

Essex Historic Environment Record/ Essex Archaeology and History

CAT Report 561

Summary sheet

Address: Rands, Rands Road, High Roding, Essex.	
Parish: High Roding	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 6078 1757	Site codes: CAT project – 10/7a ECC HEM code– HRRM10
Type of work: Archaeological monitoring and excavation	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: 15th/16th July 2010	Size of area investigated: 650m ²
Location of finds/curating museum: Saffron Walden Museum accession - SAFWM 2010.40	Funding source: Landowner
Further seasons anticipated? Yes	Related EHER numbers: 1001, 1002
Final report: CAT Report 561 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: medieval, post-medieval, modern	
Summary of fieldwork results:	
<p>Background</p> <p>Rands is located on the site of a fragmentary medieval moated enclosure to the north-east of the village of High Roding (Fig 1). Rands House is on the southern side of Rands Road with Travetts House to the north (Fig 2). In the grounds of Travetts House the east angle of the moat survives as a landscaped pond, and traces of the north angle and part of the west arm are visible as a depression in the garden (Essex Historic Environment Record 1001). Travetts House itself retains one wing of a late 15th century hall house which was altered in the 16th, 19th, and 20th centuries (EHER1002). The large pond to the east of Rands House forms part of the moated site, and a series of ditches (which enclose the area in which the tennis court was constructed) form a wider enclosed area. A single ditch terminus was identified in the foundation trench for the southern wall of the extension to Rands farmhouse during an archaeological watching brief in 2003 (<i>Rands, High Roding, Essex: Archaeological watching brief</i>, Roy, M and Mordue, J). This was possibly the north end of a ditch associated with the medieval moated site over which the farmhouse stands. However, no dating evidence was recovered. Many of the moats in Uttlesford have their origins in the 12th and 13th centuries, so evidence for earlier settlement was the focus for investigations during the groundworks.</p> <p>The potential of the site meant that a programme of archaeological work was required. Details of this were set out in a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM) officer Richard Havis. The fieldwork was carried out as according to the HEM brief, and to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CAT.</p>	

Method and results

In advance of the construction of a full sized tennis court with perimeter fencing to the south-east of the present house, a 650m² area was stripped by machine under the supervision of CAT on the 15th and 16th of July 2010. A toothless ditching bucket was used to firstly strip away the turf, exposing a medium grey clayey silt topsoil 70mm thick (L1). Finds recovered from L1 included medieval sandy grey ware (Fabric 20, 3 sherds 54g: Pottery fabrics are after Colchester Archaeological Report 7: *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-1985*, by John Cotter) including a handle and flat topped rim (probably 13th century), medieval sandy orange ware (Fabric 21, 2 sherds, 24g) including a rim with painted strip and glaze, post medieval red earthenware (PMRE) (Fabric 40, 6 sherds 25g), modern stoneware (Fabric 45m 2 sherds, 36g) and modern flowerpot fragments (Fabric 51b, 2 sherds, 18g).

The stripping of the topsoil (L1) and the underlying medium grey/brown silty clay soil accumulation (L2, 150mm thick), was done in clumps as the solidity of the clay-based soil made gradual stripping impossible. The soil and the soil/natural clay interface peeled off of a light yellow/brown natural clay with frequent chalk nodules (L3). Numerous finds were recovered from L2. The pottery recovered was similar to that recovered in L1 and included medieval sandy grey ware (Fabric 20, 5 sherds, 20g) medieval Hedingham type ware (Fabric 22, 1 sherd, 2g), PMRE (Fabric 40, 5 sherds, 84g) and modern flowerpot (Fabric 51b, 1 sherd, 26g). A discrete concentration of finds was also noted. However, upon investigation the finds did not appear to be associated with a feature. The discrete concentration included nine sherds of medieval sandy grey ware (Fabric 20, 33g) and one sherd of PMRE (Fabric 40, 7g), two complete square-headed nails (53.4mm and 30.9mm) and a medium mammal right pelvis (sheep or deer - hard to tell due to poor condition of bone) 15.3g. If the PMRE sherd is considered intrusive, this finds group could represent a discrete medieval deposit.

Also recovered during the strip were four animal bones/fragments; a right dog ulna (3.4g), the proximal end of a right sheep metatarsal that had been gnawed and chopped whilst the bone was fresh (16.1g), the shaft of a sheep humerus which has been gnawed at both ends (6.7g) and a fragment of large unidentified mammal long bone shaft (13.2g). Six worked flints were also collected; a small tertiary flake with a small area of probable retouch on the distal end (0.7g), a small, tertiary flake with removals on both the dorsal and ventral faces and a small area of delicate retouch on the distal (0.7g), a secondary flake with possible usewear (6.0g), an end scraper on a tertiary flake with abrupt retouch along a slightly concave distal end (3.0g), a heavily retouched tertiary flake with a denticulated edge and two retouched notches both formed using very abrupt retouch (1.5g), and a small tertiary waste flake (debitage) (1.2g). A wedge-shaped piece of ?worked limestone (40mm x 66mm x 18mm: 53.2g) was also recovered. Although it has the appearance of a whetstone it is more likely to be architectural.

The overall depth of the excavation was roughly 300mm and ceased on the solid, flat natural clay which will provide a suitable base for the tennis court. Further grading of the clay was undertaken to create a slight slope to facilitate drainage.

Conclusions

No archaeological features were exposed in the strip. However, there were numerous finds. Activity in the area during the modern and post-medieval periods is evident from the finds (especially the flowerpot/stoneware and PMRE). However, the worked flints indicate activity in the prehistoric period, and the medieval pottery indicates that there has been a phase of activity on this site predating the earliest phase of Travetts House (15th century). This may indicate a site older than the buildings which now occupy it. The small size and abraded nature of the potsherds, combined with the absence of features, could indicate the land has been consistently used for agriculture, with the pottery fragments entering the soil through manure spreading. Similarly, the absence of stratification may also be the result of cultivation.

Previous summaries/reports: None

Keywords: medieval moat

Significance: *

Author of summary:

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Date of summary:

August 2010

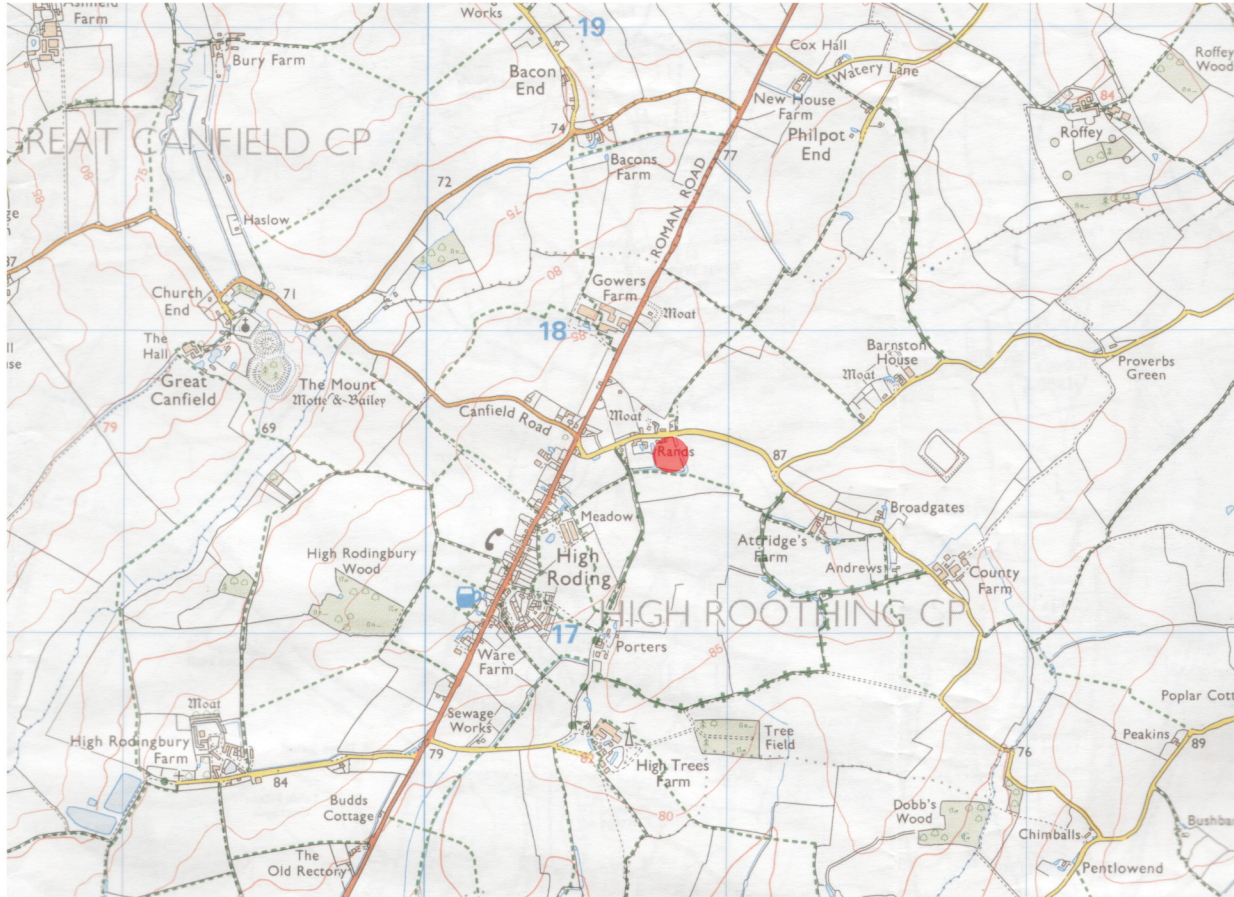


Fig 1 Site location, shown as red dot.

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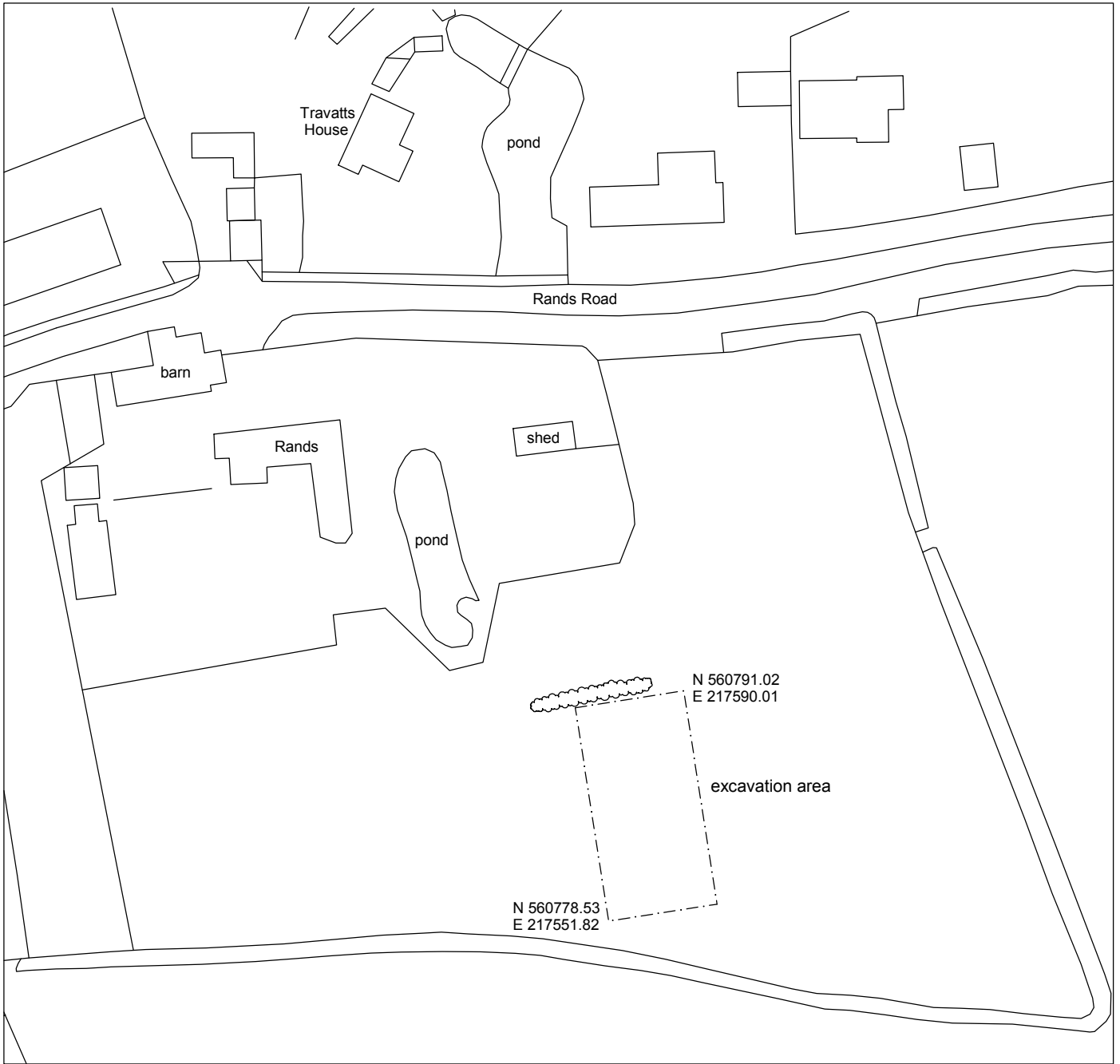


Fig 2 Excavation area

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