

## Test Trench Excavation Summary, Housepit 4 Mike Rousseau

### **Housepit Location and Description**

Housepit 4 is located in the southwestern section of the site (Vol. III, Preface, **Fig.1**), and is one of several house depressions in this portion of the site which are relatively small in diameter when compared to most of the other houses at the site. It is oval in outline, bowl-shaped, and measures 10.5 m north-south by 9.0 m east-west by 1.25 m deep. Surficially, its floor is concave, the sides are moderately steep, and the rim and lip are well pronounced.

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. 3,500–2,400 BP) (Richards and Rousseau 1987).

The Plateau horizon deposits are intact, and occupy the basal floor stratum (Stratum IV). The Kamloops horizon occupation is represented by a sparse lithic scatter immediately above the Plateau horizon roof fill deposits (Stratum III) and appears to represent either:

- (1) very short occupation of the house floor in a possible structure lacking an earth roof;
- (2) deposition of Kamloops horizon items by slopewash from the house rim; or
- (3) discard of items and refuse into the house depression shortly after its abandonment during Kamloops horizon times.

Shuswap horizon deposits were encountered in disturbed rim spoil strata contained in Square C (Strata VI to VIII). These deposits were displaced to the edge of the depression during the Plateau horizon occupation.

### **Test Trench Excavation Results**

#### **Stratum I**

Stratum I consists of an organic litter mat/humus layer about 3 cm thick, and it represents the contemporary ground surface. The associated matrix is a medium gray-brown (10 YR 3/2) silt with very few small pebbles. Cultural materials included sparsely distributed small lithic waste flakes.

#### **Stratum II**

Stratum II represents post-occupational aeolian and slopewash sediments which grade from a dark gray-black (10 YR 2/1) silt with a few angular pebbles in the center of the house, to a medium gray-brown (10 YR 4/3) silt with a moderate amount of angular pebbles at the southern house rim/edge. A Kamloops horizon projectile point preform was recovered in the upper aspect of this stratum in Square C, and another Kamloops point preform was recovered from the base of this stratum in Square A. A Kamloops side-notched point and a small corner-notched point diagnostic of the late Plateau/early Kamloops horizons (ca. 1,600–1,000 BP) were recovered from the basal aspect of Stratum II in Squares A and B respectively. The points and the preform from the bottom of this stratum *may* be indicative of a brief occupation deposited during the commencement of the Kamloops horizon (ca. 1,200–1,000 BP); however, the “floor” is poorly represented by sparse cultural material and it is possible

that these items were deposited by slopewashing or by intentional refuse discard. If indeed an early Kamloops horizon occupation is present, it appears to have been either a non-house occupation/encampment, or a structure lacking an earth roof was constructed and used. No definite roof deposit could be discerned above this questionable Kamloops horizon "floor."

### **Stratum III**

Stratum III represents roof fill associated with the basal intact Plateau horizon occupation, and is contained within Squares A and B. It varies in thickness from ca 10 cm in Square A to ca. 30 cm at the northern edge of Square B. It consists of a dark gray-brown (10 YR 3/2) silt with some angular pebbles in Square A, grading to a medium gray-brown silt at the southern end of Square B. A reworked Plateau horizon point was recovered from the southern edge of the stratum near the edge of the Plateau horizon house floor (Stratum IV). This point was probably redeposited in the roof fill during Plateau horizon times. A moderate quantity of tools and flakes as well as some bone were recovered from this stratum.

### **Strata IV and V**

This stratum represents Plateau horizon floor deposits which are contained within Squares A and B. It varies in thickness from 3 to 10 cm, and is comprised of a dark gray black (10 YR 2/1) silt with a few angular pebbles. This stratum contains an abundance of cultural materials, which include high lithic waste flake frequencies (predominantly basalt), lithic tools, faunal remains (mammal and fish), fire cracked rock, and charcoal chunks/bits. No diagnostic artifacts were recovered from the floor zone. Two vertically-

oriented post moulds (Features 1 and 3) were identified in Square A. Feature 1 was ca. 20 cm in diameter and extended only 3 cm into sterile subfloor deposits (Stratum XI). Feature 3 was ca. 15 cm and extended 11 cm into subfloor deposits. A small, circular, bowl-shaped hearth-pit (Feature 2) measuring ca. 40 cm in diameter by 10 cm deep was intersected in the western wall of Square A. A large, oval, basin-shaped, storage/refuse pit (Feature 4) (Stratum V) was intersected by the eastern wall of Square A. The matrix filling Feature 4 is a dark gray-brown (10 YR 2/2) silt with high cultural material content. Several large flake blanks, utilized flakes, retouched flakes, and a moderate quantity of fish and mammal bone were secured from this pit feature.

### **Strata VI and VII**

These strata represent Shuswap horizon deposits displaced from the house floor to the rim during the Plateau horizon occupation. These strata both consist of loose, dry, light gray-brown (2.5 Y 4/4) silt with lots of angular gravel and cultural materials. Stratum VII differs from VI in its higher organic matter content which includes birch bark rolls, puccoon nuts, charcoal, and bone. A Shuswap horizon projectile point was secured from Stratum VII. These deposits indicate that this house (or area of the site) was initially inhabited in Shuswap horizon times, and was displaced in Plateau horizon times.

### **Stratum VIII**

This is a sterile, light gray-brown (10 YR 5/2) compact mixture of clay and silt. It is contained in the southern half of Square C, and it *may* represent the extreme southern edge of a possible Shuswap horizon occupation/house

floor. Alternately, it may have been deposited during Plateau horizon times as part of the house construction activities.

### **Stratum IX**

This is a natural, sterile, possible buried Ah soil horizon comprised of light yellow-brown (10 YR 5/6) sand and silt. It appears to represent a stable ground surface, which was buried during Shuswap and/or Plateau horizon times.

### **Stratum X**

Stratum X is also a natural sterile buried soil horizon beneath Stratum IX which is comprised of medium brown (10 YR 4/3) silt, clay, and pebbles. It is horizontal in Square C, and in the south end of Square B it has slumped slightly at the edge of the Plateau horizon house edge.

### **Stratum XI**

Stratum XI is a compact, yellow-brown (10 YR 4/3) mixture of silt, clay, and angular pebbles. It occupies Square A and the northern half of Square B. It is possible that this stratum was culturally deposited as intentional subfloor fill immediately prior to the deposition of the Plateau horizon floor deposits. This is suggested by the disconformity of this sterile stratum with sterile Stratum XII to the south.

### **Stratum XII**

Stratum XII is a densely compact, sterile, light gray (10 YR 4/3) clay and silt occupying the southern half of Square B and all of Square C. Two bench-like features (Features 5 and 6) were intentionally excavated into this

stratum during the Plateau horizon occupation to form the southern edge of the house floor.

### **Excavation Summary and Conclusions**

In summary, HP 4 (or the area where HP 4 is now located) was initially occupied during the Shuswap horizon (ca. 4,000–2,400 BP). These deposits were displaced to the rim of the Plateau horizon house, which is represented in the intact basal house floor deposits (Stratum IV). A possible third component belonging to the beginning of the Kamloops horizon is weakly represented immediately above the Plateau horizon roof fill (Stratum III) within the bottom of Stratum II.

### **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 Captions**

Figure 1: Housepit 4 east wall profile and floor plan.

#### **Figure 1: Stratum Legend for Housepit 4**

- I Littermat/Duff layer. Consists of high organic component within a medium gray-brown (10 YR 3/2) silt.
- II Mostly post occupational deposition of aeolian and slopewash sediments. This stratum grades from dark gray black (10 YR 2/1)

in the north end of the trench to medium gray brown (10 YR 4/3) silt and a few angular pebbles. A brief Kamloops horizon occupation may be contained in this stratum.

- III Plateau horizon roof fill deposits. A dark gray-brown (10 YR 3/2) silt with lots of angular pebbles and cultural materials.
- IV Intact Plateau horizon house floor. A dark gray black (10 YR 2/1) silt with some angular pebbles, fire cracked rock, charcoal, cultural material. Confined to units A and B. Associated with Stratum V of Feature 4. Stratum IVA is a light yellow gray ash lens above burnt wood.
- V Feature 4 (storage/refuse pit fill). A dark gray-brown (10 YR 2/2) silt with high cultural material content. Appears to relate to the Plateau horizon house floor.
- VI Shuswap horizon deposits displaced from the center of the house. A light gray-brown (2.5 Y 4/4) silt with lots of angular gravel.
- VII Shuswap horizon deposits (displaced) similar to VI with high organic content (birch bark, puccoon nuts, charcoal, bone). Loose, dry.
- VIII Sterile light gray brown (10 YR 5/2) compact clay/silt which may be edge of Shuswap horizon house floor or roof fill.
- IX Possible buried Ah soil horizon. A sterile light yellow brown (10 YR 5/6) sand and silt.
- X Sterile medium brown (10 YR 4/3) silt. Buried soil.
- XI Sterile glacial till. Yellow-brown (10 YR 4/3) silt, clay, pebbles.
- XII Sterile glacial till. Light gray (10 YR 4/3) clay/silt.

Figure 1. Housepit 4 east wall profile and floor plan.

