Section on context sheet

	(sondage)	(turf). Compact mid yellowish brown silty clay, containing large sub-angular limestone pieces. Finds: None	(101)
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Removal of context 101 facing northwest





Finished trench facing north



Finished trench facing south



Sondage down to natural facing west