

EOXP TP 66

Location: 9 Junction Road, Temple Cowley, OX4 2NT

Area excavated: 1m x 1m

Date of Excavation: 29-30th July 2013

Conditions: dry and sunny

Method of excavation: trowel and mattock. All spoil was sieved.

Excavators: Craig Byron, Jack Fennell, Tricia Hallam, Kristyn Maguire, Steve Nicholson, Karen Stansbie,

GPS location and OD:

Report by: TH

This test pit was one of a cluster dug in the Temple Cowley area on the weekend of 29-30th June 2013 with the aim of finding out more about the archaeology of the area, especially the medieval activity associated with the Preceptory of the Knights Templar. The site was located within the grounds of a large house known as Quintain on old maps until the current house was built around the turn of the 20th century.

The test pit showed that a large amount of topsoil had been imported to the site but the sealed levels below revealed a significant amount of Roman and some medieval activity.

Map



O/S map of area in 1870

Summary of Excavation

The test pit was dug overall to a depth of 0.44m, then in Sondage A (eastern half of pit) to 0.93m, and in Sondage B (north-easterly quarter of pit) to a depth of 1.14m, reaching the natural geology.

The first spit (101) was organic, dark greyish-brown sandy silt. It was very disturbed and produced a wide variety of finds, mostly modern CBM, but also metal and plastic items as well as one possible worked flint flake. The second context was less organic and lighter in colour, but otherwise very similar. The finds too, were very similar in nature, suggesting the two contexts may be the same. The third context, (103) was similar again, but a little sandier. The finds included a large quantity of glass, mostly window glass, as well as a mixture of modern and Victorian materials. A Cu object, possibly a brooch, was found as well as a lead toy and a fragment of green-glazed pottery which could possibly be medieval. The fourth context, (104) was lighter in colour with yellowish patches. It contained a large quantity of CBM as well as other modern finds. A clear cut [106] was seen across the north-west corner

of the pit and its fill (105) was very different in nature from (104) consisting of ashy mortar and a large quantity of CBM, along with modern finds. It became clear that this pit had been cut into the original ground surface and filled with demolition materials including modern items, all sealed below imported topsoil. It was decided to dig a sondage (A) in the less disturbed eastern half of the pit. This sealed context (107) quickly produced much older finds from the Roman and medieval periods, including pottery, tile, animal bone, nails and oyster shell. One piece of modern glazed pot is likely to have been redeposited by root or worm action. A further Sondage B was then dug in the north-eastern quarter. This context (108) produced more Roman pottery including a mortarium base and a piece of green-glazed pot, probably medieval, as well as animal bone, some burnt. Finds reduced with depth and at 1.14m the natural geology was reached.

Results

Spit/context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	Drawings
Spit (101)	Layer below turf (100)	0.05m of turf and topsoil removed by spade (100). Spit (101) 0.10m deep. Dark greyish-brown organic sandy silt. Stones less than 1% included some rounded pebbles, 22-37mm, and angular limestone 22-40mm. Charcoal flecks were well distributed throughout. The spit was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Finds: c1% of context, included CBM (some burnt), slate (a few small fragments) pottery (modern glazed), bone, glass, nails and other metal fragments, metal handle, tin foil, plastic items including a button and clothes pegs, a grooved item (wooden?), 1 flint and flint flake, possibly worked. Disturbed garden soil		
Context (102)	Layer: below (101)	Context c0.07m deep. Diffuse boundaries with spit (101) above, but lighter colour and less organic, with some yellowish patches. Stones less than 1%. Some angular limestone (22-40mm) and flints (max size 40x25x10mm). Charcoal less than 1%. Finds: c1% of context, included CBM, pottery (mostly glazed), bone fragments (1 cut), tooth? Some slate fragments max size 45x20mm. Glass, mostly modern, small eggshell, nails, lead toy, foil milk bottle tops, plastic button. The context was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Disturbed garden soil		
Context (103)	Layer: below (102)	Context c0.2m deep. Diffuse boundaries with spit (101) above, but a little sandier. Fewer stones than (102). Limestone largest 30mm long, flint. Charcoal less than 1% mostly on east side. Finds: c1% of context, included large quantity of glass (50% of finds) mostly window glass, but also small bottle. Also CBM, bone, Fe objects, lead toy, Cu object (brooch?), foil milk bottle tops. The context was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Disturbed garden soil		
Context (104)	Layer: below (103)	Context 0.02m deep. Diffuse boundaries with context (101) above, but a little yellower. Stones less than 1%, mostly limestone angular (max 30x25mm). Charcoal less than 1%. Finds: c1% of context, included CBM (90% of finds), slate (1 fragment), pottery (glazed), glass (2 fragments), bone fragments (small), metal bottle top, battery? Clear		

		boundaries with (105) (fill of cut [106]). The context was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Disturbed garden soil		
Context (105)	Fill of cut [106]	Context 0.28m deep. Clear boundary with (104) abutting. Dry, loose, light grey ashy mortar. Includes small quantities of grit and calcium carbonate (less than 1%). Finds: over 90% of context, included mostly CBM, painted mortar, Fe and metal objects, glass fragment, glazed pot fragments x 2, silver paper including chocolate/biscuit wrapper. Dump of demolition rubble, rubbish and ash		
Cut [106]	Cut	Pit excavated to depth of 0.28m. Sharp break, steep sides, sloping gradually inwards with depth. Bottom not reached.		Section drawing on reverse of (105)
Context (107)	Layer in Sondage A	Context 0.49m deep. Diffuse boundary with (104) above. Mid yellowish-brown silty sand, wet and friable. Stones less than 1% decreasing with depth. Mostly large, limestone, angular (max 80x50x30mm) A few river pebbles, also 3 reddish, granite-type rocks (max 80x70x20mm). A few pieces of charcoal. Finds: less than 1% of context, reducing with depth. Included mostly CBM and pottery (90% of finds) – Roman (mostly coarse ware, some with shelly inclusions) and medieval green-glazed jug/flagon base, animal bone (some burnt), oyster shell, nails, mortar?. Also 1 fragment modern glazed pot, probably moved down by worm/root action. The context was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Original ground surface sealed below imported topsoil with evidence of domestic use during Roman and medieval periods.		
Context (108)	Layer in Sondage B	Context 0.21m deep. Diffuse boundary with (107) above and natural below. Similar to (107) above. Few stones, reducing with depth. Limestone, angular, max 85x75x30mm. Charcoal – few fragments. One granite-type stone as in (107), fossils? Finds: less than 1% of context, reducing with depth. Pottery – Roman, including mortarium base. Mostly coarse ware, some with shelly inclusions. Green-glazed medieval x 1. Animal bone – some burnt, tooth. The context was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Sealed context with evidence of domestic use during Roman and medieval periods.		

Digging spit (101)



Top of (102)



Top of (103)



Top of (104)



Top of (105) in cut [106]



Excavated pit [106]



Contents of pit [106]



Excavated Sondage A showing top of (108)



Bottom of Sondage B

