HISTORIC TOWNS IN ESSEX
~RAYLEIGH~

HISTORIC TOWNS ASSESSMENT REPORT
1999

RAYLEIGH

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Essex County Council

RAYLEIGH
HISTORIC TOWN ASSESSMENT REPORT

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HISTORIC TOWN ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION
This report is an archaeological and historical assessment of Rayleigh and forms part of the Essex Historic Towns Survey. This is an extensive urban survey as defined by English Heritage (1992) of 32 historic settlements in Essex. This project, funded by English Heritage, forms part of a nationwide reassessment of the management of the urban archaeological resource. The project is being carried out by Essex County Council's Planning Department and takes as its basis a survey carried out by the County Council in the early 1980's. This was published as Historic Towns in Essex (Eddy and Petchey 1983) and adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the County and District Councils.

This report has been compiled using a number of sources, including the Essex Sites and Monuments Record (ESMR), the List of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Interest, records held by the County Planning Department's Historic Buildings Section, and various cartographic and documentary records (following an assessment of such records by Dr Chris Thornton of the Victoria County History, Essex). The preparation of this report has involved the addition of information to the ESMR database and the digitising of spatial data onto a Geographic Information System (GIS).

For the purposes of this study the Roman period is the time-span between 43-410, the Saxon period is 410-1066, the medieval period is 1066-1536, the post-medieval period is 1536-1900 and the modern period is 1900 to the present day. This corresponds to the period divisions used by the ESMR.

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY
Rayleigh is sited in Rochford District. It is located on the crest of a north-south ridge, a prominent feature in low-lying south-west Essex. The ridge is capped with Bagshot Sands. The land falls away steeply to the west of the town, although the slope is less severe on the east side. It is sited on the main route from Brentwood to Rochford.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN
The prehistoric and Roman periods are represented by a scatter of stray finds from around the town, but there is little evidence for any density of settlement in the immediate area before the late Saxon/early medieval period.

The Domesday Book demonstrates that there was a village at Rayleigh at the end of the Saxon period. Swein of Essex built his castle there at some point between 1066 and 1086, making it one of the earliest Norman castles in the country (Rumble, 1983). There is still a substantial motte and bailey on the site and the outer bailey was still visible within this century. It has been suggested that there was a hundredal market at Rayleigh market (Eddy and Petchey, 1983), and there are also references to a market and fair dating to 1227. Unlike other Essex towns attached to castles there is no evidence that there was ever a town enclosure, although it is possible that the outer bailey served a defensive function for the townsfolk.
There are two possible interpretations for the town morphology; either the market-place was a cigar-shaped widening of the High Street or that it was sited in the area between Bellingham Lane, London Hill and Church Street, forming an infilled elongated triangular market-place. The location of the church, which contains 12th-century elements, is on the eastern edge of the town, possibly marking the location of the original settlement.

The castle was abandoned in the 14th century, and the land used first as part of the royal stud, and then in the 17th century as a farmyard. The town appears to have remained as a small market town with a small but stable population until the beginning of the 20th century when the introduction of the railway led to its growth as a commuter town for London.

EVIDENCE

DOCUMENTARY

Summary assessment of the documentary and cartographic evidence
by Chris Thornton (Victoria County History)

The Honor and town of Rayleigh has a good collection of early account rolls which begin in the late 13th century and survive in broken series through the 14th century. Medieval court rolls material is more limited but a couple of examples survive. There is little surviving documentation for the 15th century, but a more or less continuous series of manorial records including court rolls and rentals survives from the mid-16th century onwards. In addition to the manorial material, there is a very large collection of deeds for Rayleigh in the E.R.O. and there also survives a large number of conveyances, grants and fines. There are medieval and later charters for the manors of Whateley, Rayleigh and Downhall in the collections of the B.L.. The records of Rayleigh Urban District Council are available for the 20th century. Few map sources have been located, and there is a long chronological gap between a single 16th century estate map and the next surviving maps from the mid-19th century. There is apparently no major secondary source. The V.C.H. Bibliography lists minor publications (Powell, 1959 & 1987).

Assessment of the place-name and documentary evidence
The place-name Rayleigh derives from the Old English *ræge leah* or 'wild she-goat [or female roe-deer] clearing' (Rumble 1935).

The Domesday Book (Rumble, 1983, 24.17-8) describes Rayleigh in 1066 and 1086.
Land of Swein of Essex
Hundred of Rochford
Swein holds Rayleigh in lordship as one manor, for 5 hides. Then 2 ploughs in lordship, now 3. Always 10 men's ploughs. Then 21 villagers, now 6; then 6 smallholders, now 15; always 2 slaves.
Meadow, 10 acres; woodland, 40 pigs; now 1 park; 6 'arpents' of vines and it pays 20 measures of wine if it does well. Then 4 cobs, 13 cattle, 25 pigs, 105 sheep; now 5 cobs, 2 foals, 20 cattle, 11 pigs, 80 sheep and 11 goats.
Value then £10; now, apart from the wine, as much.
In this manor Swein made his castle.
Of this manor, 4 Frenchmen hold 2 hides. 4 ploughs. 4 smallholders.
Value 60s in the same assessment

Swein holds Rayleigh in lordship, which 1 free man held before 1066 as a manor, for 2½ hides. Always 2 ploughs in lordship.
Then 3 villagers, now 2; then 5 smallholders, now 6, who then had 2½ ploughs and now have only ½.
Then 1 cob, 2 cattle and 15 sheep; now 2 cobs, 9 cattle, 9 pigs, 20 sheep.
Value then and later 30s; now 40[s].
The remainder of the documentary evidence is summarised in Section 5.2.1.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

Above ground remains

The motte and inner bailey of the castle survive as a substantial earthwork.

Excavations

Most of the excavation within the town has taken place on the castle. In 1840 a vertical shaft was dug into the motte, but found nothing. E.B. Francis, who was one of the pioneers of medieval archaeology, dug in the motte and bailey in 1909-10. His report (Francis, 1913) included some of the first drawings of dated medieval pottery. Helliwell and MacLeod of Southend Museum undertook further excavations within the castle and at 77 High Road. Some publication has taken place of the castle excavations but in no detail and the results are unclear. Only the medieval pottery kiln group has been published from 77 High Road (Walker, 1990). The remainder of the work undertaken in Rayleigh is either published or is presented as Essex County Council Internal Reports in the ESMR.

Table 1: Fieldwork, archives and publications

ESMR	SITE	ARCHIVE LOCATION	PUBLICATION
13586-7	Rayleigh Castle excavations, 1909-10	Finds and archive: Southend Museum?	Francis, E.B. 1913 'Rayleigh Castle: New facts on its history and recent explorations on its site' *Trans. Essex Archaeol. Soc.* 12, 171-85
13586-7	Rayleigh Castle excavations	Finds & archive: Southend Museum	Helliwell, L. and MacLeod, D. 1981 'Rayleigh Castle' Southend-on-Sea, Rayleigh Mount Local Committee
13489	77 High St	Finds: Montrose Rd	Walker, H. 1990 "Pottery from a late medieval kiln dump at 77 High St., Rayleigh" *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 21, 92-102
13374	3-5 London Hill (RL1)	Finds: Montrose Rd; Archive: ESMR	Andrews, D.D. 1986 '3-5 London Road, Rayleigh' ECC Internal Rep., ESMR
13590	Dutch Cottage (DCR82)	Finds: Montrose Rd; Archive: Not known	Eddy, M.R. 1991 'Dutch Cottages in Essex' *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 22, 122-31
16323	Rossendale Works site, Websters Way	Finds: None; Archive: ESMR	Brooks, H. 1990 'Rossendale Works site, Websters Way' ECC Internal Rep., ESMR
16324	16-22 London Hill (RL3)	Finds: Montrose Rd; Archive: ESMR	Wallis, S. 1991 '16-22 London Hill, Rayleigh' ECC Internal Rep. ESMR
16325	57-61 High Street	Finds: Discarded; Archive: Bocking Place	Godbold, S. 1993 '57-61 High Street, Rayleigh' ECC Internal Rep., ESMR
16328-9	Bellingham Lane (BLR83/85)	Archive: Not known; Finds: Montrose Rd;	Milton, B. 1987 'Excavations at Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh' *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 18, 39-44
16982	23 Bellingham Lane (RL2)	Finds: Montrose Road; Archive: Bocking Place	Godbold, S. 1997 'The outer bailey ditch at Rayleigh Castle: observations at 23 Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh 1991' *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 28
16330	Rayleigh Church (RL4)	Finds: None; Archive: ESMR	Brooks, H. and Hudson, J. 1994 'Arch. in Essex, 1993' *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 25, 254
	Gas Board	Finds: Montrose Rd	None known

Finds

The finds evidence from Rayleigh is of mixed quality. The 1909-10 excavations recovered medieval and post-medieval pottery, metalwork and faunal and molluscan remains. The Helliwell and MacLeod excavations also produced similar material. The smaller sites within the town area have produced a similar range of material. However of the finds only the pottery has received any form of significant discussion (a summary of the pottery types is

presented below). The main question raised is whether the 'Rayleigh High Road ware' is from a local production site or whether it could have originated from Mill Green.

Medieval and post-medieval pottery   by Helen Walker (Essex County Council Field Archaeology Group)

Pottery from the castle
Pottery from an early excavation at the Castle (Reader 1913, 171-183) produced quantities of shell-tempered cooking pots with small amounts of cooking pots in a sand-tempered fabric. A Rhenish blue-grey ware ladle is illustrated, and some Saxo-Norman wares may be present. Fine ware jugs are illustrated, but not identified by common name. Some show unusual decoration, such as a strap-handle with cross-in-a-circle stamps, a strap handle with applied circular depressions, and a jug rim with applied chevron decoration, reminiscent of early Kingston-type ware jugs. None of the pottery appears to be Rayleigh High Road ware (see below) which probably means that it is earlier. A second excavation at the castle (Helliwell and MacLeod 1981) produced very similar pottery and also includes St Neots ware. Post-medieval salt-glazed stonewares were found, including sherds from Frechen bellarmines.

Medieval pottery from the town
A small group of partially complete pottery was excavated from a site at Bellingham Lane (BLR 83/85, Walker 1977, 43-4). It comprised mainly 14th to 15th century Mill Green ware and Mill Green-type ware jugs, and Mill Green-type coarse ware cooking pots, excavated from the bailey ditch. This Mill Green-type pottery may be from a possible production site at 77 High Road, Rayleigh (Walker 1990, 92-102), which was situated just to the south of the medieval town. A collection of wasters was found but there was no definite evidence of a kiln or associated structures. The pottery is identical in terms of fabric, form and methods of manufacture to that of Mill Green ware (made near Ingatestone), except that the firing conditions may be different and, more importantly, the High Road material displays several types of stamped decoration, not found at any of the Mill Green production sites. Single sherds of Saintonge green-glazed ware and Cheam white ware were found in other features.

Several small excavations have produced a few sherds of medieval pottery. A site at 23 Bellingham Lane (RL2) produced a sherd of ?Mill Green or Mill Green type coarse ware. Two sites on London Hill produced pottery, No. 3-5 London Road (RL 1) produced the rim and handle from a glazed sandy orange ware jugs and a sherd of ?Mill Green or Mill Green-type ware, while 16-22 London Road (RL3) produced one large sherd of Mill Green-type ware.

The Bellingham Lane site (BLR 83/85) also produced a small amount of post-medieval pottery comprising black-glazed ware and sherds of Frechen stoneware, datable to the 17th century. Another context produced a Staffordshire combed slipware dish rim. The site at 23 Bellingham Lane (RL2) produced a sherd of Westerwald stoneware and post-medieval red earthenware including an unusual base showing sgraffito decoration.

LISTED BUILDINGS in consultation with Anne Holden and Dave Stenning (Listed Buildings)

The schedule of listed buildings provided in this report is derived from the List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historical Interest. This List has been compiled over many years through the work of many inspectors and, as a result, the reliability of the List varies from District to District. Time was extremely limited and very few interiors were looked at, or even the rear wings of buildings. Where further research has been carried out on individual buildings, this has often shown the limitations of the List descriptions. The List for Rayleigh was originally compiled in 1986 and is of poor reliability. It has been possible to supplement the information provided in the List through the knowledge and records of the County Historic Buildings and Design Section.

There are 24 Listed Buildings in the Historic Town area of Rayleigh. Of these, the parish church is Grade II* and the remainder are Grade II.

CENTURY	NUMBER
12	1
13	0
14	0
15	0
16	4
17	5
18	4
19	9
20	1

Table 2: Listed Buildings by attributed century of origin

The church contains 12th century elements and probably replaced an earlier building. The remainder of the buildings are attributed post-medieval origins in the List description (Table 2). However, research by R. Crump of the Foulness Archaeological Group has demonstrated that 91, High Street which is Listed as being of 16th century date, actually incorporates the wing of an earlier structure dated to about 1350. It is possible that others of the timber-framed brick-faced buildings may contain portions of much older dwellings. Parts of 42A and 42B High Street date back to the 16th century, building work revealed painted beams of uncertain date.

SYNTHESIS

PRE-URBAN SYNTHESIS

Prehistoric

Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age stray finds have been made in and around the town area, but no accompanying features have been noted.

Roman

Roman finds have been found within the town area, including Roman roof and hypocaust tile within the church fabric. The indications are that there was a Roman habitation site within the area, but its precise location has not been established.

Saxon

The excavations at the castle uncovered a Saxon brooch. Otherwise the only evidence for a Saxon presence at Rayleigh is the place-name and the Domesday Book reference, which describes a medium-sized village.

Medieval synthesis and components

It is clear from the Domesday Book that there was a settlement at Rayleigh in 1066 and that the castle was built by Swein of Essex in the years between 1066 and 1086. The castle is sited on the western edge of the medieval town on a slight spur jutting out from the Rayleigh Hills, approximately halfway between the Thames and the Crouch and potentially controlling access to the peninsula between those estuaries. It has wide views to the west and north, including the upper Crouch estuary.   The Thames estuary would have been visible from the main ridge close to the castle (the view has been subsequently blocked by housing). Swein owned much of this area of south-east Essex, and it has been calculated that he had grazing for over 4,000 sheep on the marshes in the area (National Trust, 1965).

After Swein's death the castle passed to his son Robert, and then to his grandson Henry de Essex. A stone cladding was added to the surface of the motte in about 1140. Henry was indicted for alleged cowardice in battle in 1163 and the castle was taken into royal ownership. It was altered and repaired in 1172 and again in 1183-4. Shortly after 1200 King John gave the castle to Hubert de Burgh. Hubert is thought to have used Rayleigh castle as a source of stone for his new castle at Hadleigh, some 5 km to the south, overlooking the Thames. The castle reverted to the crown following the death of Hubert's son in the mid to late 13th century. In the late 13th century Queen Eleanor founded a stud at Rayleigh, which appears to have had some association with the castle. There are several documents dating to between 1279 and 1303 referring to the use of the motte as pasture, so it is evident that it no longer had any defensive role. 13th century manorial records exist referring to the repair of the King's house, mill and gaol 'against the King's arrival'. In 1362 a timber building was moved from Rayleigh Castle to Rayleigh Park under the instructions of Queen Philippa. In 1394 Richard II gave permission to the inhabitants of Rayleigh to quarry the castle foundations for stone. As the foundations are specifically mentioned it appears that any stone superstructure that had existed had already been totally removed by that date.

The town morphology and development is less clear. The church is sited at the north-eastern end of the town, close to the church and its location may indicate the original position of the Saxo-Norman settlement.   The medieval town appears to have developed from this point southwards along the main road which runs along the top of the ridge.

The medieval urban components are:-

The Castle

Francis's excavations in 1909-10 showed two main phases of castle development, that is the Domesday Castle and the late 12th century re-modelling. This phasing was confirmed by the Helliwell and MacLeod excavations of the 1950s and '60s.

The Domesday castle

The Domesday castle built by Swein has largely been obscured by the 12th century building phase. However some parts of it have been revealed by excavation. It appears that a natural spur of land was cut off by a deep ditch with a berm or flat ledge and a palisade on its western side. The spoil from the ditch was heaped at the end of the spur to form a mound. On the eastern side of the ditch and mound was a timber structure, interpreted as a gate (Francis 1913).   This structure stood on the original ground surface, now 3.6m below the current ground surface. One of the timbers from the gate is preserved in Southend Museum, and has a notched lap joint of a type that went out of use in the 13th century. To the north of the gate was what Francis described as kitchen areas and hut sites dating to the 11th and 12th centuries.

The 12th-14th century castle

In the 12th-13th century the castle was completely re-modelled, but its internal features were then dismantled in the late 13th and 14th centuries. The main components of the 12th-14th century castle are described below.

The motte (TQ 8049 9095)

The big Domesday ditch was recut, and there were minor adjustments to the palisade and berm. The motte was increased in height and its slope faced with stone rubble in about 1140. There is no evidence that there was ever a stone keep on the top, although there was possibly a temporary wooden structure. The excavators (Francis, 1913) have suggested that perhaps these building works by Henry de Essex were not finished due to his dispossession.

The inner bailey (TQ 8054 9091)

In about 1140-1160 the ditch encircling the inner bailey and motte was dug and a rampart with a palisade on its inner edge constructed. In about 1180 a second palisade was added to the western side of the rampart. The bailey measured 72m by 45m, and appears to have had an entrance on the north side, presumably leading out on to London Hill. The kitchen area and hut sites in the north-west corner of the inner bailey continued in use for about another 100 years.

In the late 13th century the ground level of the inner bailey was raised by up to 2m, approximately the same height as the rampart. On this new surface various buildings were erected, in the north-west corner these included a central hall and a number of outbuildings. In the eastern side of the bailey a layer of cobbles was placed over the partially buried rampart. In the north-east corner of the inner bailey were at least two large rectangular timber-framed buildings with chalk floors, kitchen areas and a smithy. Some of these buildings remained in use into the 14th century, long after the castle had lost its defensive role.

The outer bailey (TQ 8062 9088)

The outer bailey was located on the eastern side of the inner bailey and is also 12th century in origin. Parts of the outer bailey ditch were still visible in the back gardens of the houses fronting Bellingham Lane and in the area that is now the car-park next to Mill Hall at the beginning of the 20th century. Excavations in 1983 and 1985 on the Regal Cinema site and a watching-brief at 23 Bellingham Lane in 1997 confirmed its position parallel to Bellingham Lane. There was evidence that it was re-used as a property boundary in the 15th or 16th centuries. Excavation in 1969 in the area between the mill and the outer bailey ditch revealed layers of gravelling, a clay platform and timber foundations, possibly from a bridge crossing from the outer bailey to the inner bailey (Helliwell and MacLeod, 1981).

Holy Trinity Church (TQ 8081 9092)

The Parish Church of Holy Trinity Church is sited at the north-east end of the High Street. The earliest surviving parts are in the chancel, these date to the 12th century (RCHME, 1923) . It is probable however that there was a timber predecessor there from at least 1066. The church was substantially rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries. The chancel was reconstructed and a new nave added, both built of Kentish ragstone. Most of the rebuilding probably used material from the earlier structure, but one of the reasons why permission was sought from Richard II to quarry the castle was for the building of the church belfry, so it is likely that the tower was built soon after 1394. Within the church are memorial brasses to John and Thomasin Barrington, who died in 1416 and 1420 respectively. There is also half of a late 12th century purbeck marble font and a 14th century piscina. The 15th century screen comes from Runwell Church and was installed in the 19th century at Rayleigh.

St Mary's Chapel (TQ 8049 9119)

St Mary's Chapel was located near the bottom of London Hill (Wallis, 1993). At the beginning

of the 20th century its location was preserved in the place-name 'Chapel Field'. In 1928 when the modern town expanded into this area, stone columns and blocks together with numerous floor tiles were found during construction work.   The earliest known reference to it dates from 1285 and it is thought to have been demolished at the time of the Reformation.

The built-up area (TQ 8067 9075)

The morphology of the medieval built-up area is not entirely clear, however it appears to have been concentrated along the High Street, in the area to the east of the outer bailey.   The parish church was sited at the north-eastern end of the town, its location perhaps marking the site of the original Domesday settlement.   At this point the east-west route of London Hill meets the north-west route of the High Street.   To the south of the church is a triangular built-up area, delimited by London Hill, Bellingham Lane and High Street.   It is possible that this area originally formed part of the market-place (see below), however a watching-brief at 3-5 London Hill (ESMR 13374) established that the area was already partly built-up by the 14th and 15th centuries.   Traces of several successive clay floors and a hearths were noted on the site.   Some of the property boundaries on either side of the High Street may well reflect the original layout of the medieval tenements.

Excavation by MacLeod at 77, High Road (ESMR 13489) to the south of the historic town in 1974 is said to have uncovered occupation dating to the 13th century, including a number of barn-like structures.   A dump of pottery wasters and a possible kiln was also found on this site (see below).

The market-place (TQ 8065 9077)

There are references to a market and fair having been granted by 1227 (Eddy and Petchey, 1983).   The location of the market-place is not entirely certain, however it is probable that it was held in the High Street, where there is a widening of the road.   The triangular built-up area between London Hill, Bellingham Lane and the High Street may represent infilling of what would have originally been a much larger elongated triangular market-place.

A pottery kiln

A possible pottery kiln was located at 77, High Street (ESMR 13374).   The material is dated to the second half of the 14th century to the 15th century, and is thought to be related to Mill Green ware.

The mill

There are 13th-century documentary references to the King's mill, but its location is unknown.   However, given the local topography it was probably a wind-mill sited on the higher point of the ridge.

The gaol

There are 13th-century documentary references to the King's gaol.   Its location is not known, but it is possible that it was sited within the castle defences.

Post-medieval and modern synthesis and components

During the post-medieval period Rayleigh remained a small market town serving the needs of the immediate countryside. The Reformation probably led to the demolition of St Mary's Chapel on London Hill.   It had the usual range of small-scale industry found in urban areas, including a gas works, brewery and smithy, as well as four corn mills.   Some ribbon development appears to have taken place along the main road, but it was the arrival of the railway in the 1890's that stimulated its growth to its current size as it became a commuter town for London.

The post-medieval and modern urban components are:-

The built-up area (TQ 8067 9075)
Rayleigh appears to have grown little in size in the post-medieval period, and the main morphological features were already in place by the end of the medieval period, that is the street-pattern and infilled market-place. However there was considerable re-building or updating of the medieval buildings, with the Listed Buildings largely dating to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. There is some evidence however that some of these actually have medieval timber-frames concealed behind post-medieval brick facings. It wasn't until the early years of the 20th century that the town began its steady growth, stimulated by the building of the London and North Eastern Railway in the 1890's, which made commuting to London possible.

Holy Trinity Church (TQ 8081 9092)
The very fine brick porch and the south chapel were added in the early 16th century.

The Castle (TQ 8049 9095)
The excavations in 1969 showed that both the inner and outer baileys were reoccupied in the 17th century. Traces of several timber-framed buildings with clay floors and a farm-yard were recovered, along with evidence for more recent occupation. In the northern part of the outer bailey, near the mill, Helliwell and MacLeod (1981) found over a metre of deliberate build-up which they attributed to the Second World War effort, presumably on the basis of information from local people.

Windmills
In the 18th century Rayleigh had three windmills, two near the corner of Eastwood Road and Queens Road, the other beside Hockley Road. All three were post-mills and largely timber-built. They were demolished in the later 19th century, although the Hockley Road mill-mound survives.   In 1809 a fourth windmill (TQ 8063 9094) was built, in the area between the castle and Bellingham Lane. This was brick-built tower mill. In 1906 the power source for this structure changed from wind to an oil engine, and later electricity was used. It remained in use until just before the Second World War and has recently been restored.

The 'Dutch Cottage' (TQ 8037 9078)
The 'Dutch Cottage is an octagonal building on Crown Hill, thought to date to the 18th century. It takes its name from the supposed association of this type of dwelling with the 17th century Dutch immigrants who constructed many of the sea-walls along the Essex coast.

The Gas Works (TQ 8042 9075)
The Gas Works is depicted on the 1875 1st edn. OS map as sited on the south side of Crown Lane. This has been built over.

Brick kiln (TQ 8050 9074)
The 1875 1st edn OS map shows a brick kiln and quarry on Crown Lane, but this was no longer extant by 1896, and the site has been built over.

The smithy
A smithy was located to the rear of 72-4 High Street on the 1875 1st edn OS map, but the site has been built over.

Anchor Brewery (TQ 8051 9062)
The 1875 1st edn OS map depicts a brewery on the High Street, which was still present in 1923 but is no longer extant and the site has been built over.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TOWN

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Rayleigh is of archaeological importance largely because of its castle, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and is one of the earliest in the country. The quality of the documentary evidence for the Honor and town of Rayleigh is also very good, and much information on its development and economy could probably be extrapolated from it. The town itself is a small market town, of only moderate historic visual interest, due to large-scale redevelopment in the historic core in the 1960s-80s, however it is possible that there may be significant buried archaeological evidence still extant.

The prehistoric and Roman periods are represented by a scatter of stray finds from around the town, but there is little evidence for any density of settlement in the immediate area before the late Saxon/early medieval period. The Domesday Book demonstrates that there was a village at Rayleigh at the end of the Saxon period. Swein of Essex built his castle there at some point between 1066 and 1086, making it one of the earliest Norman castles in the country (Rumble, 1983). There is still a substantial motte and bailey on the site and the outer bailey was still visible within this century. It has been suggested that there was a hundredal market at Rayleigh market (Eddy and Petchey, 1983), there are also references to a market and fair dating to 1227. Unlike other Essex towns attached to castles there is no evidence that there was ever a town enclosure, although it is possible that the outer bailey served a defensive function for the townsfolk. There are two possible interpretations for the town morphology; either the market-place was a cigar-shaped widening of the High Street or that it was sited in the area between Bellingham Lane, London Hill and Church Street, forming an infilled elongated triangular market-place. The location of the church, which contains 12th-century elements, is on the eastern edge of the town, its position possibly marking the location of the original settlement. The castle was abandoned in the 14th century, and the land used first as part of the royal stud, and then in the 17th century as a farmyard. The town appears to have remained as a small market town with a small but stable population until the beginning of the 20th century when the introduction of the railway led to its growth as a commuter town for London.

SURVIVAL

The earthworks of the castle motte and inner bailey are still extant, if rather overgrown. The excavations that have been undertaken within this area showed that there was up to 4m of deliberate build-up in some areas and that the earliest castle defences had effectively been buried, as indeed had much of the 12th and 13th century occupation. There was considerable robbing of the stone in the 14th century and the excavations themselves will have disturbed the northern section of the inner bailey, but large-scale buried deposits are still to be anticipated. The outer bailey ditch is still extant but infilled and at least part of the interior of the outer bailey has medieval layers sealed beneath later dumping. The chancel of Holy Trinity Parish Church is 12th century and is the oldest surviving building in the town. The state of survival of archaeological deposits in the remainder of the town is unclear, however intact buried archaeological evidence may well be present. There has been some cellaring within the historic core, but only on a small-scale. The survey of 91, High Street has demonstrated that some of the post-medieval buildings may contain remnants of earlier structures. The survival of the post-medieval built environment is quite good, and the present stock of buildings represents an important archaeological resource.

Waterlogged deposits are expected to be rare or absent in Rayleigh except in the castle moat and in individual deeper features such as wells. However archaeological excavation has demonstrated that wood survives in area where normally it would not be expected to survive. Eleventh century timbers have been recovered from the inner bailey, where they had been

buried by several metres of deposits, and 13th-century brushwood was noted during the excavation at 77 High Road. The soil type is Bagshot sands and is acidic in nature. However, quantities of shell were noted during the castle excavations so it is possible that other calcareous material such as bone may also survive. Metalwork and ceramics were recovered in quantity and their state of preservation was good. No zoning of deposits in terms of their potential is currently possible.

The 1909-10 excavations by Francis in the castle were of a good standard for their time. The 1950s and 1960s excavations by Helliwell and MacLeod in the castle and the town have not been fully published and further work using their original records might help elucidate their findings. The remainder of the excavations and watching-briefs within Rayleigh have been undertaken by the Essex County Council Archaeology Section. These have either been published or are present as internal reports in the ESMR, depending on the results. The quality of the historic documentary evidence is good.

The motte and inner bailey of the castle is extant and still an impressive monument, as is Holy Trinity Parish Church. However the remainder of the town demonstrates little of its medieval origins, largely due to the addition of late 20th shop-fronts. The Rayleigh Castle material is on display at Southend Central Museum.

CURRENT PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

There are 24 Listed Buildings in the Historic Town area of Rayleigh, one of which is Grade II* and the remainder Grade II. The castle is under the guardianship of the National Trust and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 39). The majority of the historic town area is within the Conservation area, with the exception of Crown Hill, the site of St Mary's Chapel on London Hill and the south-eastern end of the High Street.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The understanding of the development and function of the small medieval and post-medieval town and the testing of theories on social action, economy, politics etc. have been highlighted as an important area of study at the national level (English Heritage, 1997; Ayres in Brown and Glazebrook, forthcoming).

The research priorities for the medieval and post-medieval period are:-

- Fieldwork undertaken at Rayleigh has been largely concentrated within the area of the castle, with some useful results. However our understanding of the development and nature of the castle would benefit from a work of synthesis covering all the fieldwork undertaken to date. In particular the 1950s and 1960s excavations by Helliwell and MacLeod in the castle and the town have not been fully published and further work using their original records might help elucidate their findings.
- The emphasis to date has been on the castle, and subsequent fieldwork in Rayleigh should be targeted to address specific questions of the towns internal morphology, including the location of the market and the identification of the late Saxon/early medieval settlement.
- The period of transition from the late Saxon settlement to the medieval town needs to be examined.
- The relationship between castle and town, including the effect of patronage and of the castle's decline on the urban economy, would benefit from further study.
- The relationship between Rayleigh and its rural hinterland also merits further research, and the role it played as the head-quarters of Swein of Essex's estates.

- The medieval and post-medieval pottery evidence has the potential to provide some evidence about dating, trade and distribution networks and socio-economic factors. However, although Reader's (1913) report on the castle is very useful it needs to be updated by correlating his fabric type series with Cunningham's typology, and by giving the fabrics their common names. Also, the pottery from Helliwell and Macleod's excavation (1981) merits rewriting, as the report contains some interesting looking pottery but is very difficult to follow. Further evidence for pottery production is needed as, at our present state of knowledge it is possible that the waster dump of 'Rayleigh High Road ware' could have originated from Mill Green. Rayleigh may be a good candidate for comparing the castle assemblage to that of the town, although rather more excavation in the town would be needed. In addition the towns location in relation to the coast and the River Thames suggests that evidence for imported wares should be looked for.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: Documentary sources

Archive	Classmark	Number	Date	Description
E.R.O.	various			Southend-on-Sea branch of E.R.O. has a large collection of Rayleigh deeds in various classmarks. See especially: D/DMq; D/DJe; D/DNe; D/DJe; T/P; D/DTo; D/DGs.
B.L.	Harl.	5190, art. 2		Manorial lands and tenements.
B.L.	Add. MS.	5937, f. 193	temp. Hen. III	Grant of the manor to H. de Burgh.
P.R.O.	SC6	1117/13	16-18 Hen. III	Accounts of Honor of Rayleigh, lands of Hubert de Burgh.
B.L.	Eg.	2949, ff. 1-3b, 30b	1226-1553	Charters showing the descent of the manor and Honor of Rayleigh. (16th cent. copies).
P.R.O.	SC6	1089/7	3-4 Edw. I	Accounts including Rayleigh, prob. lands late of John de Burgh.
P.R.O.	SC2	173/48	5-6 Edw. I.	Perquisites of courts etc.
P.R.O.	SC6	1089/15-18	6-9 Edw. I	Account rolls of Honor of Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	840/17-21	3-5,17-18 Edw. I, 17 Edw. II	Bailiff's accounts of lands of John de Burgo in Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	845/36-55	30-31 Edw. I - 44-45 Edw. III	Good series of bailiff's accounts for the Honor and town of Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	1292/4	Edw. I to Hen. VI	Sub-accounts and subsidiary documents, including the manor of Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	1113/12-13	31, 34 Hen. VI	Receiver's account, arrears.
B.L.	various		13th cent. onwards	Large number of conveyances, grants, fines in various collections of charters. Whatley, Rayleigh and Downhall manors.
B.L.	Harl. Ch.	45 H. 53	1353	Bequest for burial in the church of the Holy Trinity in the new aisle.
P.R.O.	SC6	1091/1	7-10 Edw. III	Accounts of lands of the Queen, including Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	1091/5	15-16 Edw. III	Account of lands of the Queen including Rayleigh,
P.R.O.	SC6	1091/8	16-17 Edw. III	Account of lands of the Queen including Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	SC6	846/1-14	45-46 Edw. III - 1-2 Ric. II	Bailiff's accounts for Honor and town of Rayleigh.
P.R.O.	Sc2	173/62	48-50 Edw. III	Hundred courts including Rayleigh.
B.L.	Add. MS.	5937, f.193	14 Ric. II	Grant to Edmund, Duke of York.
P.R.O.	SC6	1119/4	23-24 Hen VI	Receiever's account.
P.R.O.	SC6	1113/10	27-28 Hen. VI	Receiver's account.
B.L.	Eg.	2949-50	1553-1606	Court book of the Honor of Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	D/DU	40/78/1	1555	Rental of honor of Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	D/DU	514/29/24	1579	Rental of honor of Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	TS	305	1597	Rental of manor and borough of Rayleigh.
B.L.	Harl. Ch.	Roll DD.4	temp. Eliz. I	Plan of W.Clopton's estate.
E.R.O.	D/DCf	M1-17, 20-24	1599-1879	Court rolls, books and rentals of manor of Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	TS	223	1649-1866	Court rolls and books of manor of Rayleigh.
B.L.	Add. MS.	6735, f. 138	1789	Drawing of the Castle.

E.R.O.	T/P	83/7; 83/18	1789	Sketch of Rayleigh Castle.
E.R.O.	D/DNe	P7	1825	Estate map of Thundersley and Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	D/CT	285	1839	Tithe map.Scale: 26.6 in. to 1 m.
B.L.	Add. MS.	42039, f. 21	1869	Grant to Edmund, Duke of York.
B.L.	Add. MS.	42039, f. 21	1869	Drawing of the church.
B.L.	Add. MS.	37723, ff. 13, 21	1896-1902	Plan of earthworks at Rayleigh.
E.R.O.	D/DU	746/17	1927-1939	Town planning scheme.
E.R.O.	D/URa		1929-1973	Rayleigh district council records; committee minutes; medical officer of health reports etc.
E.R.O.	D/DToP		post WWI	Modern building development maps, mainly post WWI.
B.L.	Add. MS.	6735, f. 138	n.d.	Plan of Rayleigh Castle.

APPENDIX 2: Listed buildings

Serial No.	Date	Street	No.	Name	Building Type	GV	Grade	Material
7/71	12	Church Street		Church Of Holy Trinity	Parish Church	N	II*	Ragstone rubble, flint, brick,
7/88	16	High Street	91	North Thames Gas	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/82	16	High Street	11	Holland And Barrett Health Food Shop	Shop	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/10001	16	High Street	93	Spread Eagle Public House	House	N	II	Timber framed, brick, rendered
7/90	16	High Street	42A, 40	Singer Sewing Machine Shop [42A] & Mr B'S [Textiles] Ltd. Shop [40]	Shop	Y	II	Timber framed, brick
6/105	16	Rayleigh Avenue		Eastwood Lodge	House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/106	16	The Chase		Barnaby's Hotel	House	Y	II	Timber framed, brick
7/73	17	Church Street	1, 3, 5	Wern Cottages	House	N	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded, brick, plastered
7/75	17	Crown Hill	33	The Dutch Cottage	House	N	II	Timber framed, plastered, brick
7/92	17	High Street		The Crown Public House	Public House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/81	17	High Street	9	La Romantica Restaurant	Restaurant	N	II	Timber framed, plastered
7/102	17	London Hill	13, 15, 17		House	Y	II	Timber framed, rough rendered
3/103	17/18	London Hill	64, 66		House	Y	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded
7/72	18	Church Street		Head Stone	Tombstone	N	II	
7/76	18	Eastwood Road	154	White House Farmhouse	House	Y	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded
6/80	18	High Road		Weir Farmhouse	House	Y	II	Timber framed, plastered, weatherboarded
7/83	18	High Street		Kingsleigh House	House	N	II	Brick
7/96	18	Hockley Road	24, 26		House	Y	II	Brick
5/219	18	Hockley Road		Milestone	Milestone	Y	II	Stone
7/95	18	Hockley Road	18	The Ferns House	House	N	II	Timber framed, gault brick, weatherboarded
7/94	18	Hockley Road		Barringtons Cottages	Shop	N	II	Timber framed, weatherboarded
7/101	19	Bellingham Lane		Rayleigh Windmill	Tower Mill	Y	II	Brick
7/74	19	Church Street	4, 6, 8		House	N	II	Timber framed, rough rendered
7/85	19	High Street		Town Pump	Pump	N	II	Cast iron
7/84	19	High Street		The Old White Horse Public House	Public House	Y	II	Gault brick
7/87	19	High Street		Horse Trough And Drinking Fountain	Horse Trough	N	II	Stone
7/89	19	High Street		Rayleigh Baptist Church	Church	Y	II	Brick, stuccoed
7/91	19	High Street	78-84 [even]	Francis House [Lloyds Bank]	House	N	II	Brick, plastered
7/93	19	Hockley Road		Barringtons	House	N	II	Gault brick
7/99	19	Hockley Road		Amigo's Restaurant	School	N	II	Brick
7/86	20	High Street		Martyrs Memorial Obelisk	Obelisk	N	II	Marble, cast iron

APPENDIX 3: Urban components list

ID	DESCRIPTION
MEDIEVAL	
394	THE DOMESDAY CASTLE
395	THE MOTTE
396	INNER BAILEY
397	OUTER BAILEY
398	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
399	ST MARY'S CHAPEL
400	THE BUILT-UP AREA
401	THE MARKET-PLACE
402	POTTERY KILN
403	MILL
404	GAOL
POST-MEDIEVAL	
405	BUILT-UP AREA
406	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
407	THE CASTLE
408	THE WINDMILLS
409	THE 'DUTCH COTTAGE'
410	THE GAS WORKS
411	THE SMITHY
412	THE BRICK KILN
413	ANCHOR BREWERY

RAYLEIGH
Environs

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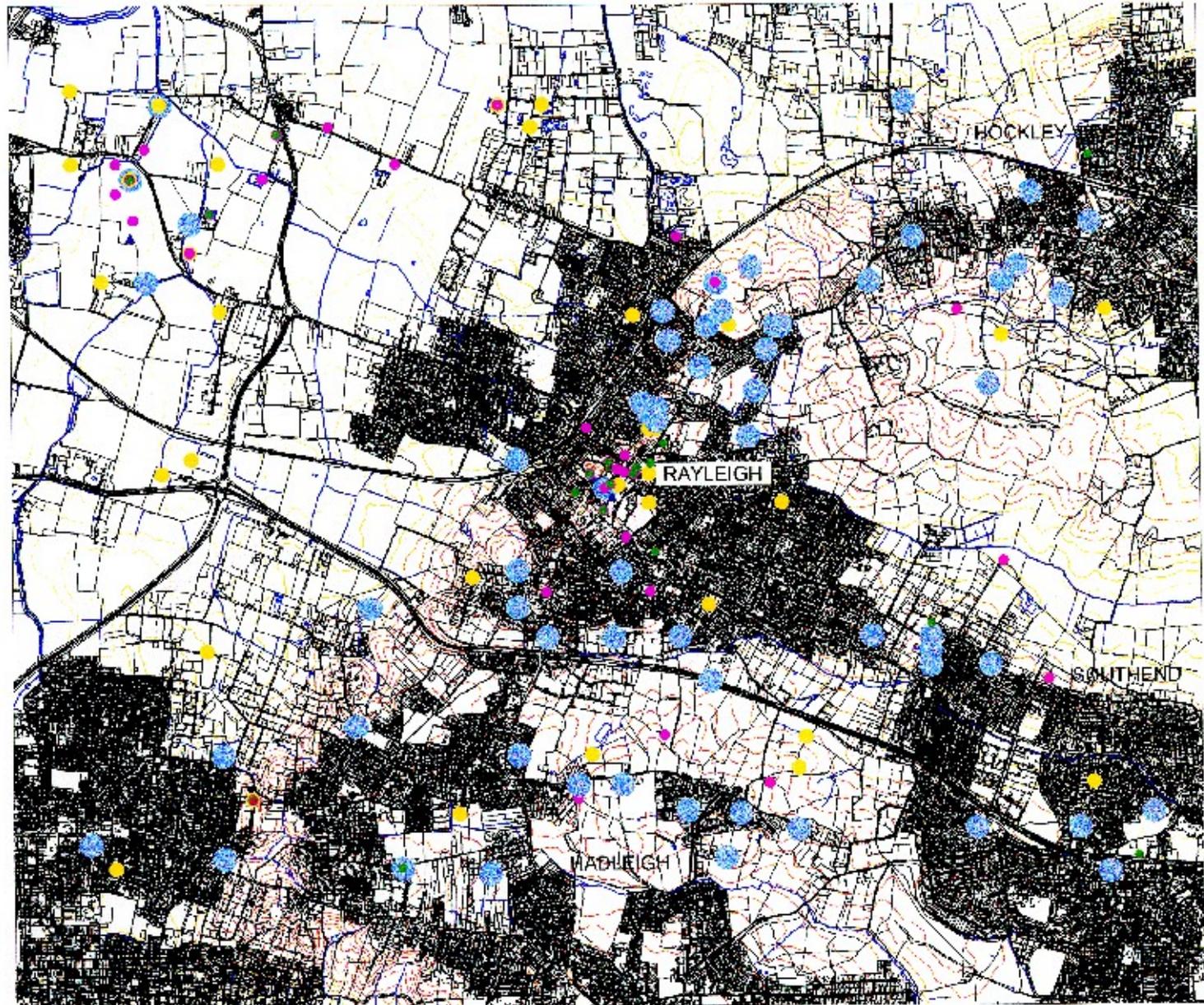
SMR sites

- 🔵 PREHISTORIC
- 🟡 ROMAN
- 🟣 MEDIEVAL
- 🟢 POST MEDIEVAL
- 🔴 MODERN
- 🔺 UNCERTAIN

HOCKLEY

RAYLEIGH

SOUTHEND

HADLEIGH

1   0   1   2 Kilometers

RAYLEIGH
Historic Town Extent

N

HISTORIC TOWN EXTENT

1:5000

0   100   200   300   400   500 Meters
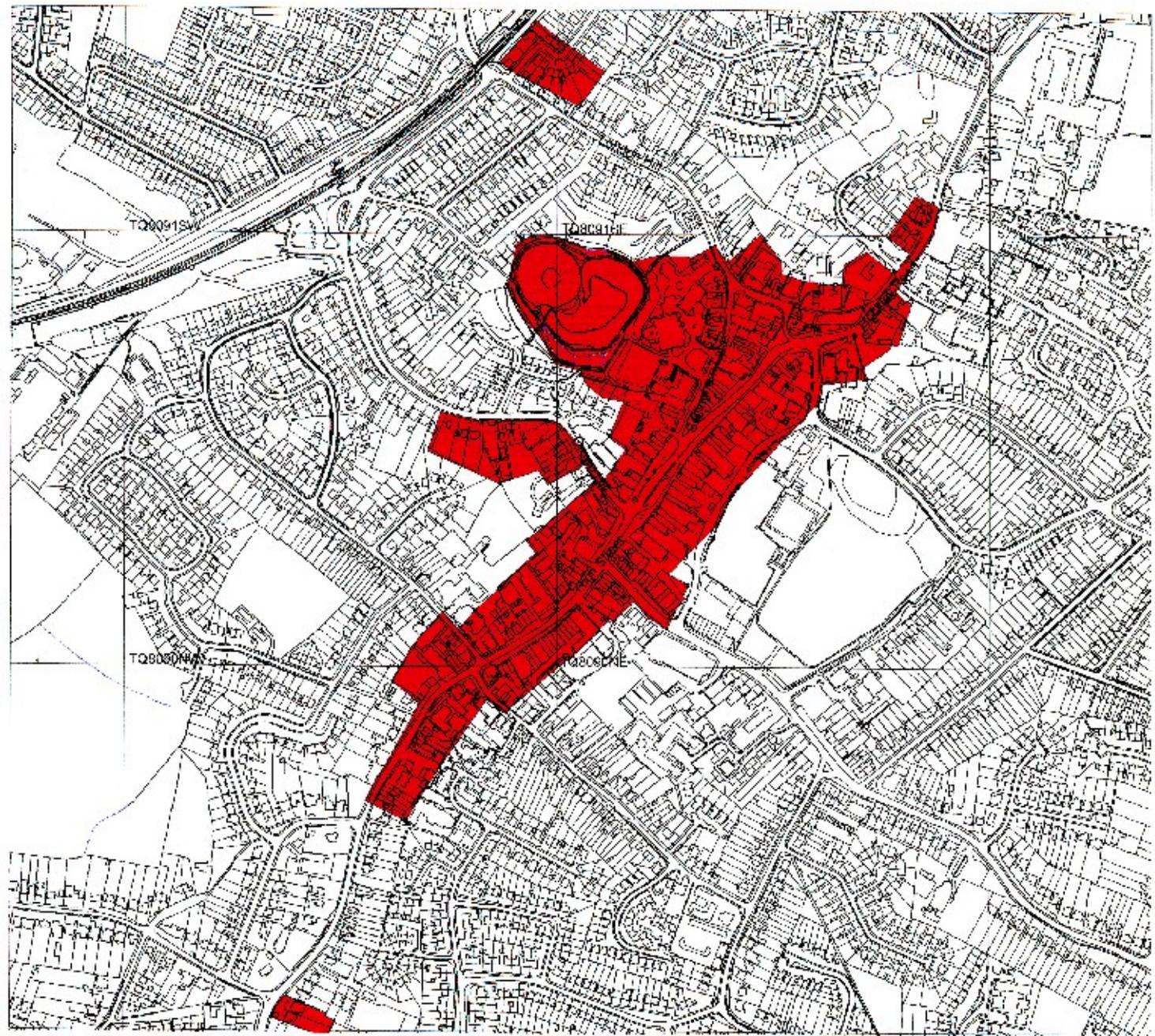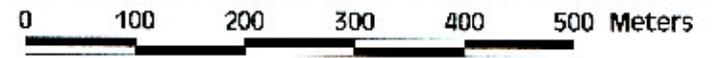
RAYLEIGH
Listed Buildings and SMR sites

N

Listed Buildings by century
- 12
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20

SMR site

SMR find-spot

1:5000

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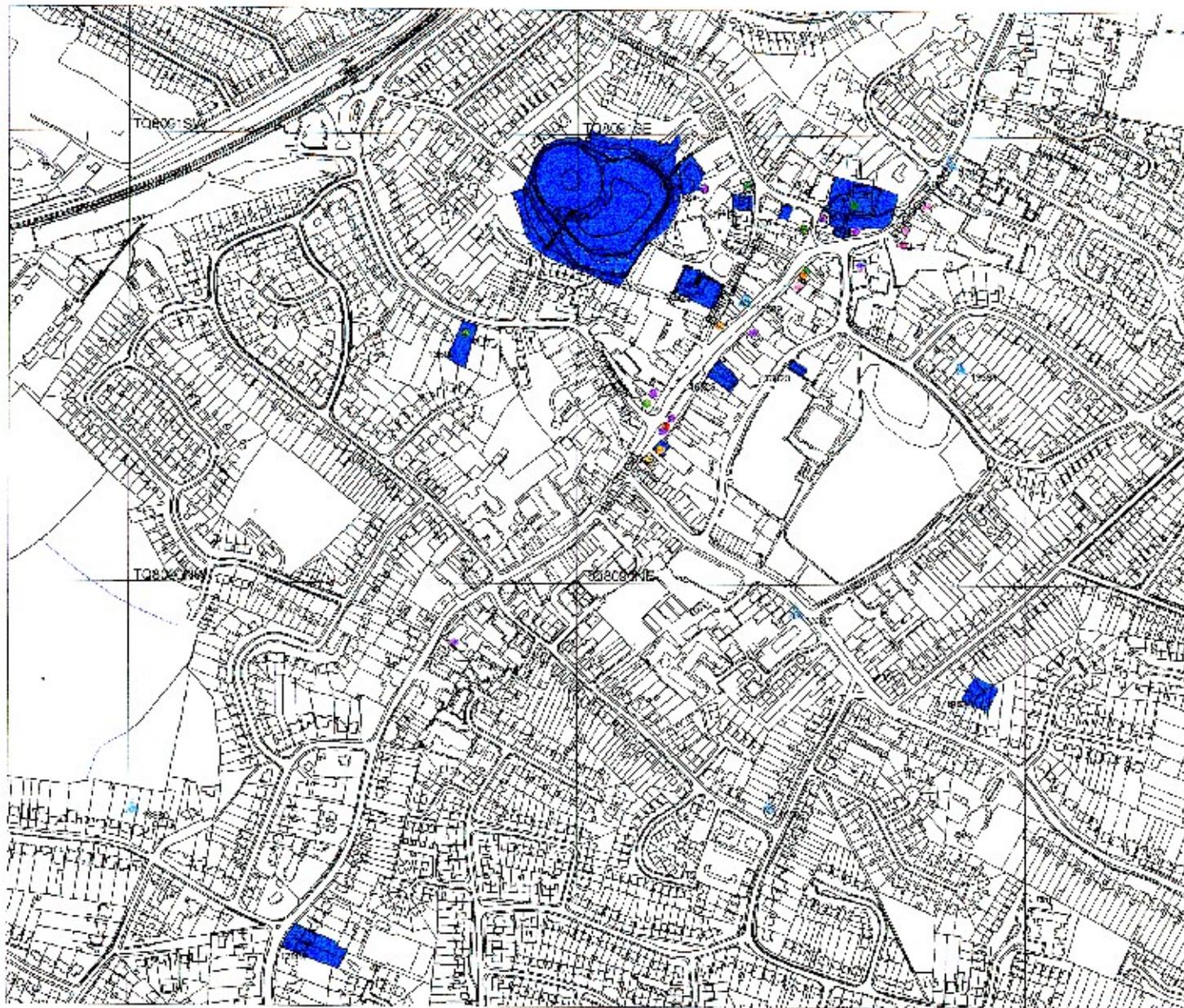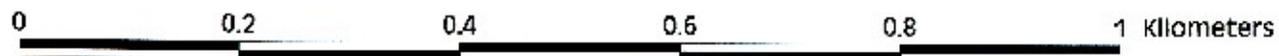
The Development of Rayleigh
from the Cartographic Evidence

1777

1839

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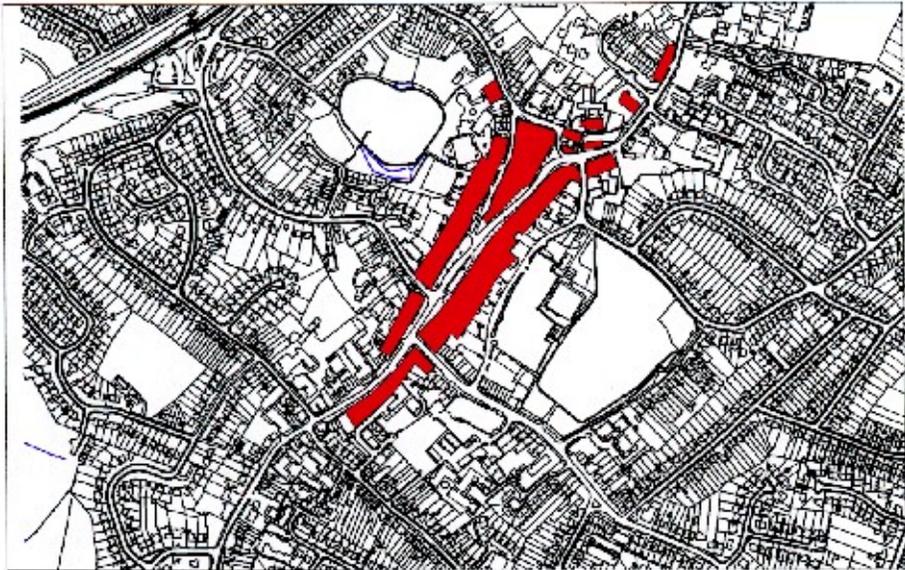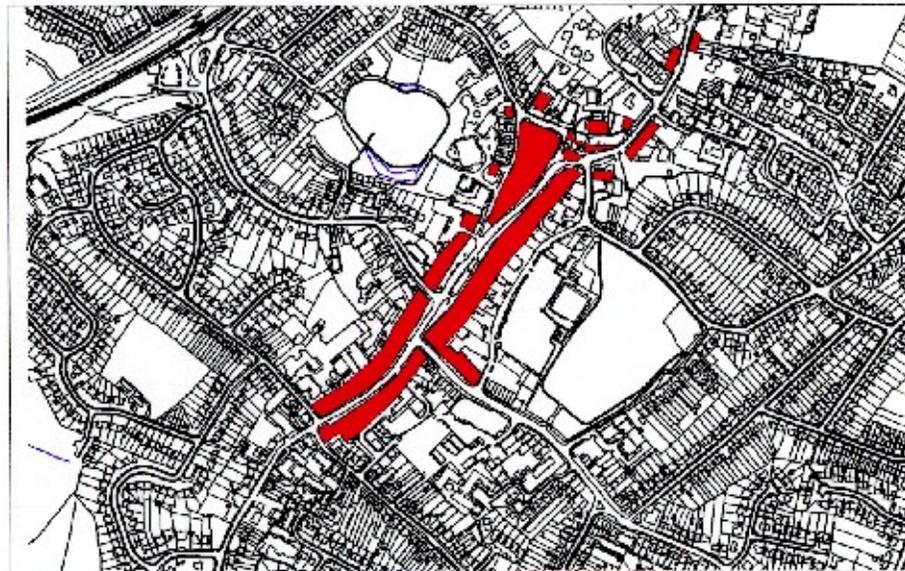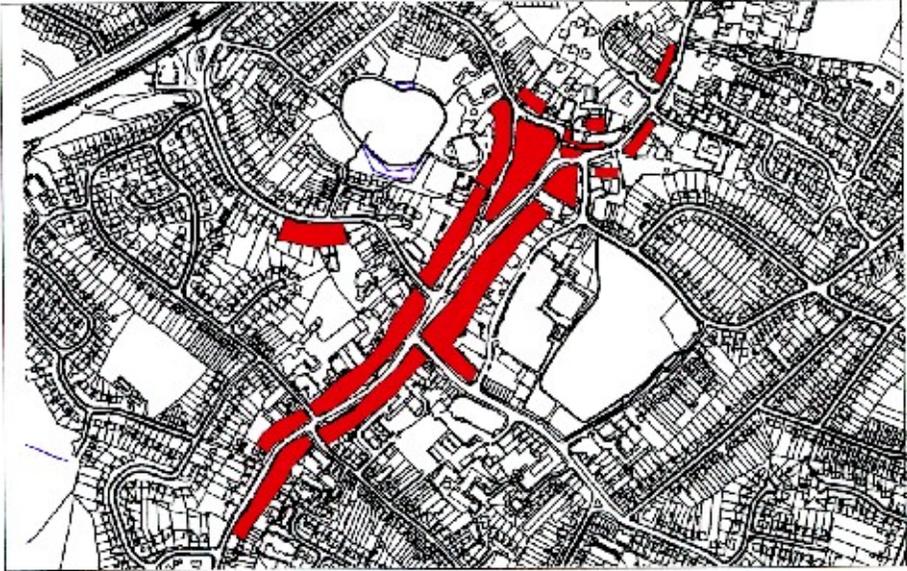
1881

RAYLEIGH
Archaeological fieldwork

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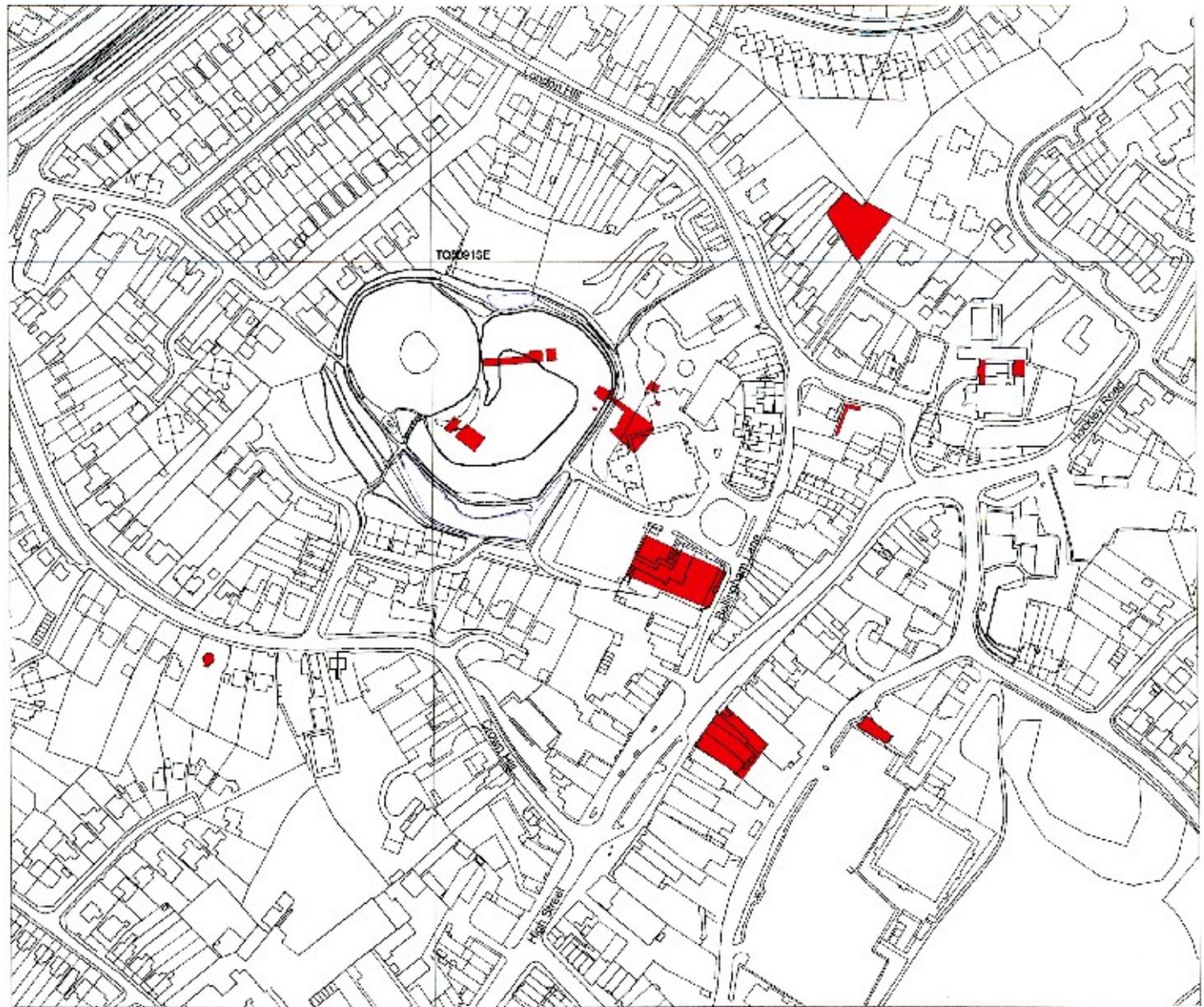
Fieldwork

1:2500

| 0 | 100 | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 Meters |

RAYLEIGH
Medieval interpretation

N

KEY

![purple]	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
![orange]	INFILLED MARKET-PLACE
![blue]	INNER BAILEY
![dark green]	OUTER BAILEY
![violet]	POTTERY KILN
![pink]	ST MARY'S CHAPEL
![yellow]	THE BUILT-UP AREA
![light green]	THE MARKET-PLACE
![red]	THE MOTTE

1:5000

0   100   200   300   400   500 Meters

25
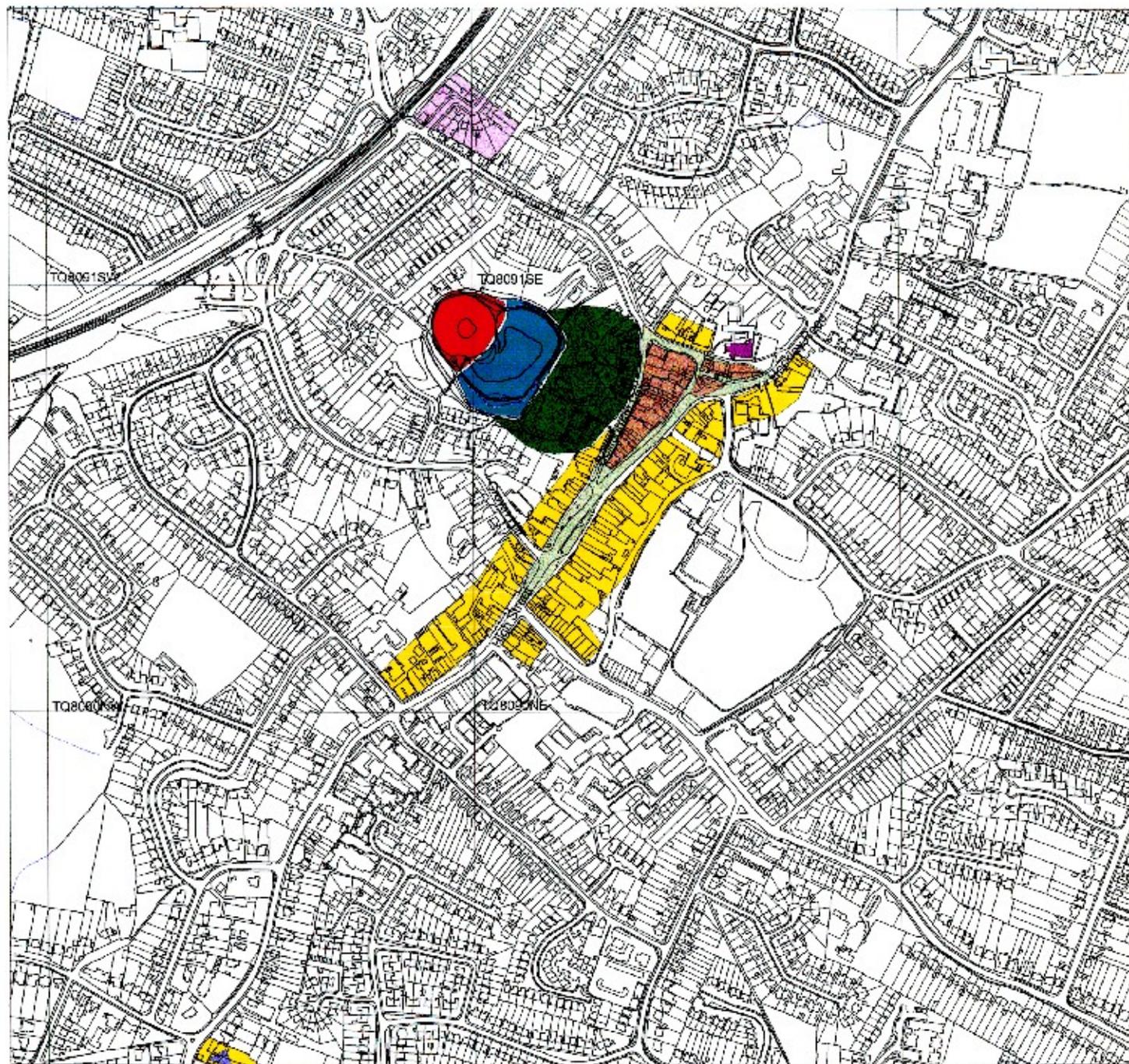
RAYLEIGH
Post-medieval interpretation

N

KEY
- ANCHOR BREWERY
- BUILT-UP AREA
- HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
- THE 'DUTCH COTTAGE'
- THE BRICK KILN
- THE CASTLE
- THE GAS WORKS
- THE SMITHY
- THE WINDMILLS
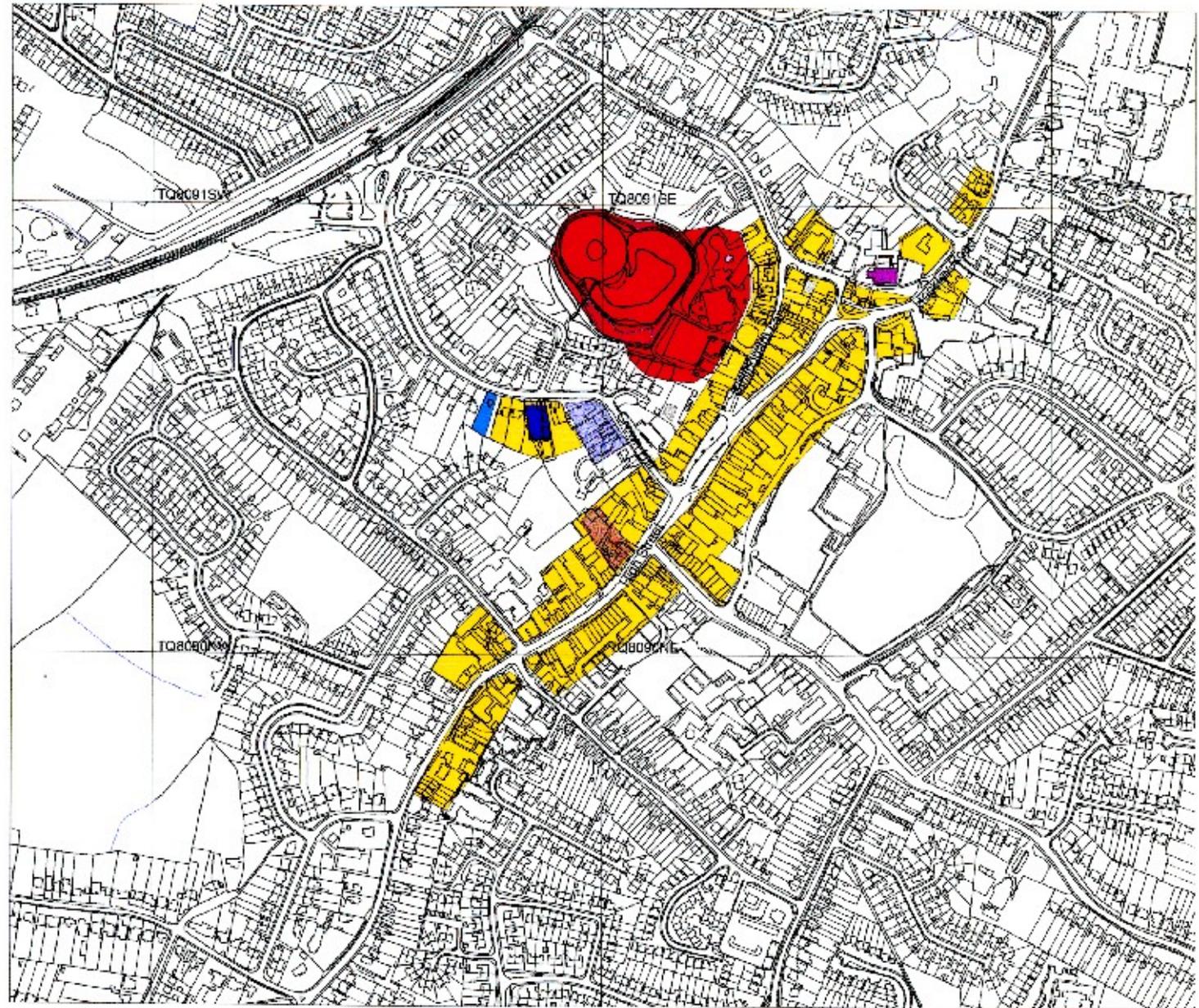
1:5000

0   0.2   0.4   0.6   0.8   1 Kilometers

RAYLEIGH
Cellars

N

■ Cellars

RAYLEIGH
Constraints

N
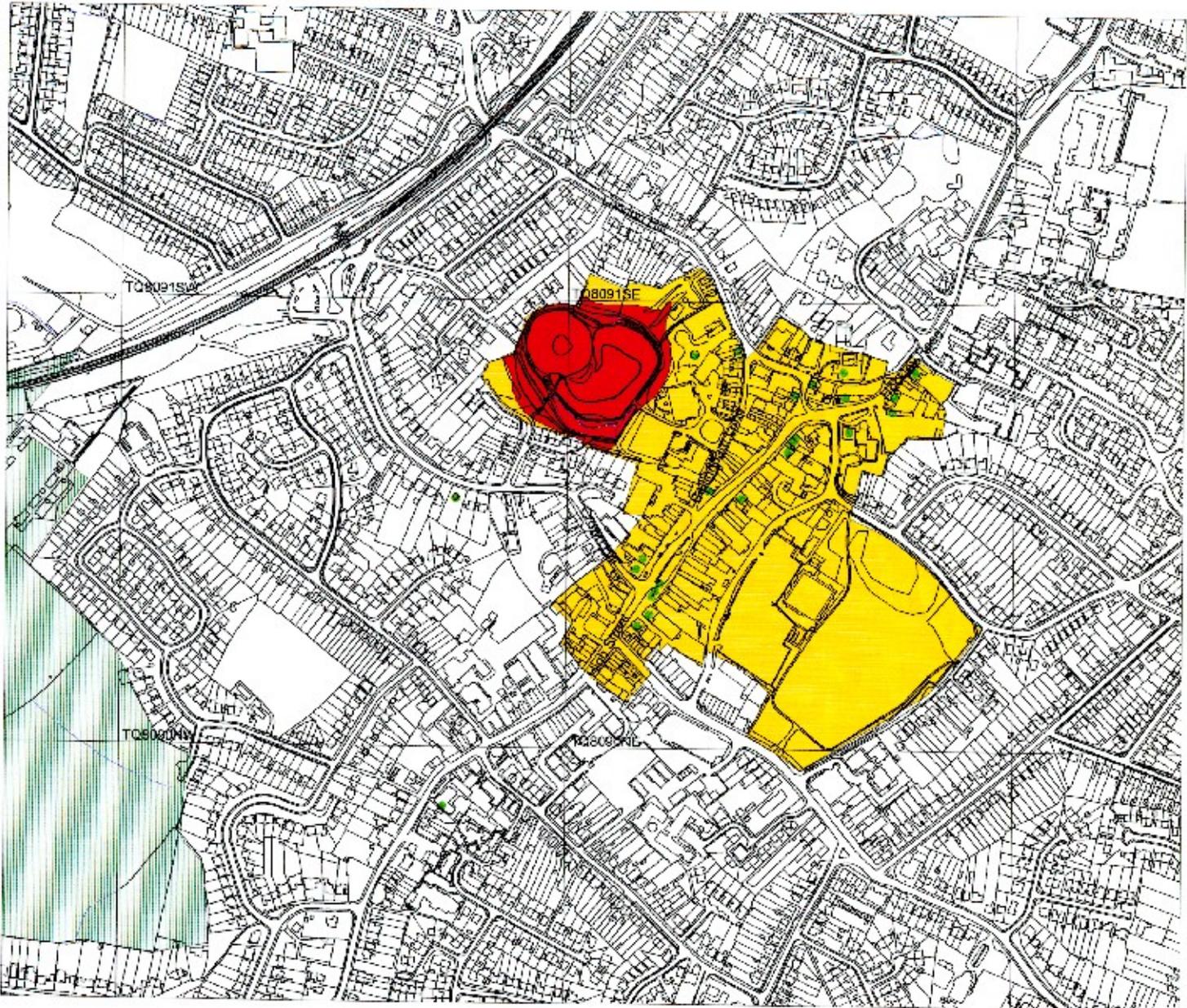
Conservation Area
Listed Buildings
Scheduled Ancient Monument
Metropolitan Green Belt

| 0 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1 Kilometers |