Quick Reference Test Pit Digging Guide

Step	Where to work	What to do
1	Booklet	Fill out all boxes on the front cover of your **Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record** booklet.
2	On marked test pit site	Measure out your 1 m square test pit with tape, string and nails.
3	Around test pit	Measure and draw a location sketch plan to record test pit location.
4	Near test pit	Lay out your plastic sheeting at least 2 m away from test pit.
5	Booklet	Fill in details on top right-hand side of the first **Context Record Sheet** page in your **Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record**
6	Booklet	Complete recording steps 1–4 on the **Context Record Sheet**, **including** drawing a plan of the surface of the pit in the gridded square at 1:10 scale.
7	Beside test pit	Line an empty finds tray with newspaper.
8	Beside test pit	Label a plastic resealable finds bag in permanent marker pen with the site-name, test pit number and context number, and place it in the finds tray.
9	In test pit	(Before first context ONLY) Remove turf (if present) with spade, in squares as neatly as possible.
10	In test pit & on spoil heap	Use mattock to loosen soil in test pit, and the shovel to put it into bucket. Keep the bottom of the test pit as level as possible and the sides straight. Try not to get soil on the grass.
11	On spoil heap	Sieve every bucketful of soil (holding the sieve over the plastic sheeting). Pick out of the sieve **anything** you see that looks **man-made** (these are your finds) and tip the residue onto the spoil heap on top of the plastic sheeting.
12	Beside test pit	Clean any finds and place them in the finds tray to dry (only put them in the finds bag when they are dry).
13	In test pit	Continue until you have removed 10 cm from the whole surface of the test pit.
14	In test pit	Use your trowel and hand shovel to remove all loose soil from the exposed surface and leave it level.
15	Booklet	Fill in the rest of the **Context Record Shee**t by filling in boxes steps 5–7.
16	Booklet	Begin your next context by starting a new **Context Record Sheet**, i.e. by returning to step 5.
Repeat steps 5–16 (omitting step 9) for context 2 and all subsequent contexts until you have finished your test pit, then go on to step 17.		
17	Booklet	Fill in the details on the top left hand side of the **FINAL Context Record Sheet** page in your **Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record** complete all 7 recording steps.
18	Booklet	Fill in all parts of the final **Section Drawing Sheets**.
19	In test pit	Back-fill your test pit and replace turf AS NEATLY AS POSSIBLE.
20	In test pit	Tidy site, collect up and clean your equipment and return with everything to the excavation base.

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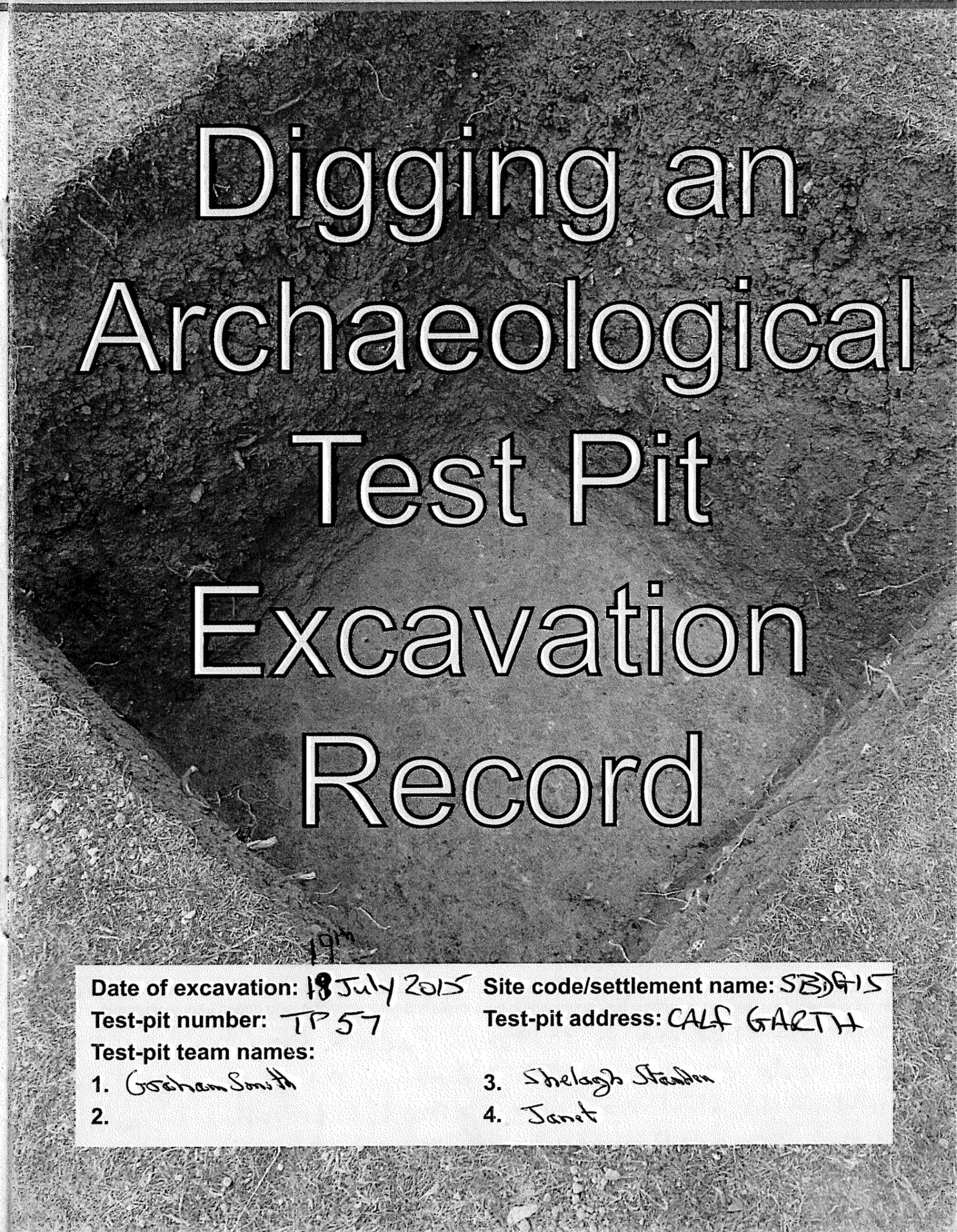
Digging an Archaeological Test Pit Excavation Record

Date of excavation: 18 July 2015 **Site code/settlement name:** SBD15

Test-pit number: TP 57 **Test-pit address:** CALF GARTH

Test-pit team names:

1. Graham Smith

2.

3. Shelagh Standen

4. Janet

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Test Pit Location Map

Site code: SBDG15

Test Pit number: TP57

Site measured by: Tom Sanders

Map drawn by: Tom Sanders

Test pit location recording checklist	
Task	**Tick when completed**
Measure and draw map of area around your test pit with North marked.	✓
Add written description of test-pit location	✓

1. Make a measured, labelled plan of the unexcavated surface the test pit, showing where it is in relation to features such as houses, boundaries, roads, walls etc which are marked on your Ordnance Survey map. Include lines showing the exact distances from your test pit to permanently identifiable points nearby such as buildings or ield corners. Show your test pit as a square with the corners numbered 1-4, to correlate with the numbers on each context plan in the **Context Record Sheets** in this **Record Booklet**.

2. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your map:

↑
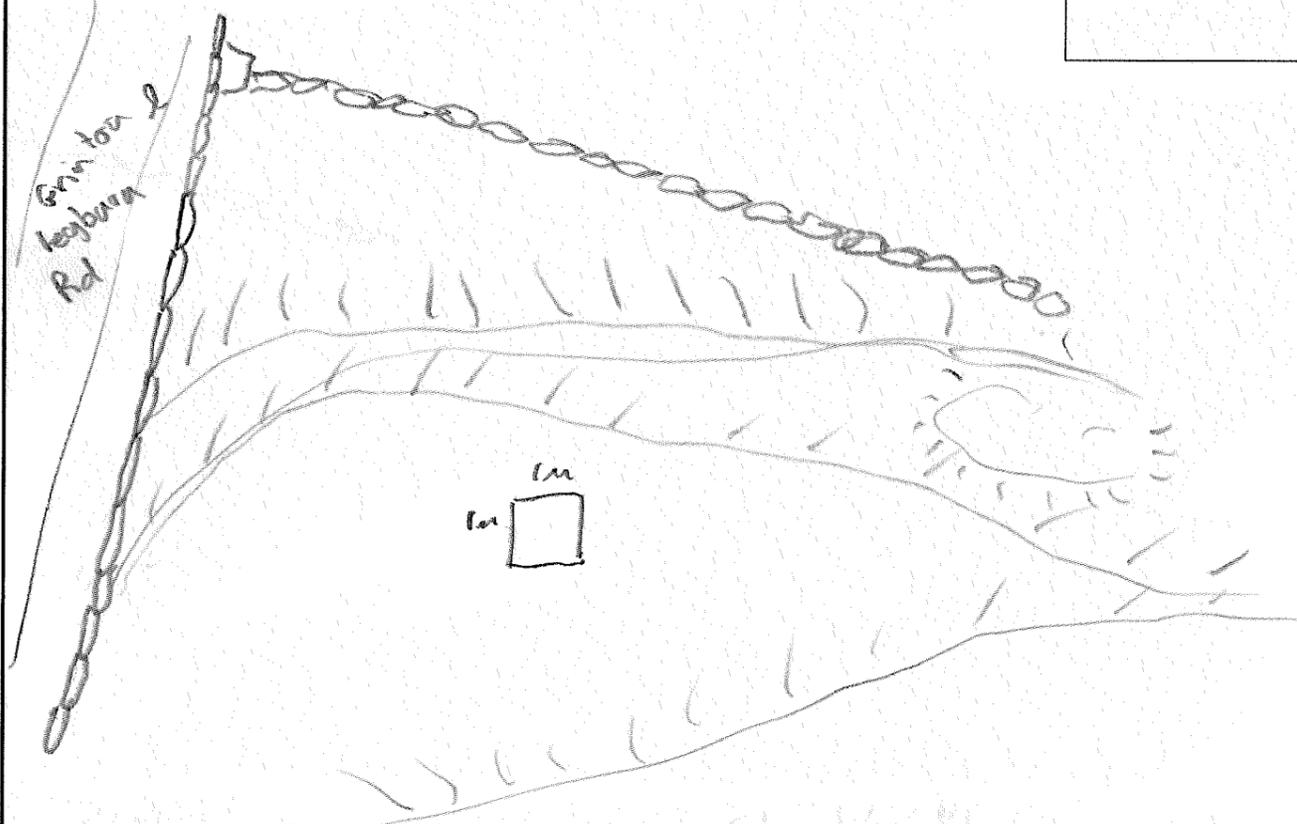
3. Describe where your test pit is, adding any notes which help explain this to someone who doesn't know your site:

Test pit lies on a terrace feature in a field on the East side of the Grinton & leyburn Rd in Grinton. The field in located halfway up the hill between properties to the north & south.

Section Drawings

Site code:

Test Pit number:

1	Ground surface	2
2	Ground surface	3
3	Ground surface	4
4	Ground surface	1

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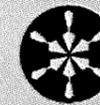# FINAL Context Record Sheet

Site code: [ ]   Test Pit number: [ ]   Context number: [ ]

Context recorded by: [ ]

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1   2   3   4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

1   Final (unexcavated) context plan   **2**

4   **3**

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Final Context Recording task checklist

Task (complete all these **before** starting to backfill)	Tick when completed
Photograph surface of bottom of test pit	
Draw plan of bottom of test pit	
Complete section drawings for all 4 sides of your test pit	
Ensure all finds are clean and in clearly labelled bags	
Fill in all sections on this **Final Context Recording Sheet**	

6. Did you excavate your test pit to natural? If not, explain why you stopped digging.

7. Use this space for your conclusions about how well your test-pit excavation went, what you think it revealed, any technical problems you encountered which may have affected the results, and any other thoughts that might be useful when writing up your test-pit excavation:

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBDG15**   Test Pit number: **TP57**   Context number: **1**

Context recorded by: **Tom Sanders**

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1   **0 cm**   2   **0 cm**   3   **0 cm**   4   **0 cm**

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

1   Context plan   **2**

Grass

4   **3**

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Tufts representing grass

Recording task checklist

Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this **Context Record Sheet**	✓

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 100	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

None

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBDG15**   Test Pit number: **TP57**   Context number: **2**

Context recorded by: **Tom Sanders**

Recording task checklist	
Task	**Tick when completed**
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	✓

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 10cm   2 10cm   3 10cm   4 10cm

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan: ↙

Context plan — (with sketch) "Soil" with pebbles

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

layer of soil.

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	%1	Flecks ✓	Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	%99	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	Y	%.01	Flecks ✓	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

Shotgun cartridge.
Bone fragments
Broken clay pipes (stems)
Pottery shards (Glazed, terracota)

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: [ ]   Test Pit number: [ ]   Context number: [ ]

Context recorded by: [ ]

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1   2   3   4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan

1 2
4 3

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Recording task checklist	
Task	**Tick when completed**
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	%
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?:

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

Context Record Sheet

Site code: SBDG15   Test Pit number: TP57   Context number: 3

Context recorded by: Tom Sanders

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1 20cm   2 20cm   3 20cm   4 20cm

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan

1 2
4 3

Soil

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

layer of soil and small amount of stone.

Recording task checklist	
Task	**Tick when completed**
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	✓

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 1	(Flecks)	(Small)	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 99	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	Y	% .01	(Flecks)	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

Pottery shards (handle, terracota)
Bone fragments
Masham Ware
Medevil Glaze Ware
Slag peice
Iron nail

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: ☐   Test Pit number: ☐   Context number: ☐

Context recorded by: ☐

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1   2   3   4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

1   Context plan   **2**

4   **3**

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Recording task checklist	
Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	%
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	
Fill in **all** of this **Context Record Sheet**	

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?:

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: [ ]   Test Pit number: [ ]   Context number: [ ]

Context recorded by: [ ]

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1   2   3   4

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan

1 [ ] 2
4 [ ] 3

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

Recording task checklist

Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	%
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?:

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: SB0G15   Test Pit number: TP57   Context number: 4

Context recorded by: Tom Sanders

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?

1 30cm   2 30cm   3 30cm   4 30cm

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

Context plan   ↑

1 [ ] 2

Soil

4 [ ] 3

4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:

layer of soil & small amount of stone.

Recording task checklist

Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	✓

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 25	Flecks ✓	Small ✓	Med ✓	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 75	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	Y	% .01	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).

Pottery shards (Glazed, terracota)

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Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBDG15**   Test Pit number: **TP57**   Context number: **5**

Context recorded by: **Tom Sanders**

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 **40cm** 2 **40cm** 3 **40cm** 4 **40cm**

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

| 1 | Context plan ↑ | 2 |
| 4 | Soil | 3 |
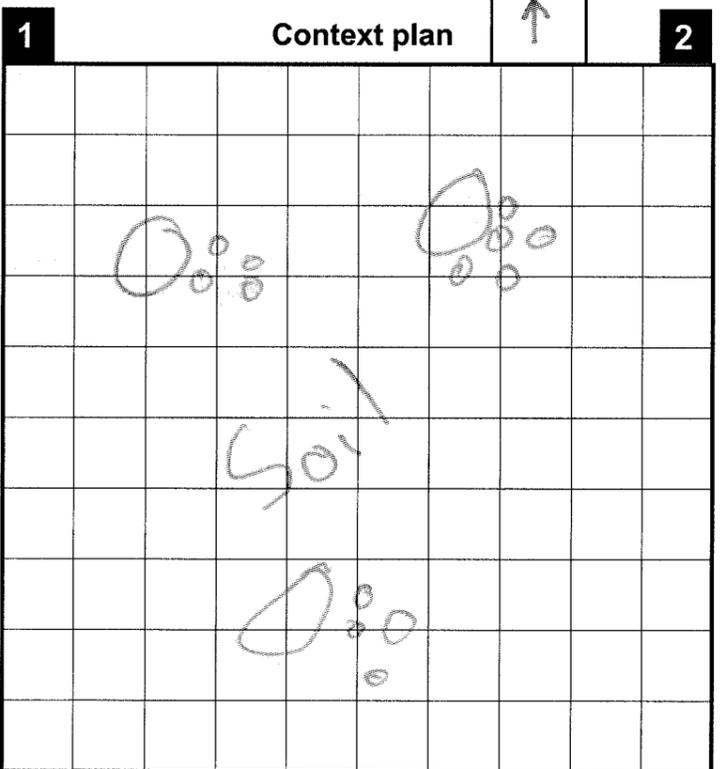
4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:
layer of soil & a amount of small & medium stone.

Recording task checklist

Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	✓

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 40	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 60	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).
Slag ?
Fired Clay Plug ?

Context Record Sheet

Site code: **SBDG15**   Test Pit number: **TP57**   Context number: **6**

Context recorded by: **Tom Sanders**

1. What depth is the surface of the top of this context at the four corners of your test pit (numbered in black boxes below)?
1 **50cm** 2 **50cm** 3 **50cm** 4 **50cm**

2. Make a measured, labelled plan of this context in the gridded square below (1 cm on paper = 10 cm in pit)

3. Draw an arrow here pointing in the direction of North on your plan:

| 1 | Context plan ↑ | 2 |
| 4 | | 3 |
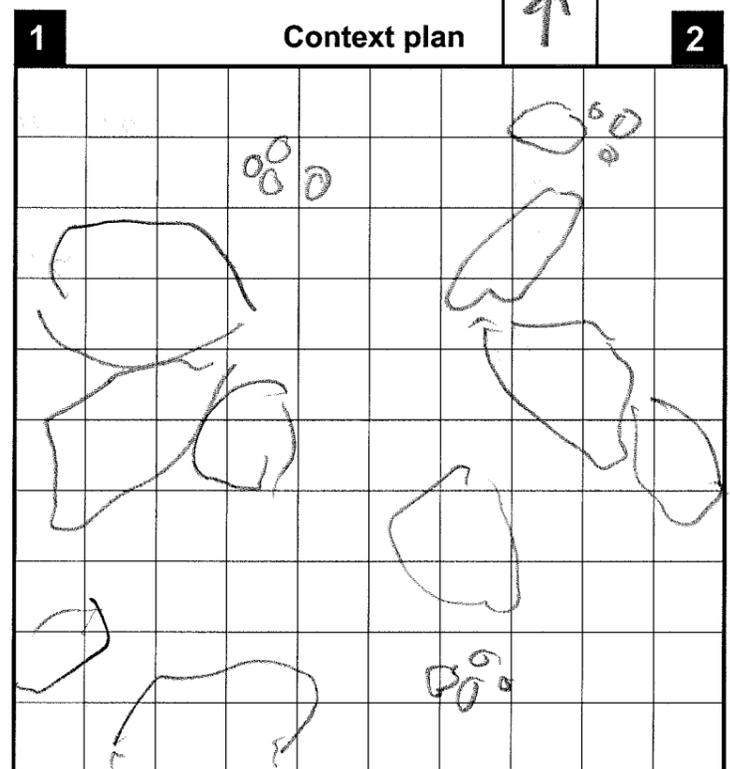
4. Describe what you've drawn on the plan, adding any notes which help explain what you have shown on your plan:
Soil and stone layer of large stone & various small and medium stones.

Recording task checklist

Task	Tick when completed
Photograph top of layer **before** starting to dig it	✓
Draw plan of top of context **before** starting to dig it	✓
Dig context, sieve spoil, keep and record finds (record percentage sieved)	100 %
Clean finds and place in clearly labelled finds tray to dry with labeled bag	✓
Fill in **all** of this Context Record Sheet	✓

5. Complete the boxes below to show what (apart from finds) was in this context (write non-listed inclusions into blank row if necessary):

	Present y/n	Percent-age?	Particle size (tick each box that applies)			
Stone	Y	% 50	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Sand	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Soil	Y	% 25	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Clay	Y	% 25	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
Charcoal	N	%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large
		%	Flecks	Small	Med	Large

6. What colour was this context?: 3

7. List the finds from this context. For each find, say what it is (or what it looks like) and what date it is (if you know).
None