

EOXP TEST PIT 37
Oxeye Court, Greater Leys, Oxford.

Area excavated: 1m x 1m

Date of Excavation: 12th and 13th May 2012

Conditions: Day 1 and 2 - Sunny, Dry, Windy

Excavators: Paul Rowland, Jayne Moore, Jane Parkinson.

Report By: Jayne Moore, Jane Parkinson, Paul Rowland

GPS location and height over sea level: SP 5538 0199, 68m OD

The evidence from this test pit is in the area of the Roman pottery manufactory that is known to have occupied this area. Recent landscaping after building work, and previous years of ploughed farmland has since occurred.

Summary of Excavation

The location of this test pit was determined by the following two factors: a test pit previously dug by the owner around the time of the Time Team Big Dig and before the East Oxford Project had started (which produced Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery, there was also the possibility of a ditch or other feature located in the bottom of the test pit as discussed with the then county archaeologist); the second factor was the volume of pottery found in the flower beds around the boundary of this property.

The test pit was dug to a depth of 0.3m in two spits, with a further 0.5m in a sondage 0.5m x 0.5m in the northwest corner of the pit. The natural geology was reached.

There were clear boundaries between spits/contexts, with the first one being clearly topsoil. There was evidence of contamination and re-depositing due to building work, with some presence of building material into context 102. Spit 2 (101) comprised of sticky clayey silt and was mid yellowish brown, a distinct contrast to the dark brown topsoil in Spit 1 (100). Context 102 also brought a sudden change in presentation being yellowish grey sticky clay, but undulating rather than a distinct even layer. Again context 103 was distinct being mid brownish yellow sandy clay. Context 104 was diffuse to context 103 and of similar composition; this context was above the natural layer of blue/grey clay.

Results

Spit/con text	Type of Deposit	Description	Soil sample	Drawings
Spit (100)	Turf and topsoil	0.16m of turf and topsoil removed by hand. Dark brown sticky sandy clay, friable to firm and damp. Inclusions: Pebbles (some broken) < 2% and moderately rounded. Angular limestone < 1%. Contamination: roots ants and worms. Boundary: Clear sudden change to sticky clayey silt. Finds: Ceramic Building Material		Sketch plan

		<p><3%. Pottery <1%, modern metal <1%, modern pottery <1%. INCL RB</p> <p>Turf and topsoil soil, part of landscaping after building work completed.</p>		
Spit (101)	Layer: below (100)	<p>0.13m of mid yellowish brown firm damp sticky clay silt removed by hand.</p> <p>Inclusions: Modern Concrete, Limestone, large angular Limestone (largest 0.11m x 0.15m x 0.06m) total <5%. Pebbles <1% small range of sizes. Small angular Limestone <2%, Wood <1%</p> <p>Boundary: Clear sudden change to yellowish grey sticky clay (102).</p> <p>Finds: abraded Pottery, abraded modern pottery, modern plastic all <1%.</p> <p>At 0.27m (E) and 0.22m (W) level at which larger chunks of limestone found (x 5, max size 0.2m)</p> <p>Layer below turf and topsoil probable make up layer.</p>		Sketch plan
Context (102)	Layer: below (101) in sondage	<p>Sondage dug in NW corner of trench 0.5m x 0.5m</p> <p>0.23m of yellowish grey damp very firm sticky clay. Removed by hand and spade.</p> <p>Inclusions: Pebbles <2%. Limestone <2%. Slag <1%, Slate <0.5%, Shell <0.01%.</p> <p>Boundary: Clear undulating sudden change to sandy clay.</p> <p>Finds: Pottery very abraded <1%, Ceramic Building Material <2%, potential Mortaria <1%.</p> <p>Most likely to be the level of soil whilst this was farm land, before the house building took place.</p>		Sketch plan
Context (103)	Layer: below (102) in sondage	<p>0.22m of firm but damp mid yellowish brown sandy clay</p> <p>Inclusions: Pebbles <1%. Limestone <0.5%.</p> <p>Boundary: Clear sudden change to sandy clay.</p>		Sketch plan

		<p>Finds: Pottery with slip (black and red) <2%, Mortaria <1%.</p> <p>Most likely a layer of re-deposited natural.</p>		
Context (104)	Layer: below (103) in sondage	<p>0.08m of firm mid brownish yellow sandy clay.</p> <p>Inclusions: Pebbles small and medium <15%. Charcoal <1%</p> <p>Boundary: Clear sudden undulated change to natural blue/grey clay.</p> <p>Finds: 1 small piece of eroded terracotta.</p> <p>Bottom of spit lies on very fine natural blue/grey clay.</p> <p>Limit of excavation (LOE)</p>		Sketch plan and sketch of section

Photographs



Test pit 37 after removal of turf and topsoil (Spit 100) looking south



Top of context 102 after removal of context 101



Top of context 103 in sondage after removal of context 102



Natural in sondage after removal of context 104



Section of test pit 37 looking north in sondage