

**75A HIGH ROAD, RAYLEIGH**

**ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING  
ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD  
SUMMARY**



**Essex County Council**

**Field Archaeology Unit**

**July 2007**

## ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

<b>Site name and address:</b> 75a High Road, Rayleigh	
<b>Parish:</b> Rayleigh	<b>District:</b> Rochford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 8020 9010	<b>Site code:</b> RL10
<b>Type of work:</b> Monitoring and recording	<b>Site director/Group:</b> P. Allen, Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Date of work:</b> 29/06/07	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 4.6 x 4.9m
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b> Southend. No finds	<b>Client:</b> Mr Paul Godfrey for the landowner
<b>Further work anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER Nos:</b> 13489
<b>Final report:</b> EAH summary	<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports:</b> Walker, H., 1990: Pottery from a Possible Late Medieval Kiln Dump at 77 High Road, Rayleigh, <i>Essex Archaeology and History</i> <b>21</b> , 92-102.	
<p><b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was carried out on the machine-excavation of foundation trenches for a conservatory at the rear of no. 75a High Road, Rayleigh (Figs 1 and 2; planning ref: ROC/0306/07), thought to be the site of a late medieval pottery kiln. When the present house was built in 1974 (as a sub-division of no. 77), trenches excavated by D.C. Macleod of Southend Museum recovered a relatively large amount (20kg) of late medieval pottery dating to c. 1350-1500, with a few pottery wasters and possible kiln props. A possible kiln flue, a burnt area and a cobbled surface were also recorded. The plan of the 1974 trenches has unfortunately not been preserved in the Southend Museum archives, and the precise location of the medieval remains within the house plot is not known. It has been assumed that the 1974 trenches were located in the area of the present house, but local knowledge suggests at least one trench was in the garden to its rear. Pottery kiln wasters from Rayleigh were identified by J.G. Hurst in 1958, but again no detailed records survive in the Southend Museum archives.</p> <p>A report published by Helen Walker (1990) has interpreted the pottery and related features as likely evidence of late medieval pottery manufacture on the outskirts of Rayleigh (Fig. 1). The pottery is classified as Rayleigh High Road ware. It is red-fired, often with a grey reduced surface, and consists mainly of fine ware jugs, many of which are glazed and have stamped decoration. Rayleigh High Road ware is very similar to the products of the earlier Mill Green industry in central Essex, and was most likely a later development of it.</p>	

No medieval pottery or stratigraphy was found in the foundation trenches for the conservatory (Fig. 2). Natural orange-pink brickearth with coarse gravel and sand patches was recorded at a depth of 1.0m beneath the patio surface (Fig. 2), sloping gently down to a depth of 1.3m in the south-east, following the natural slope of the ground. In the northern foundation trench the natural was sealed by light grey-brown sand-loam subsoil up to 0.2m thick (Figs 2 and 3, layer 2). This survived only at the west end of the trench and represents the only area of undisturbed original ground surface. The subsoil was truncated to the south-east, and the surface of the natural brickearth appears to have been truncated in all other areas of the foundation trenches. They were overlain by dark grey-brown silty loam topsoil (Fig 3, layer 1), 0.5-0.8m thick, containing occasional fragments of modern brick, tile and plain white china (all discarded). This layer represents disturbed spoil from construction of the present house, spread out to the south-east to create a terrace for the modern patio, which had a paved surface on a hardcore base bedded in sand.

The archaeological monitoring suggests that most of the area of the new conservatory had been disturbed during the previous building work in 1974, although it is possible that evidence of late medieval pottery manufacture may survive in the garden of no. 75a, or in adjacent plots.

**Author of summary:** Patrick Allen

**Date of summary:** July 2007



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Fig.1. Location plan

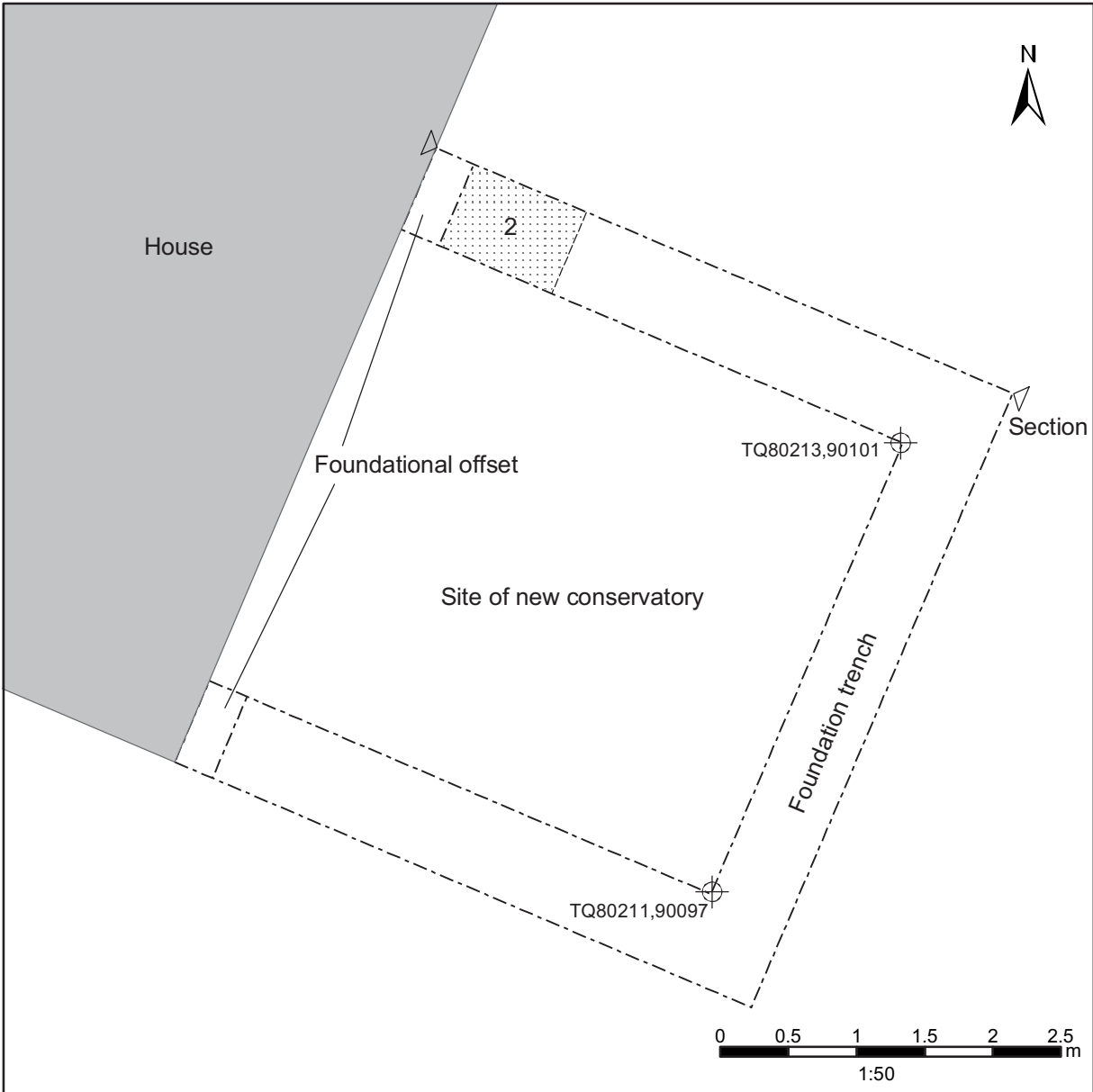


Fig.2. Trench plan

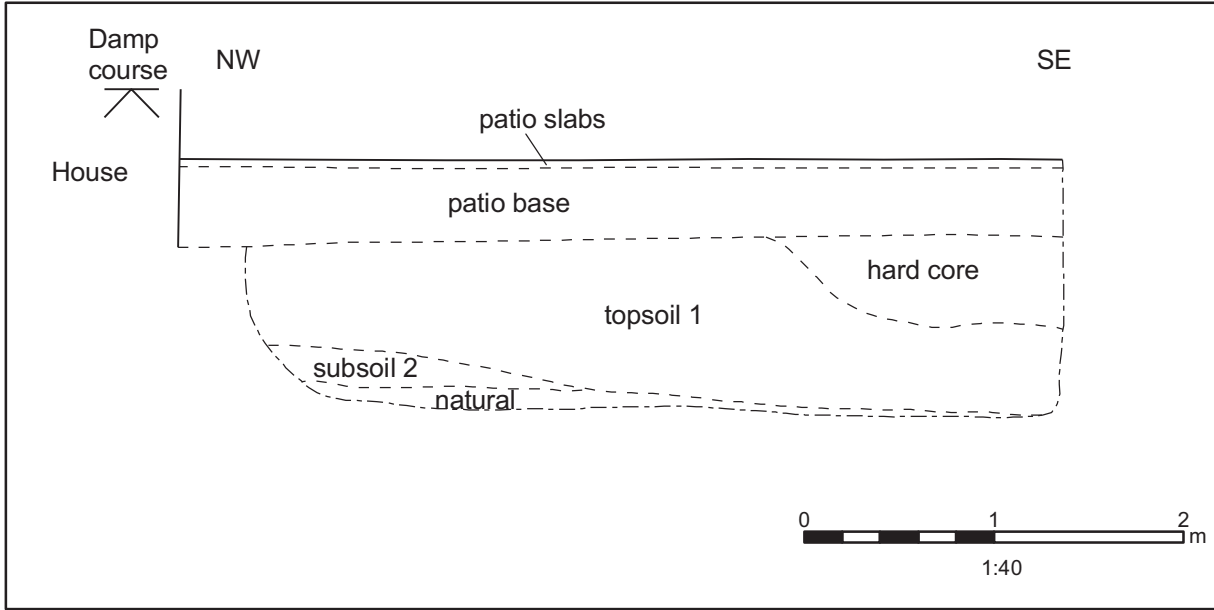


Fig.3. Section



Plate 1. Northern foundation trench, looking north-west.



Plate 2. Southern foundation trench, looking north-west.