

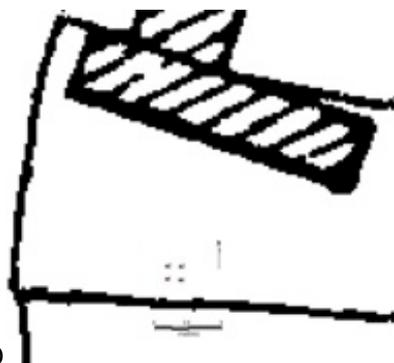
TEST PIT EOXp10 ML

Mill Lane, Iffley

This site is at the core of old village of Iffley, which was established by the 10th century, and is close both to the Norman church and to the river. There was a mill in Iffley by the 12th century; in 15th century this was acquired by Lincoln College, along with an estate which, by 16th century, included a farmhouse, later enlarged and known as The Manor.

The south wing of the Manor was destroyed by fire in 1810 and around 1920 the current brick-built house was erected on this site.

The excavation revealed extensive evidence of this fire in the form of charcoal, burnt stone and fragments of medieval roof tile. It also revealed the foundations of a substantial wall likely to have been linked to the south wing of the Manor, although its alignment does not tie in well with the surviving part of the Manor. There has clearly been activity on this site for a very long time, as prehistoric worked flints and Roman pottery were found, as well as medieval and post-medieval ceramic material.



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Area excavated: 1m x 1m

Date of Excavation: 11th-12th June 2011

Conditions: Day 1 – sunny, warm and dry; Day 2 – cool and very wet

Method of excavation: spade and trowel. All soil sieved on Day 1, but this was not possible on Day 2 due to heavy rain.

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Report by: TH, LM, GM

Summary of Excavation

The test pit was dug overall to a depth of 0.28m. It was then sectioned and the eastern half of the pit was dug to a depth of 0.43m. The natural geology was not reached.

The first spit (101) was a dark, organic garden soil containing evidence of burning – charcoal, burnt stone, tile and fused glass. The spit was very disturbed and contained CBM (including medieval roof tile) and a variety of pottery from a wide range of periods as well as 2 worked flints.

The second spit (102) was less organic but still produced evidence of burning, though it seemed less disturbed and there were fewer finds. At a depth of 0.23m a thin band of yellow clay emerged c.0.28m from the northern edge of the pit, running parallel with it across the full width of the pit. (From this point on the pit was dug contextually rather than spits.) This feature [103] was investigated and found to underlie (102) on the northern side of the pit,

sloping down, especially to the NW, extending beyond the excavated area to the north across the full width of the pit.

To the south of [103] a spread of tumbled building stone (some burnt) and tile soon emerged (104), likely to have been a destruction/demolition layer linked to the fire and the subsequent clearing of the site.

The pit was then sectioned and the eastern half was dug as 2 contexts: one (104) to the south, and the other feature [103] to the north. The yellow clay of [103] was excavated and found to fill a straight-sided, trench with a flattish bottom. It seems likely that it formed part of the foundation trench of a substantial wall associated with the old south wing of the manor. Beneath [103] was a sealed context (105) which produced some medieval pottery, suggesting earlier occupation on the site.

The weather conditions prevented excavation to the natural geology and it would be useful to complete this at some point, possibly extending the pit to the north.

There is a large quantity of stone in the garden, some of it partially dressed, found in the rockery to the south, and in the steps and pond surround to the east. There are also some large slabs of stone and slate in the upper level of the garden to the east. This may well originate from the demolition of the south wing of the manor, as the current house is of brick construction. It seems likely that, following demolition of the remains of the south wing, topsoil may have been moved from elsewhere on the site, possibly from the higher ground to the east, to create the garden. This would explain the disturbed nature of the deposits in the upper levels of the pit. However, it is curious that the alignment of the wall foundation within the pit is EW, whereas that of the surviving manor house is NE to SW. It might be useful to carry out a geophysical survey (possibly resistivity) here to map out the possible position of any building on the site prior to excavation.

It would also be useful to research the form of the Manor House prior to the fire, possibly through Lincoln College archives. Drawings or plans could help to shed light on the structure of the south wing and provide dating evidence for the building. The owner of the current brick-built house also referred to it having an older core and this would be interesting to investigate further.

Results

Spit/context	Type of deposit	Description	Soil sample	Drawings
Spit (101)	Layer below turf (100)	0.05m of turf and topsoil removed by hand; spit 0.2m deep. Dark brown highly organic sandy silt. Angular limestone fragments 10-55mm, some burnt, and some rounded pebbles, 10-30mm. Finds: Fragments of charcoal, roofing tile (some clearly medieval), pottery (post-medieval, medieval Brill ware and Roman) metal objects including nails, glass (some fused), animal bone, shell and 2 flint flakes. The spit was much disturbed by roots and worm action. Garden soil, very organic and much disturbed, with clear evidence of burning and destruction.		
Spit (102)	Layer: below (101)	Diffuse boundaries with spit (101) above, but lighter and less organic with fewer finds. Some limestone and pebbles. Clear boundaries with feature [103] contained within it. 0.03-0.08m deep. Finds: charcoal, tile, glass and pottery of different periods. One worked flint. Garden soil, disturbed and showing evidence of burning and destruction.		Sketch plan
Feature [103]	Feature: below	Mid yellowish brown clayey silt containing small gravel and larger limestone fragments 10-30mm. Visible initially		Sketch plan

	(102)	as narrow 60mm band within (102) running parallel with northern edge of pit and 0.3m to south of it, across the full width of the pit. This deposit lay within a trench with vertical cut to south, 0.1m deep, with flattish bottom. Clear boundaries with (102) overlying it and abutting to south. 0.07m deep. Finds: 1 piece of pottery Foundation trench and clay fill for a substantial wall, possibly part of a building		
Context (104)	Layer: below (102), abutting [103]	Mid greyish-brown sandy silt containing a few rounded pebbles c30mm. Clear boundaries with (102) and [103]. 0.20-0.25m deep. Finds: extensive spread of stones (some burnt) and tile running southward from feature [103] and reducing to south of pit. Limestone moderately sorted and flattish, sizes 130 x 110 x 30 – 90 x 80 x 30mm. Fewer stones at lower levels. Charcoal flecks throughout and some concentrated patches to centre south and NE. Some bone and one oyster shell. Tumble from collapsed wall.	1	Sketch plan
Context (105)	Layer: below [103], abutting (104)	Mid greyish-brown sandy silt containing poorly sorted stones (one 100 x 60 x 40mm ?dressed) , a few pebbles (20-30mm). Not fully excavated to natural. Finds: some tile, bone and medieval pottery. Boundaries distinct with [103] and diffuse with (104). Domestic layer predating building destroyed by fire.		Sketch of section

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Spit (101)

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Top of Spit (102) looking west

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ure [103] exposed, looking south
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Feat



Context (104), looking south-west

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Context (104) & Feature [103] (top), looking north
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Context (104) (top left) Feature [103] (top right); Cut [103] with Context (105) exposed (bottom right) & Context 104 (bottom left), looking west

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Before closing, looking west