

EOXP TEST PIT 41

Location of Test Pit: 6 Pine Close, Blackbird Leys, Oxford

Date of Excavation: 22-23 June 2012

Area of excavation: 1.0 x 1.5m

Weather conditions: Cloudy/sunny with occasional showers

Excavators: 22.6.2012 - Jane Griffin, Roelie Reed

23.6.2012 - Catriona Manners, Tara Love, Roelie Reed

Report by: Roelie Reed

GPS Location and height above sea-level: SP 5600 0315, 67 OD

Introduction

The test pit was in the back garden of the property. These houses were built in the 1950s according to the current house-holder; they have been in the property for approximately 8 years. According to Victoria Count History – History on Line: “The new housing estate of Blackbird Leys was brought into the county borough in 1957 and into the Parliamentary borough in 1960”. (Accessed on line 26.06.2012).

The Roman road was less than 100m to the east of the property, but the area has been considerably remodelled over the centuries - most of it is probably under the current electricity substation. The owner said that the garden was never soggy or waterlogged so there must be good natural drainage.

Excavation summary

The natural was reached at a depth of approx. 0.26 m (slight variations across the test pit due to natural geology). None of the material was sieved as it appeared to be all post 1950s materials.

Spit 1 (4100) consisted of turf and topsoil. It contained lots of evidence of burning and large pieces of charcoal primarily square pieces and for this reason assumed to be builders' remains/materials. This spit dug to a depth of 0.20 by trowel only.

Spit 2 (4101) at a depth of approximately 0.26m a stony layer was found. At first it was thought that it was man-made, but after clearing the whole 1 x 1 m test pit area it became clear that this was a natural layer of lime stone with “drainage” holes. The landowners said that they had encountered the same situation when trying to dig a pond to the south east of the test pit. When trying to plant a small tree to the north west of the test pit had the same problem.

Extension to East by 0.50 m (4102) to a depth of 0.26 m – had the same aspects of (4100) and (4101) with similar finds and consistency. The soil was removed by trowel only and material was not sieved.

No plan or section drawings were made, but there are sketches of bedrock/drainage holes are on reverse of context sheets.

Results

Spit/ context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil Sample	Comments
(41 00)	Layer	<p>Turf and top soil, friable, dark brownish black, sandy silt (20% sand, 80% silt) The soil contained plenty of roots and much evidence of worm activity.</p> <p>Inclusions: small amount of builders' rubble (15%), i.e. CBM, cement, tarmac, angular limestones; 0.02 – 0.07m (20%), rounded river pebbles; 0.01 – 0.04m (10%), charcoal (5%).</p> <p>Finds: CBM, slate, floor tile, wall tile, bone, Fe objects, modern glass and pottery, post decimalisation penny, part of toy</p> <p>Context changed at a depth of 0.20 m</p>	none	 <p>Evidence suggests domestic use. There is much evidence of burning at this level</p>
(41 01)	Layer	<p>Friable, darkish brown, sandy silt (30/70%) Roots and worms still present</p> <p>Inclusions: Angular limestones – 10%, charcoal/ash 5%</p> <p>Finds: 2 sherds of modern tile, 1 sherd of floor tile</p> <p>Natural reached at a depth of 0.27m</p>	None	 <p>Natural limestone bedrock with drainage holes Sketch</p>
(41 02)	Extension /layer	<p>0.50 m extension eastward</p> <p>Layer same as (41 00) and (41 01)</p> <p>Turf and topsoil darkish brown, sandy silt (20/80%), becoming slightly more sandy just above bedrock.</p> <p>Inclusions: Angular limestones 25% (0.02 – 0.07m), rounded river cobbles 10% (0.01 – 0.05m), small rounded stones(?) approx. dia between less than 5 mm to approx. 10mm (5%), charcoal (5%), burnt stone roots and worms</p> <p>Finds: coin, Fe objects, glass, porcelain, plastic tab (from bread packing, loaf of bread was 33 p and date was august (but no year), glazed wall tiles, roof/floor tiles sherds (lime stone).</p>	None	 <p>Natural, but drainage holes appear to be larger. Difference in colour due to dampness of sand. Sketch</p> <p>Taking the finds into consideration, it is possible that the garden was not put to lawn until late 1970s/early 1980s.</p>



Finds from the layer
Natural reached at a depth of 0.27 m

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

No	Description
1837	Returfed
1836	Tara measuring
1835	Finds from 4102
1834	Stones from 4102
1833	End of context 4102
1832	Close up end of context 4102 and 4101
1831	Baulk looking south
1830	Baulk looking east
1829	End of context 4102
1828	4102 looking north
1827	Natural whole tp looking west
1826	Natural facing west
1825	Natural looking west
1824	Same again
1823	Close up natural
1822	Close up natural
1821	Close up natural
1820	Close up natural
1819	End 4102
1818	End looking west
1817	Last bits
1816	Turf upside down
1815	Catriona sieving
1814	Clearing up
1813	
1812	Catriona
1811	Esme and Katie -
1810	Katie looking at coin
1809	Finds from 4101
1808	Finds from 4100
1807	Stones from 4102
1806	End 4101
1805	End 4101
1804	End 4101
1803	Baulk looking east (west facing)
1802	Baulk looking south (north facing)
1801	Baulk looking west (east facing)
1800	Baulk looking north (south facing)
1799	End of TP (4101)
1798	Royal visit
1797	Stones from (4100)
1796	Katie and Esme
1795	Katie and Esme
1794	View from house east
1793	End of context (4100)
1792	Baulk looking east (west facing)

1791	Baulk looking south (north facing)
1790	Baulk looking west (east facing)
1789	End of context (4101)
1788	End of context (4101)
1787	Jane
1786	View We3st towards house
1785	View east from house