

Test Trench Excavation Summary, Housepit 2

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Housepit Location and Description

Housepit 2 is located in the west-central portion of the site (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig.1**). It is large, circular in outline, bowl-shaped, and measures 19.5 m in diameter by 1.5 m deep. Surficially, its floor is slightly concave, the sides are moderately steep, and the rim and lip are well-pronounced.

The stratigraphy (**Fig. 1**) and diagnostic projectile points indicate that the housepit contains occupations belonging to three cultural horizons:

- (1) Kamloops horizon (ca. 1,200–200 BP);
- (2) Plateau horizon (ca. 2,400–1,200 BP). and;
- (3) Shuswap horizon (ca. 4,000–2,400 BP) (Richards and Rousseau 1987).

Of the three horizons represented, only the occupations related to the Kamloops horizon remain intact. The previous occupations belonging to the Plateau and Shuswap horizons were disturbed and displaced to the edge of the house by the Kamloops horizon occupants.

Test Trench Excavation Results

Stratum I

Stratum I is backdirt deposited by pot hunting activities which consists mostly of Strata II and III deposits from the very northern end of Square A. It is a dark gray-brown silt containing a moderate amount of angular pebbles and disturbed cultural deposits.

Stratum II

Stratum II is comprised of post-occupational surface deposits consisting of a dark gray-black humus (Ah horizon). It contains very few small pebbles, and appears to have originated by aeolian deposition and slopewashing. Cultural materials (mostly lithic waste flakes) are contained within this stratum, but are not as abundant as in the strata lying immediately beneath it.

Stratum III

Stratum III represents roof fill associated with the Kamloops horizon occupation represented in Squares A and B. It is particularly evident in Square A where it is thickest, and it can be traced throughout Square C. This roof fill is comprised of a dark gray-brown silt with high small angular pebble content. A good quantity of cultural materials were secured from this roof stratum, including three Kamloops side-notched points from Square A.

Stratum IV

Stratum IV represents Kamloops horizon floor deposits and is only evident in Squares A and B. It separates two lenses comprising Feature 1, and occupies the upper half of Feature 2. It consists of a medium gray-brown silt with a low frequency of angular pebbles, and it has a high frequency of cultural materials.

Stratum V

Stratum V is a sterile, light yellow-brown glacial till consisting of clay, silt, and angular pebbles. It defines the lower limit of the Kamloops horizon occupation in Squares A and B. In Square B and in the northern half of

Square C this sterile till appears to have been intentionally displaced from around Features 1 and 2 to the north during the construction of the Kamloops horizon house. This stratum has a close similarity in composition to Stratum IX, although Stratum IX has a greater small pebble content.

Stratum VI

Stratum VI occupies the upper aspect of Feature 1, and is a lens of medium orange brown burnt silt and ash. Associated with this lens were several large pieces of fire cracked rock and small chunks of diffusely scattered charcoal. It appears to be the extreme southwest corner of a hearth feature which lies buried to the northeast. It represents the final use-episode of Feature 1 during the Kamloops horizon occupation.

Stratum VII

Stratum VII represents the basal use of Feature 1 associated with the Kamloops horizon house floor (Stratum IV). It is a dark gray black silt with angular pebbles and high charcoal content. It appears to represent a hearth deposit, and may extend beyond the northeast corner of Square A.

Stratum VIII

Stratum VIII is an oval, basin-shaped lens of dark gray-brown silt with angular pebbles and cultural material. It occupies the bottom of Feature 2, which represents the erection of a vertical roof support post. A large, shallow, basin-shaped depression measuring ca. 60 cm north-south by 80 cm east-west was dug into sterile sub-floor deposits (Stratum V), the post was then set in the western edge of the basin, and the basin surrounding the post was then filled in with floor deposits to secure it in place. The post

measured 23 cm in diameter and extended 10 cm into the sterile matrix at the bottom of the basin. Stratum VIII is associated with the Kamloops horizon occupation of the house.

Stratum IX

Stratum IX is similar to Stratum V in color and content, however it differs in that it has a high percentage of small- and medium-sized angular pebbles. This stratum is interpreted to be the very southern edge of the Kamloops horizon occupation house floor. The western wall clearly exhibits this same Stratum, and a burnt log (Feature 3) with an oblique orientation was atop the southern edge of this gravelly deposit. Perhaps the gravelly matrix was intentionally placed around the periphery of the house floor for drainage(?).

Stratum X

Stratum X consists of Shuswap horizon and possibly Plateau horizon house floor deposits, which were dug from the center of the house and were redeposited along the house rims during the Kamloops horizon occupation. It is a loose, dry, medium gray-brown silt with angular pebbles, small pieces of diffusely scattered charcoal, and cultural material. An "eared" Shuswap horizon projectile point was recovered from this stratum in Square C.

Stratum XI

Stratum XI also consists of displaced floor deposits belonging to Plateau and/or Shuswap horizon occupations. It is a loose, light gray-brown dry silt and sand with a high incidence of angular pebbles, some clay

patches, and cultural materials. A Plateau horizon projectile point and corner-notched point were recovered from this stratum in Square C.

Stratum XII

Stratum XII is comprised of disturbed and redeposited Plateau horizon floor deposits displaced from the house center. It is a light gray-brown slightly compact silt with angular pebbles and cultural materials.

Strata X to XII

Strata X to XII indicate that the house had been occupied prior to the Kamloops horizon during both Shuswap and Plateau horizons. The dryness of these strata resulted in the preservation of many fish bones, which appear to be salmon.

Stratum XIII

Stratum XIII is a light gray-white compact sterile clay, which may be the edge of a house belonging to either the Shuswap or Plateau horizon. Such clay stratum are often found along the edges of house floors, or at the edge of the roof.

Excavation Summary and Conclusions

In summary, HP 2 appears to have been initially constructed and occupied during the Shuswap horizon (ca. 4,000–2,400 BP). The basally “eared” projectile point from Stratum X suggests sometime between ca. 3,500–3,000 BP (Richards and Rousseau 1987). The house was also apparently occupied during the Plateau horizon, as indicated by the corner-notched point from Stratum XI. Its large size suggests a date between 2,400–1,600 BP.

During the subsequent Kamloops horizon, the stratigraphy indicates that the cultural deposits contained in the floor of the house were excavated out and heaped on the house rim. Intentional modification of the sterile sub-floor deposits (Stratum V) is indicated, particularly in Squares B and C. The Kamloops horizon occupation is confined only to the very bottom of the house depression (**Fig. 1**) and it is clear that it did *not* extend to include the house walls of earlier structures. The Kamloops horizon deposits are thus smaller in extent, but appear to be intact, and are represented by Strata III, IV, VI, and VII.

References

- Richards, Thomas H., and Michael K. Rousseau
1987 *Late Prehistoric Cultural Horizons on the Canadian Plateau.*
Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Publication
No. 16, Burnaby, British Columbia.

Figure 1. East wall profile and floor plan of HP 2, Squares A, B, and C

Legend			
Stratum	Munsell		Description
I	10 YR 2/1	Dark gray brown	Pot hunter's backdirt from spoil in the north end of Square A. Silt with angular gravel and cultural material.
II	10 YR 2/0	Dark gray black	Humus (A horizon). Surficial deposits.
III	10 YR 2/1	Dark gray brown	Silt with angular gravels and cultural material. It separates two lenses comprising Feature 1 and occupies the upper half of Feature 2. Kamloops horizon roof fill.
IV	10 YR 3/1	Medium gray brown	
V	2.5 Y 4/4	Light yellow brown	
VI	7.5 YR 3/4	Medium orange brown	
VII	7.5 YR 2/0	Dark gray black	
VIII	10 YR 2/0	Dark gray brown	
IX	2.5 Y 3/2	Light gray yellow	
X	10 YR 3/1	Medium gray brown	
XI	10 YR 3/2	Light gray brown	
XII	2.5 Y 4/2	Light gray brown	
XIII	10 YR 3/2	Light gray white	

Figure 1: Stratum Legend for Housepit 2

- I Pot hunter's backdirt from spoil in the north end of Unit A. Dark gray/brown silt (10 YR 2/1) with angular gravel and cultural material.
- II Surficial deposits. Dark gray black humus (AH horizon)(10 YR 2/0).
- III Kamloops horizon roof fill. Dark gray-brown silt (10 YR 2/1) with angular gravel and cultural material. Pebble content high.
- IV Kamloops horizon floor deposits. Medium gray-brown silt (10 YR 3/1) with angular gravels and cultural material. It separates two lenses comprising Feature 1, and occupies the upper half of Feature 2.
- V Sterile glacial till. Light yellow-brown (2.5 Y 4/4) clay and silt with angular gravels. Compact. Appears to have been dug into during Kamloops horizon occupation.
- VI Medium orange brown burnt silt and ash (7.5 YR 3/4). Associated with uppermost use of Feature 1. Probably a small hearth associated with Kamloops horizon occupation.
- VII Initial Kamloops horizon use of Feature 1. Dark gray-black silt (7.5 YR 2/0) with angular pebbles. Appears to be hearth.
- VIII Basal fill in Feature 2 (Post mould complex). It appears to have deposited into the depression, which was excavated to accommodate the post mould evident in the floor plan. A dark gray brown (10 YR 2/0) silt with angular pebbles and cultural material. Kamloops horizon occupation.

- IX Sterile sub-floor deposits at edge of Kamloops horizon house. A light gray-yellow silt (2.5 Y 3/2) with a high small pebble content. Similar to Stratum V.
- X Shuswap horizon deposits (disturbed by Kamloops horizon occupants). Probably originate from the center of house and represents the remains of the initial pithouse occupation. Medium gray brown silt (10 YR 3/1) with angular pebbles.
- XI Plateau/Shuswap deposits (disturbed). Likely originate from center of house. Light gray brown (10 YR 3/2) silt and sand, lots of pebbles, some clay, and cultural material.
- XII Plateau horizon deposits displaced from center of house. Light gray-brown (2.5 Y 4/2) silt, pebbles, cultural material.
- XIII Light gray white compact clay (10 YR 3/2)(sterile). Possible previous house edge.

Figure 1. East wall profile and floor plan of HP 2, Squares A, B, and C

