

## Extra-Housepit Excavation 22—Summary of Excavation

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Approximately ten depressions were recorded on the ridge overlooking the Fraser Canyon to the south of the site, and two were chosen for investigation. Although the group of depressions are located on the opposite side of Keatley Creek from the main group of house pit house depressions, it was suggested that the ridge might have served as a lookout position due to its unique view of the river terraces to the south and west of the site. It was thought that the depressions, with diameters between three and four meters each, might have been the remains of structures which served as sentinel huts. The purpose of the investigation of two of the depressions that were situated on the edge of the ridge was to establish if, in fact, they were the remains of the huts. One of these two depressions was EHPE 22 (Volume III, Preface, **Fig. 1**).

If floors were discovered similar to the ones found in the house pit depressions at the other locations within the site, then it could be inferred that the depressions were the remains of structures. If the investigation showed that there were no identifiable floors then it could be established that the depressions served another purpose. Other possible uses of the depressions were as cache pits or roasting pits. Below surface disturbances tend to extend to a deeper level in cache pit depressions, containing obvious back fill strata and an admixture of faunal remains. Roasting pits may be shallow or deep but are most readily characterized by fill that is saturated with charcoal deposits. Therefore establishing the difference between a depression used as a living structure and ones used as caches or roasting pits is a straight forward matter, except in the situation where depressions have

had more than one use. EHPE 22 was investigated by excavating a trench 100 cm by 50 cm to a depth of 110 cm (**Fig. 1**).

### **Stratigraphy**

*Stratum I:* This stratum was composed of 20% rock and appears to be colluvium or fill that has filled in the depression. It conforms to the natural slope of the edge of the pit feature and at its center it is about 15 cm thick, thinning in an up slope direction.

*Stratum II:* This stratum appears to be a secondary pit feature used and filled in after the main cache pit was used. Stratum II is also composed of 20% rock and is mainly distinguishable from the Stratum I by an interface zone with slope lines. The infilled matrix conforms to a shape that drops in the south end of the depression indicating that the digging and filling of this stratum was an event taking place sometime after lower levels of the main fill were deposited.

*Stratum III:* This stratum represents the main depositional event and extends as deep as 110 cm below the surface. Disturbance by rodent burrowing is intensive. The matrix is looser and softer than the overlying strata. It is composed similarly of 20% rock but is also of a brown color, rather than a grayish color characterizing the overlying strata. Stratum III dips down even farther than 110 cm in the north end of the pit. Further investigation was not carried out due to the fact that enough information had been gathered to establish that the pit was not used as a residential structure.

All of the strata contained small amounts of charcoal. Stratum III particularly contained large chunks up to 5 cm in total length. The charcoal

appeared to be part of the pit fill due to the fact that it was randomly dispersed throughout the stratum. There was a notable increase in the amount of charcoal in a downwards direction in Stratum III. Near the top, the concentration was below 2% and near the bottom it approached closer to 5% charcoal concentration. Due to the fact that there was no evidence of fire it is difficult to pinpoint the source of the charcoal. Nevertheless the source of the charcoal was not *in situ* because of its random placement. In addition, concentrations of charcoal were not great enough to indicate that the pit was used for roasting activities.

Within Stratum I or at the interface between Stratum I and II, a tip of a projectile point was found. The point was not likely associated with pit digging, caching, or infilling activities but may have been deposited before or after these activities took place. If it was deposited before, then it was probably secondarily deposited during back filling or through down slope movement of Stratum I material. It seems more likely that it was in primary context due to the fact that two similar projectile point fragments were found in the same level in EHPE 21, less than 5 m away.

Stratum I and II contained faunal and lithic materials in small amounts. Fish, bird, and mammal bone (one of each), and fragments of fish skull were recovered in Stratum II. Four lithic flakes were found. All of these materials were probably part of the backfill materials. One stone flake was found in Stratum III. None of these materials independently or together indicates what the cache pit was used for. The faunal remains may have been brought to the site by animals for example, where they were left and eventually mixed with cache pit fill. Lithic materials could be at this location due to lithic reduction behavior, and were then secondarily deposited with pit fill.

No living floor was discovered, but the excavating showed that the depression had been used as a cache pit. The strongest evidence for the use of the ridge as a cache pit location is the shape and depth of the culturally removed and re-deposited pit fill along with large pieces of bark liner and rolls of bark found near the bottom of the pit. The extent of depth was greater than 110 cm below the surface; much deeper than would be expected in a living structure. Near the bottom of the main fill zone large fragments of bark were discovered. The bark may have originally been used as a liner protecting cached food from the surrounding matrix. Interestingly, underlying a large bark fragment were a number of smaller pieces of rolled bark. Both the bark liner and the rolled bark were kept as samples. It is difficult to establish whether the rolled bark was cached or served some role in preservation similar to the bark liner.

### **Figures**

Figure 1: Surface plan and cross section oh EHPE 22.

# Extra Housepit Excavation 22

## West Wall Profile

Figure 1. Surface plan and cross section on EHPE 22.

