

# EOXP TEST PIT TP38

Location of Test pit: 19 Teal Place, Blackbird Leys

Date of Excavation: 12/05/2012

Area excavated: 1 x 1m

Weather conditions: Sunny, cool wind.

Excavators: Leigh Mellor, Gillian Mellor, Tricia Marsh, Linda Page, Mark Franks

Report by: Leigh Mellor

GPS location and height above sea-level: SP 5585 0211 approx. 72m OD

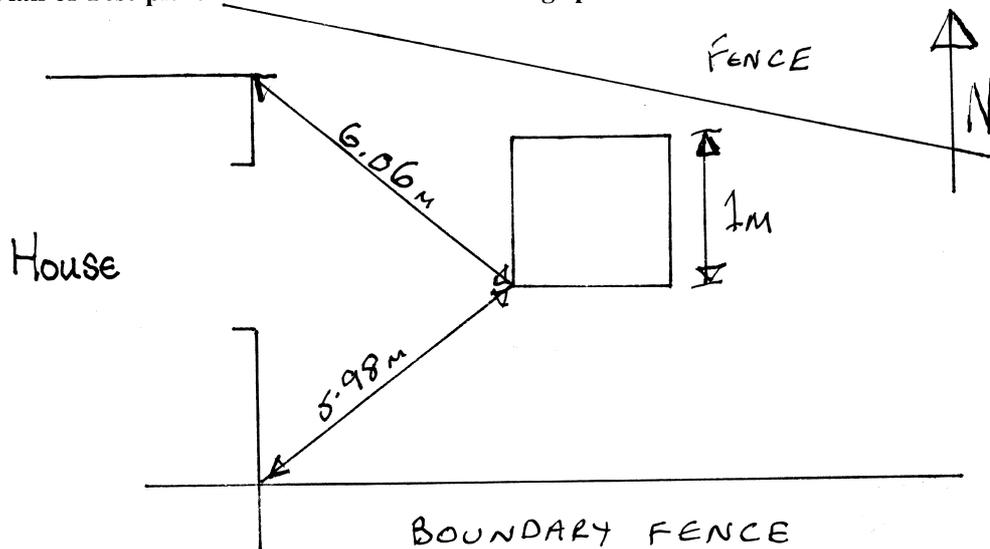
## Introduction

The Test Pit was dug in the rear garden of an 80's house, built when the Greater Leys Estate was constructed. Prior to the building work a number of trenches were dug in the confines of the planned area of the estate as part of an archaeological evaluation and discovered evidence of extensive late Roman pottery works and one example of early (1<sup>st</sup> Century) Romano-British occupation (HER PRN 26336, Tempus Reparatum). More recently, the land appears to have been in agricultural use: in 1749 owned by the Duke of Marlborough (Bodleian Library, MSC1749 (95)), in 1853 as part of Blackbird Leys Farm, owned by Christopher J Waddell, Esq (Bodleian Library – G.A.Oxon B 91 (46)). Google Earth shows the land as fields in 1945.

To the North of the site is the course of the Northfield Brook, which has historically formed the boundary between Sandford and Littlemore parishes, while to the South-East lies Sandford Brake, woodland which appears in the 1749 map (ref above).

## Excavation summary

Sketch Plan of Test-pit location in relation to buildings/permanent features:



The grey clay of the natural geology (as identified by the other test pits dug this weekend) was reached at depth of approx. 0.6m. Context (101) was only c 0.09m deep, consisting of friable, humic, dark brown sandy clay with modern detritus consistent with this having been a building site relatively recently. It also contained a noticeable amount of limestone cobbles, as well as river pebbles and rounded flint pebbles.



The linear feature appearing in (102)

Context (102) was more clayey, with a linear feature becoming visible as the layer was trowelled back. Below this the test pit was divided into three sections: - a structure (wall), Context [105] which ran east-west, bisecting the test pit, with layer (103) to the south of it and layer (104) to the north. The two layers were noticeably different in appearance with the northern one (104) being much darker looking, and having waterlogged wood in it. We assume [105] was a wall as it was so closely packed.



The wall, having been sectioned, showing the Terram membrane

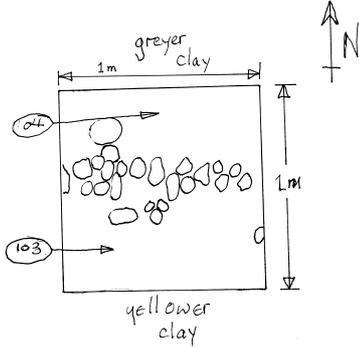
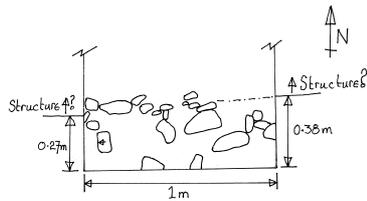
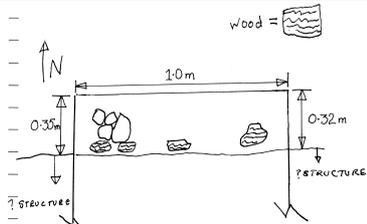
When a layer of Terram or some similar membrane was discovered at the bottom of (103) it was decided to remove a slice through the wall to ascertain if the membrane ran under the 'wall' which it did, by 0.01-0.02m. We then folded the membrane back to dig a small sondage down to the natural grey clay.

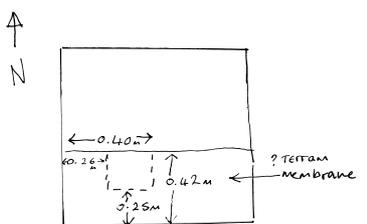
It was noted that there was no sign of a plough horizon, which given the past history of the site as agricultural land was taken as a sign that the topography had been significantly remodelled during the building of the estate. The finding of a dry-stone wall on top of some modern membrane was taken to be a result of a digger moving earth around. Given this we assume that most of the contexts had been recently redeposited.



The sondage (106) showing the natural.

## Results

Spit/ context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	Comments
(100) 0.06m deep	Layer			
(101) Below (100) to 0.15m	Layer	Turf layer removed by hand, then trowel. Friable, dark brown, sandy clay with increasing lumps of yellowish grey. Root and worm disturbance. <b>Inclusions:</b> Charcoal 1%, Limestone cobbles 10% (80x80x70mm largest), flint pebbles, rounded river pebbles, many broken <b>Finds:</b> Glass, pottery – unabraded, CBM	N/A	Rubble from construction of house with modern rubbish
(102) 0.15m to 0.17m Below (101), above (103) & (104)	Layer	Firm, dark yellowish brown clay, small lenses of sand & pure clay. Worm disturbance. <b>Inclusions:</b> Limestone cobbles, some with flat faces. Pea gravel, waterlogged wood. <b>Finds:</b> Iron nails	N/A	As above, showing linear feature 
(103) 0.17m to 0.38m Below (102) – South part of test pit	Layer	Friable, wet mid-yellowish brown clay. Root and worm disturbance <b>Inclusions:</b> River pebbles (few) 80mm-20mm, Dark stones, Limestone Cobbles <b>Finds:</b> Worked flint	N/A	
(104) 0.17m to 0.38m Below (102) – North part of test pit	Layer	Compact, wet, greenish grey clay, lenses of yellow & black clay. Root disturbance <b>Inclusions:</b> River pebbles 15%; Wood – waterlogged 2%; Pea gravel 20%	N/A	
[105] 0.17m to 0.38m Below (102) – between (103) & (104)	Structure	Limestone cobbles tightly packed and interleaved with smaller pebbles 200x14x60mm – 90x70x50mm Clear boundaries	N/A	Part of an old wall (see sketch below)

<p><b>(106)</b> 0.38m to 0.57m Below (103) under membrane</p>	<p>Layer</p>	<p>Wet, yellow, becoming greyer, clay with lenses of grey clay Inclusions: River pebbles 30mm; Charcoal (?) flecks Clear boundaries</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Down to the natural</p> 
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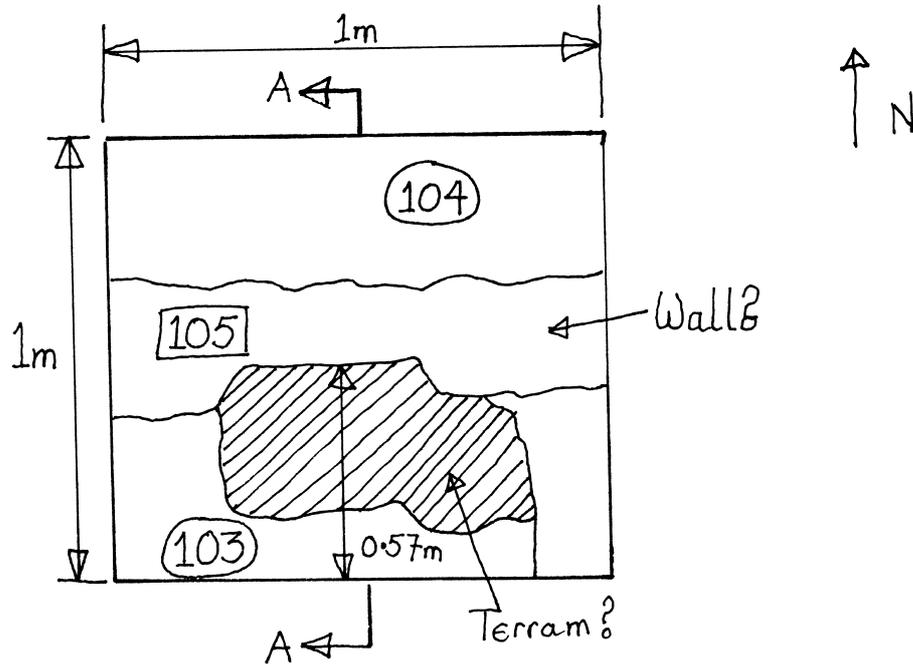
East Oxford Archaeology Project: Test-pit Recording Sheet

Test-pit Code: 38 Context/spit no: 105

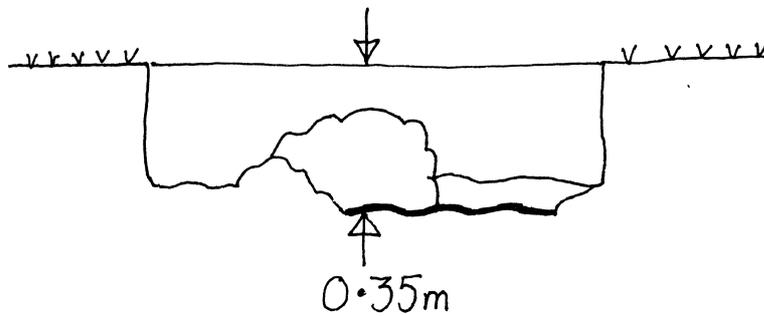
Sketch Plan or Section:

Put in North and measured dimensions

Title:



Section A-A



Sketch of [105], the wall and the Terram membrane.