

**59 SHEERING ROAD
HARLOW
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING SUMMARY



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

OCTOBER 2009

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: 59 Sheering Road, Harlow, Essex	
Parishes: Harlow	District: Harlow
NGR: TL 4846 1171	Site Code: HASR 09
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 29th July 2009	Size of Area Investigated: 199 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Harlow	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.:
Final Report: EAH summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 65752
Periods Represented: Post-medieval, modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><i>Introduction (Fig. 1)</i></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken at 59 Sheering Road, Harlow, Essex, during the construction of a new house extension, swimming pool and garage. The evaluation was undertaken in response to a recommendation made by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM) to the local planning authority that an archaeological condition be placed on planning consent due to the location of the development within an area of archaeological significance.</p> <p><i>House extension</i></p> <p>The foundation trenches for the new house extension were 0.65m to 0.70m wide and varied from 1m to 2m in depth. The overburden consisted of c. 0.30m of dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil, beneath which was 0.15m to 0.20m of natural light yellowish brown silty clay subsoil overlying more solid natural yellowish brown chalk-flecked clay with light grey mottling. The subsoil increased in thickness to 0.4m towards the west and took on a slight greenish hue. The south-western arm of the trench was heavily disturbed with up to 0.7m of mixed clay and modern brick rubble overlying orange brown natural clay.</p> <p><i>Garage</i></p> <p>The foundation trench for the new garage was c. 0.65m wide and varied in depth from 1.1m to 1.6m. Overburden within the trench generally comprised 0.14m of mid grey clay silt (topsoil) above 0.3m of mid greyish brown silty clay subsoil overlying light orangey brown to yellowish brown natural clay. The sequence was different in the north-west of the trench (Fig. 2) where rubble-covered greyish brown organic silty topsoil (1) overlay a mixed deposit of grey and yellow silty clay (2) with lenses and flecks of charcoal, ash and occasional lumps of baked clay. One sherd of 17th to 18th century pottery, possibly residual, was recovered from this deposit. Beneath was a layer of redeposited chalk-flecked yellowish brown clay (3) overlying slightly disturbed, but probably natural, mid greyish brown clay silt subsoil (4). Although partly obscured, deposit 2 appeared to continue around the north-west corner of the trench and covered an area of approximately 3m by 2m. Part of the south-east arm of the trench had clearly been disturbed and backfilled with mixed grey and brown silty clay (5) containing fragments of modern brick and concrete to a depth of 0.8m. An earlier concrete foundation was exposed at the southern end of this arm. Two residual finds were recovered from layer 5, one was a piece of clay pipe stem and the other a single sherd of late 18th to early 19th century pottery.</p>	

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Swimming pool

The footprint of the new swimming pool measured approximately 8.8m by 4.8m. Topsoil (0.35m deep) was removed under archaeological supervision to the top of the archaeological horizon by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed bucket. In the west of the trench a linear compacted deposit of greyish brown clay was noted. This deposit was investigated by means of a machine-cut sondage and found to be 0.15m deep. The compactness of the deposit and the presence of several fragments of modern brick indicated that it was of recent origin. Natural subsoil exposed in the remainder of the trench consisted of light yellowish brown silty clay flecked with chalk. A slightly darker, mid yellowish brown patch investigated by means of a second sondage was found to be a natural variation in colour. The subsoil was 0.2m thick and overlay solid natural yellowish brown chalk-flecked clay with light grey mottling.

Discussion

Contexts 2 and 3 in the north-west corner of the garage foundation trench were the only deposits encountered of potential archaeological interest. Observation of the surrounding sections suggested that both were the fills of a shallow cut. Deposit 3 was only visible in the drawn section and may just have been a cleaner, less mixed version of context 2. Only one sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered and it seems probable that this sherd is residual, like the other recovered finds, and that the cut is of more recent date. The cut was located within an area of potential modern disturbance formerly occupied by trees and outbuildings and adjacent to the property boundary, formerly demarcated by a hedge. Prior to the construction of 59 Sheering Road and neighbouring properties in the later 20th century the area was used as farmland.

Conclusion

Although the development was situated to the south of an area of known prehistoric and Roman activity, and to the north of the historic Churchgate Street, no remains positively pre-dating the modern period were identified.

A finds summary and table is included as Appendix 1 and context data as Appendix 2.

A copy of this summary will be submitted to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

Previous Summaries/Reports: None

Author of Summary: T. Ennis

Date of Summary: October 2009

APPENDIX 1

Finds report by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker

Several stages of work produced finds from two contexts only. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in the table below. The finds consist of two sherds of pottery and a post-medieval clay tobacco pipe stem fragment.

The pottery comprises one sherd of internally glazed post-medieval red earthenware, perhaps from a bowl, and one small fragment of creamware datable to the later 18th to early 19th centuries. The red earthenware shows traces of glaze on a broken edge; the glaze probably entered a crack in the vessel, showing that it would have been a semi-waster or second. Given the close proximity of the major pottery-manufacturing centre at Potter Street, Harlow, a couple of kilometres to the south, it could be a kiln waster. Waste pottery may have been transported some way from the kilns. For example, it could have been brought in for use as hardcore, but it is also possible that there were manufacturing sites outside Potter Street and that there might have been another production site in the vicinity.

No further work is required on any of the finds and, due to the small amount and relatively recent date, all have been discarded.

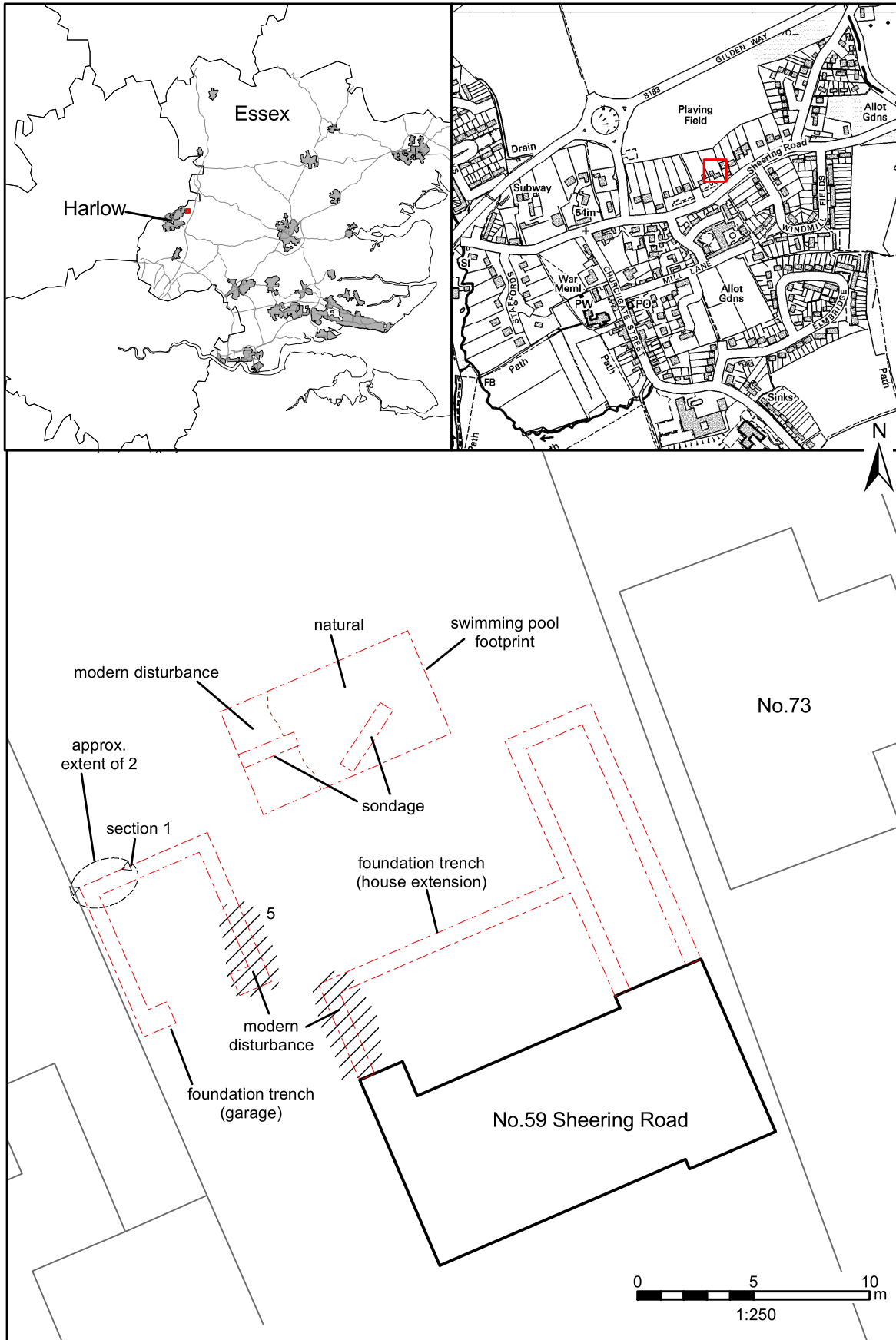
Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	Layer	1	20	Pottery; post-medieval red earthenware, internally glazed sherd	?17th-18th C
5	Deposit	1 1	6 1	Clay pipe stem Pottery; rim sherd, creamware, laminated	Post med. later 18th to early 19th C

APPENDIX 2

Context data

Context	Type	Description	Period
1	Layer	Mid greyish brown organic clay silt (topsoil), 0.16m thick	Modern
2	Fill/Layer?	Mixed grey and yellow brown silty clay, 0.35m thick	Modern?
3	Fill/Layer?	Redeposited yellow brown clay, 0.25m thick	Modern?
4	Layer	Mid greyish brown clay silt, 0.28m thick	Natural
5	Layer	Grey and brown silty clay, 0.8m thick	Modern



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Fig.1. Site location

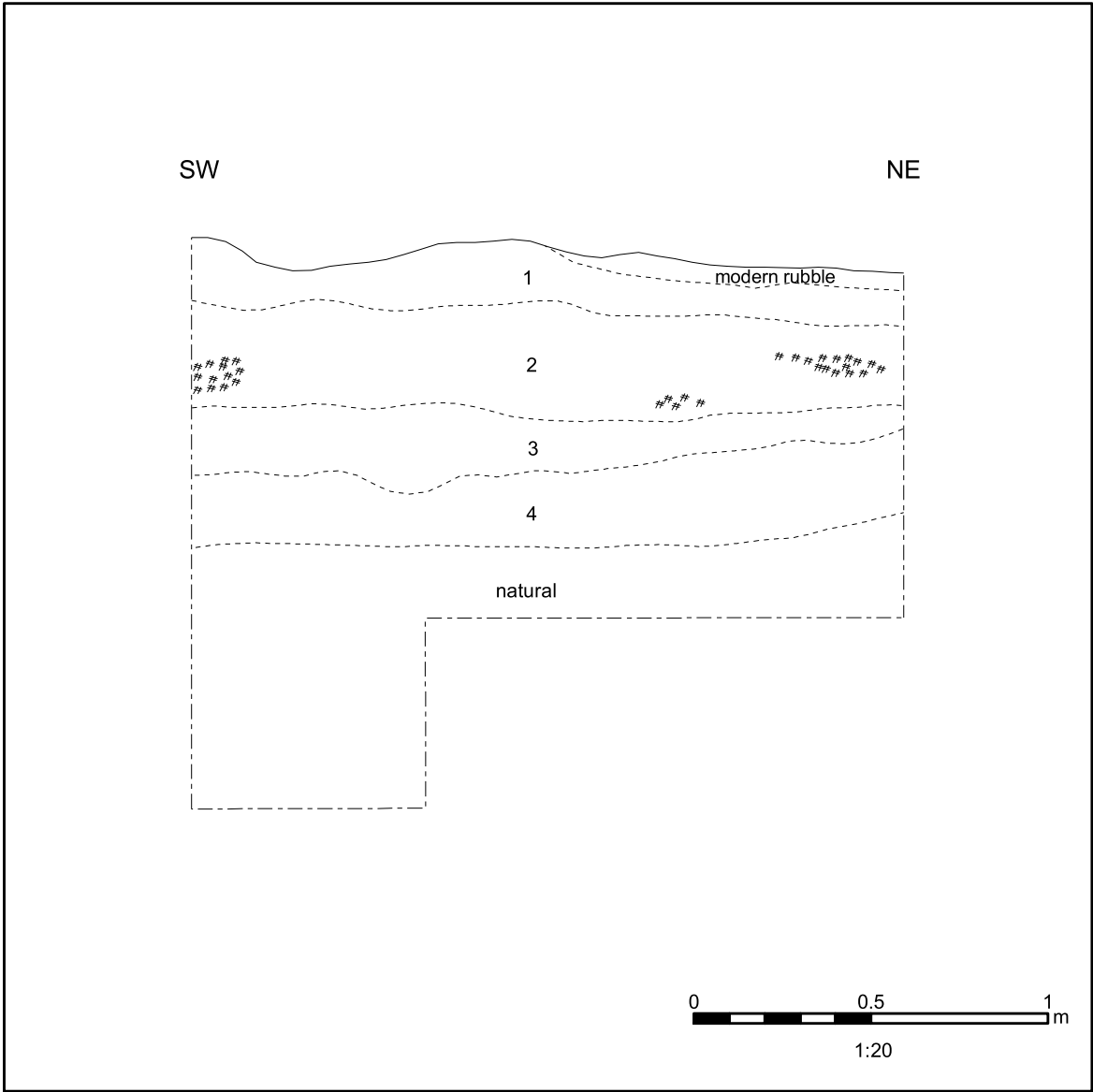


Fig.2. Section 1