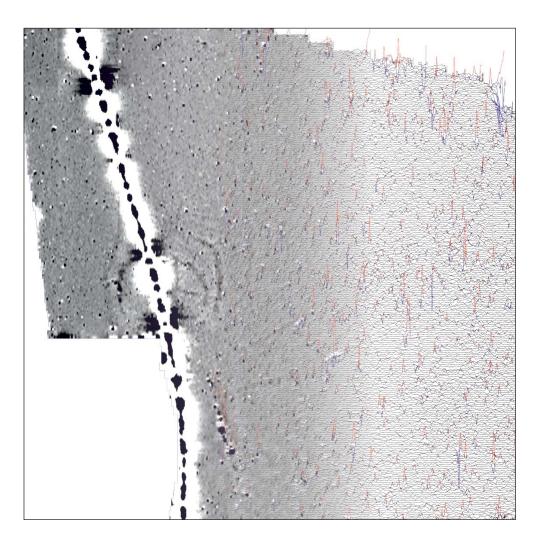


Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report



Ref: 87641.02 April 2013

# **geoservices**



## **Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report**

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## **Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report**

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### **Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report**

#### Summary

A detailed gradiometer survey was conducted over land at Ritherdens, west of Taunton, Somerset (centred on NGR 318950, 124300). The project was commissioned by MS Power Projects Limited with the aim of establishing the presence and significance, or otherwise, of detectable archaeological features within the proposed development area. This information is intended to inform discussions on the nature and extent of any potential future development of the site and highlight any potential archaeological issues.

The site comprises three arable fields, approximately 1.5km west of the centre of Taunton. The site occupies an area of relatively flat land that falls gradually to the north and south. The detailed gradiometer survey covered 19.3ha. This survey has demonstrated the presence of anomalies of definite, probable and possible archaeological interest within the survey area, along with regions of increased magnetic response and at least one modern service.

The geophysical data has revealed an enclosure, which was also noted from aerial photographs in the archaeological desk-based assessment, in addition to a possible second enclosure at the same location. There is scope for further remains given that much of the enclosure interior is obscured by a service running through the centre of the complex.

Many features marked on the early mapping consulted have been detected in the survey data including possible tracks, former field systems and ploughing trends. The remaining features detected relate to more recent use of this area with modern ploughing trends, spreads of magnetic CBM and metallic debris detected.

The survey was undertaken between the 25<sup>th</sup> February to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013.



## **Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report**

#### Acknowledgements

The detailed gradiometer survey was commissioned by MS Power Projects Limited. The assistance of Mr Larry Mark is gratefully acknowledged in this regard.

The data was acquired under the direction of Wessex Archaeology. Jennifer Smith processed the geophysical data, Ross Lefort and Jennifer Smith interpreted the geophysical data and Ross Lefort wrote this report. The geophysical work was quality controlled by Dr. Paul Baggaley. Illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.



## **Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report**

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by MS Power Projects Limited to carry out a geophysical survey of land at Ritherdens, Taunton, Somerset (**Figure 1**), hereafter "the Site" (centred on NGR 318950, 124300). The survey forms part of a programme of archaeological works being undertaken to inform decisions regarding potential future development at the Site.
- 1.1.2 The aim of the geophysical survey was to establish the presence/absence, extent and character of detectable archaeological remains within the survey area.
- 1.1.3 This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, the detailed survey results and the archaeological interpretation of the geophysical data.

#### 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The survey area comprises three arable fields measuring 20.6ha in area, located approximately 1.5km west of Taunton (Figure 1). A detailed gradiometer survey was undertaken covering the total available area of the Site (19.3ha).
- 1.2.2 The Site is located on a gently sloping spur of land that lies between the River Tone to the north and one of its smaller tributaries to the south. The centre of the Site lies at a height of approximately 30m above Ordnance datum (aOD) with the land dropping slightly towards the northern and the southern extents of the survey area. The survey area is defined by the boundaries of the three fields.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the area is made up of three main bedrock formations; Branscombe mudstone to the north and east, a sandstone formation of interbedded sandstone and mudstone to the southwest and Sidmouth mudstone along the far south of the site. All three bedrock geologies present were formed in the Triassic. Superficial deposits are present in the southern half of the site with head deposits (clay, sand and gravel) recorded in the southeast corner of the site and colluvium (Diamicton) in the far south of the site. The soils underlying the Site are most likely typical argillic pelosols of the 431 (Worcester) association. Other soils including typical brown earths of the 541w (Newnham) association and pelo-alluvial gley soils of the 813e (Compton) association are present in the south and southwest of the site (SSEW 1983). Soils derived from such geological parent material have been shown to produce magnetic contrasts acceptable for the detection of archaeological remains through magnetometer survey.





#### 2 METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The detailed magnetometer survey was conducted using a Bartington Grad601-2 dual fluxgate gradiometer system. The survey was conducted in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (2008).
- 2.1.2 The geophysical survey was undertaken under the direction of Wessex Archaeology between 25<sup>th</sup> February to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Field conditions at the time of the survey were largely good.

#### 2.2 Method

- 2.2.1 Individual survey grid nodes were established at 30m x 30m intervals using a Leica Viva RTK GNSS system, which is precise to approximately 0.02m and therefore exceeds English Heritage recommendations (2008).
- 2.2.2 The magnetometer survey was conducted using a Bartington Grad601-2 fluxgate gradiometer instrument, which has a vertical separation of 1m between sensors. Data collected for the detailed survey were acquired at 0.25m intervals along transects spaced 1m apart. The system used has an effective sensitivity of 0.03nT, in accordance with EH guidelines (2008). Detailed data were collected in the zigzag method.
- 2.2.3 Data from the detailed survey was subject to minimal data correction processes. These comprise a zero mean traverse (ZMT) function (typically ±5nT thresholds) applied to correct for any variation between the two Bartington sensors used, a deslope function to remove errors created by the ZMT function in areas of concentrated ferrous responses, and a de-step function to account for variations in traverse position due to varying ground cover and topography. These three steps were applied to all survey areas, with no interpolation applied.
- 2.2.4 Further details of the geophysical and survey equipment, methods and processing are described in **Appendix 1**.

#### 3 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The gradiometer survey has been successful in identifying anomalies of definite, probable and possible archaeological interest across the Site, together with a number of modern services. Results are presented as a series of greyscale and XY plots, and archaeological interpretations, at a scale of 1:2000 (Figures 2 to 8). The data are displayed at -2nT (white) to +3nT (black) for the greyscale images and ±25nT at 25nT per cm for the XY trace plots.
- 3.1.2 The interpretation of the datasets highlights the presence of potential archaeological anomalies, ferrous/burnt or fired objects, and magnetic trends. Full definitions of the interpretation terms used in this report are provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.1.3 Numerous ferrous anomalies are visible throughout the detailed survey dataset. These are presumed to be modern in provenance and are not referred to, unless considered relevant to the archaeological interpretation.



#### 3.2 Detailed Gradiometer Survey Results and Interpretation

- 3.2.1 The southern field contains the clearest archaeological features including at least two possible enclosures and an early field boundary. The two possible enclosures are located at 4000 and 4001 and are interrupted by a modern service (4018) that cuts through the middle of the complex. The larger oval enclosure measures roughly 42m in length and is defined by weakly positive readings ranging from +0.5nT to +2nT; this feature is considered to be a cut feature such as a ditch. There are stronger positive anomalies near 4001 with values around +5nT; they range in shape from small sub-oval to larger irregular shapes. These features are considered to be pits that have been backfilled with magnetically enhanced refuse. The oval enclosure has been observed in the Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) as a cropmark in aerial photography (Wessex Archaeology 2012).
- 3.2.2 The second possible enclosure lies to the north of **4000** and is sub-rectangular in shape measuring 28.5m x 21m with magnetic values similar to that of the oval enclosure. This enclosure overlaps with the oval enclosure and is considered to date to a different phase.
- 3.2.3 There are other features nearby such as another suspected section of ditch to the west of **4001** and a number of curvilinear trends. It is unclear as to which, if any, of the enclosures these anomalies relate to but a couple of them curve around the outside of the oval enclosure suggesting a link. There is little visible in the data to suggest the presence of any internal divisions within the enclosures and aside from the probable pits near **4001** there are few features within the enclosures. The two enclosures have been classed as probable archaeology, this is due to the weakness of the observed magnetic values. The service at **4018** is quite likely to have impacted on the archaeology here and the ferrous shadow from it will obscure any additional features in this area. The ditches appear to fade into the background but this could simply be a loss of magnetic contrast rather than a termination of the ditches.
- 3.2.4 A curvilinear anomaly has been observed at **4002**; it has magnetic values between +0.5nT and +2nT and is considered to be a section of ditch. Like the enclosures discussed above the anomaly fades into the background gradually and may extend further than is visible from this data. This feature is visible as a field boundary on the 1842 tithe map for Bradford on Tone.
- 3.2.5 The remaining anomalies in this field are either trends or small positive anomalies. The trends are either considered to be ploughing trends (4003) or may prove to be weakly contrasting archaeological features (4004). The small positive anomalies are considered to possibly represent small cut features such as small pits or postholes; since they form no significant patterning in their spatial distribution they have been classed as possible archaeology.
- 3.2.6 The largest field to the north contains a long intermittent, curvilinear anomaly that is defined by spreads of positive anomalies at **4005** to **4010**. At first sight these anomalies appear to be geological given that the spreads have very diffuse edges and irregular shapes but the southern region coincides with early field boundaries marked on maps consulted in the DBA (Wessex Archaeology 2012). The most regular response at **4005** corresponds closely to a field boundary observed in the plan of the parish of Bradford on Tone prior to the exchanges of 1802. It has values between +0.5nT and +2nT and is considered to be a section of ditch. The irregular features at **4006** to **4008** correspond to another field boundary visible on this map along with the 1842 tithe map for Bradford on Tone. The majority of the anomaly is made up of weakly positive values (less than +2nT) with some stronger better defined anomalies (around +5nT) in places with much stronger areas of increased magnetic response present also (between -40nT and +40nT). The



weaker broad regions are considered to be the remains of tree throws created when these boundaries, which may have been at least partially defined by hedges and mature trees, were removed. These features have been classed at possible archaeology. The stronger better defined features are considered to be pits and other cut features and they have been classed as archaeology to reflect this. The areas of increased response could relate to burning or deposits of ceramic waste.

- 3.2.7 The northern section that runs from **4008** to **4010** does not correspond to a field boundary visible on maps consulted in the DBA. These areas are still considered to represent a former field boundary given their similarity to responses from the other known boundaries.
- 3.2.8 There are two elongated spreads of increased magnetic response at **4011** and **4012**; the responses within these regions consist of a concentration of bipolar (black and white) anomalies that are considered to have possibly accumulated due to these areas being used as access tracks alongside field boundaries. The 1842 tithe map shows field boundaries present close to both of these spreads.
- 3.2.9 There are some isolated positive anomalies that are considered to be probable archaeology. A good example can be seen at **4013** that has values around +7nT. These anomalies most likely represent pits.
- 3.2.10 This field is criss-crossed with numerous ceramic field drains with examples noted at **4014** to **4016**. They are composed of a series of bipolar responses that define the individual sections of pipe buried underground. Some such as at **4014** possess stronger magnetic values and this could either reflect a shallower depth of burial or a difference in the manufacture of the field drain. All field drains are considered to be relatively modern.
- 3.2.11 The remaining anomalies in this field are either trends or small positive anomalies. The trends are either considered to be ploughing trends or may prove to be weakly contrasting archaeological features. The small positive anomalies are considered to possibly represent small cut features such as small pits or postholes; since they form no significant patterning in their spatial distribution they have been classed as possible archaeology.
- 3.2.12 The smallest field in the northeast has a much higher concentration of small ferrous/ceramic responses with some particularly large ferrous anomalies observed around **4017**. This higher concentration most likely suggests that domestic refuse, including ceramic and ferrous debris, has been added to the soil as part of its use as agricultural land.
- 3.2.13 No definite or probable archaeological features have been observed in this field. The anomalies present in this field are either trends or small positive anomalies. The trends are either considered to be ploughing trends or may prove to be weakly contrasting archaeological features. The small positive anomalies are considered to possibly represent small cut features such as small pits or postholes; since they form no significant patterning in their spatial distribution they have been classed as possible archaeology.

#### 3.3 Gradiometer Survey Results and Interpretation: Modern Services

3.3.1 There is one modern service located in the data at **4018**; it passes through the entire survey area and is aligned NNW-SSE. There are numerous ceramic pipes (e.g. **4015**) running through the data but these are considered to be ceramic field drains related to agriculture.



3.3.2 It is not clear from the geophysical data whether any of the services identified are in active use or not. Also gradiometer data will not be able to locate and identify all services present on site. This report and accompanying illustrations should not be used as the sole source for service locations and appropriate equipment (e.g. CAT and Genny) should be used to confirm the location of buried services before any trenches are opened on site.

#### 4 DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 The detailed gradiometer survey has been successful in detecting anomalies of definite, probable and possible archaeological interest within the Site, in addition to regions of increased magnetic response and one modern service.
- 4.1.2 The geophysical data has revealed an oval enclosure that was identified from aerial photography in the DBA (Wessex Archaeology 2012) along with a second sub-rectangular enclosure. The aerial photography suggests that the oval enclosure may have a second concentric ditch surrounding it. It is unclear whether these enclosures served as settlement sites or served some other function related to agricultural activity. The enclosure is divided by a modern service that may obscure additional features and the complex is likely to extend outside of the survey areas.
- 4.1.3 Former field boundaries of various forms have been identified in the data that demonstrate this area has largely served as agricultural land in recent centuries.
- 4.1.4 The remaining features detected relate to more recent use of this area with ploughing trends, spreads of magnetic CBM and metallic debris and one modern service detected.
- 4.1.5 The relative dimensions of the modern services identified by the gradiometer survey are indicative of the strength of their magnetic response, which is dependent upon the materials used in their construction and the backfill of the service trenches. The physical dimensions of the services indicated may therefore differ from their magnetic extents in plan; it is assumed that the centreline of services is coincident with the centreline of their anomalies, however. Similarly, it is difficult to estimate the depth of burial of the services through gradiometer survey.
- 4.1.6 It should be noted that small, weakly magnetised features may produce responses that are below the detection threshold of magnetometers. It may therefore be the case that more archaeological features may be encountered than have been identified through geophysical survey.

#### 5 **REFERENCES**

English Heritage, 2008, *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation. Research and Professional Service Guideline No 1*, 2nd edition.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, *Sheet 5, South East England*, Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Wessex Archaeology, 2012. *Ritherdens Solar Development, Somerset: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Client report ref. 87640.01

#### 6 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Plan of the Parish of Bradford on Tone Prior to and Following the Exchanges of 1802 (Somerset Archives DD/DP/C1062)

Bradford on Tone Tithe map: 1842



#### APPENDIX 1: SURVEY EQUIPMENT AND DATA PROCESSING

#### Survey Methods and Equipment

The magnetic data for this project was acquired using a Bartington 601-2 dual magnetic gradiometer system. This instrument has two sensor assemblies fixed horizontally 1m apart allowing two traverses to be recorded simultaneously. Each sensor contains two fluxgate magnetometers arranged vertically with a 1m separation, and measures the difference between the vertical components of the total magnetic field within each sensor array. This arrangement of magnetometers suppresses any diurnal or low frequency effects.

The gradiometers have an effective resolution of 0.03nT over a  $\pm 100nT$  range, and measurements from each sensor are logged at intervals of 0.25m. All of the data are stored on an integrated data logger for subsequent post-processing and analysis.

Wessex Archaeology undertakes two types of magnetic surveys: scanning and detail. Both types depend upon the establishment of an accurate 20m or 30m site grid, which is achieved using a Leica Viva RTK GNSS instrument and then extended using tapes. The Leica Viva system receives corrections from a network of reference stations operated by the Ordnance Survey and Leica Geosystems, allowing positions to be determined with a precision of 0.02m in real-time and therefore exceed the level of accuracy recommended by English Heritage (2008) for geophysical surveys.

Scanning surveys consist of recording data at 0.25m intervals along transects spaced 10m apart, acquiring a minimum of 80 data points per transect. Due to the relatively coarse transect interval, scanning surveys should only be expected to detect extended regions of archaeological anomalies, when there is a greater likelihood of distinguishing such responses from the background magnetic field.

The detailed surveys consist of 20m x 20m or 30m x 30m grids, and data are collected at 0.25m intervals along traverses spaced 1m apart. These strategies give 1600 or 3600 measurements per 20m or 30m grid respectively, and are the recommended methodologies for archaeological surveys of this type (EH, 2008).

Data may be collected with a higher sample density where complex archaeological anomalies are encountered, to aid the detection and characterisation of small and ephemeral features. Data may be collected at up to 0.125m intervals along traverses spaced up to 0.25m apart, resulting in a maximum of 28800 readings per 30m grid, exceeding that recommended by English Heritage (2008) for characterisation surveys.

#### Post-Processing

The magnetic data collected during the detail survey are downloaded from the Bartington system for processing and analysis using both commercial and in-house software. This software allows for both the data and the images to be processed in order to enhance the results for analysis; however, it should be noted that minimal data processing is conducted so as not to distort the anomalies.

As the scanning data are not as closely distributed as with detailed survey, they are georeferenced using the GPS information and interpolated to highlight similar anomalies in adjacent transects. Directional trends may be removed before interpolation to produce more easily understood images.



Typical data and image processing steps may include:

- Destripe Applying a zero mean traverse in order to remove differences caused by directional effects inherent in the magnetometer;
- Destagger Shifting each traverse longitudinally by a number of readings. This corrects for operator errors and is used to enhance linear features;
- Despike Filtering isolated data points that exceed the mean by a specified amount to reduce the appearance of dominant anomalous readings (generally only used for earth resistance data)

Typical displays of the data used during processing and analysis:

- XY Plot Presents the data as a trace or graph line for each traverse. Each traverse is displaced down the image to produce a stacked profile effect. This type of image is useful as it shows the full range of individual anomalies.
- Greyscale Presents the data in plan view using a greyscale to indicate the relative strength of the signal at each measurement point. These plots can be produced in colour to highlight certain features but generally greyscale plots are used during analysis of the data.



#### **APPENDIX 2: GEOPHYSICAL INTERPRETATION**

The interpretation methodology used by Wessex Archaeology separates the anomalies into two main categories: archaeological and unidentified responses.

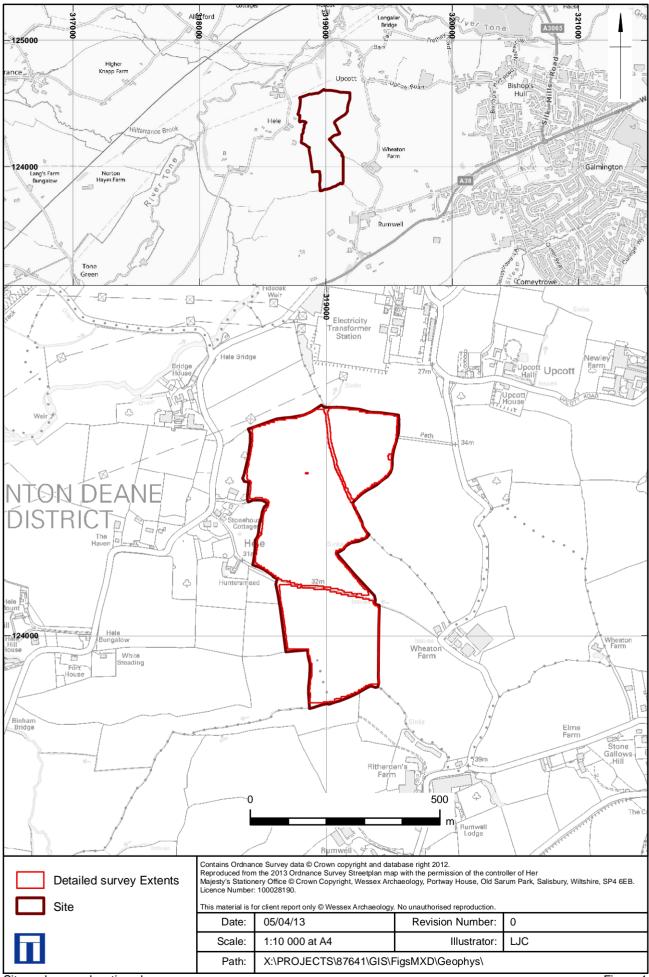
The archaeological category is used for features when the form, nature and pattern of the anomaly are indicative of archaeological material. Further sources of information such as aerial photographs may also have been incorporated in providing the final interpretation. This category is further subdivided into three groups, implying a decreasing level of confidence:

- Archaeology used when there is a clear geophysical response and anthropogenic pattern.
- Probable archaeology used for features which give a clear response but which form incomplete patterns.
- Possible archaeology used for features which give a response but which form no discernible pattern or trend.

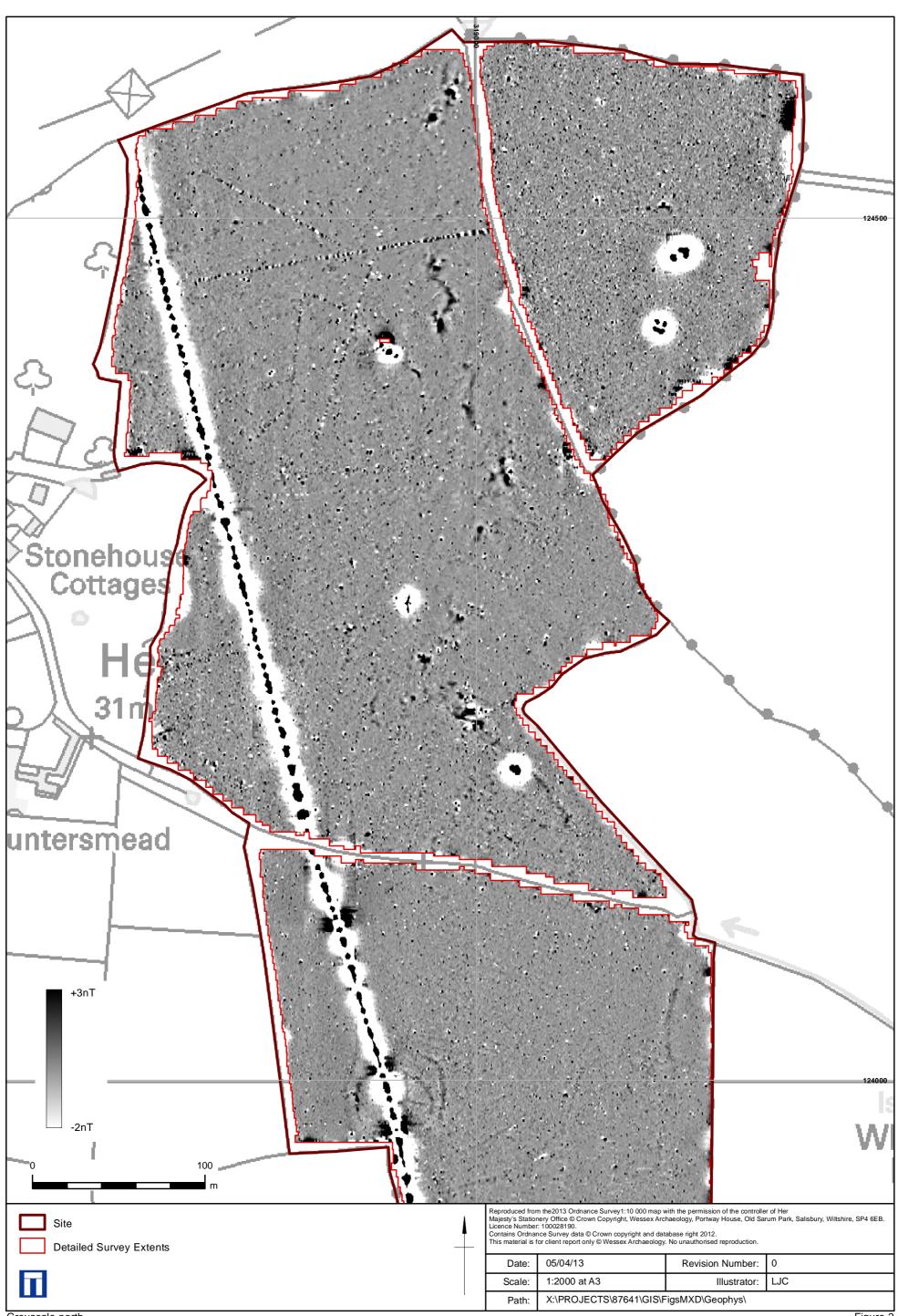
The unidentified category is used for features when the form, nature and pattern of the anomaly are not sufficient to warrant a classification as an archaeological feature. This category is further sub-divided into:

- Increased magnetic response used for areas dominated by indistinct anomalies which may have some archaeological potential.
- Trend used for low amplitude or indistinct linear anomalies.
- Ferrous used for responses caused by ferrous material. These anomalies are likely to be of modern origin.

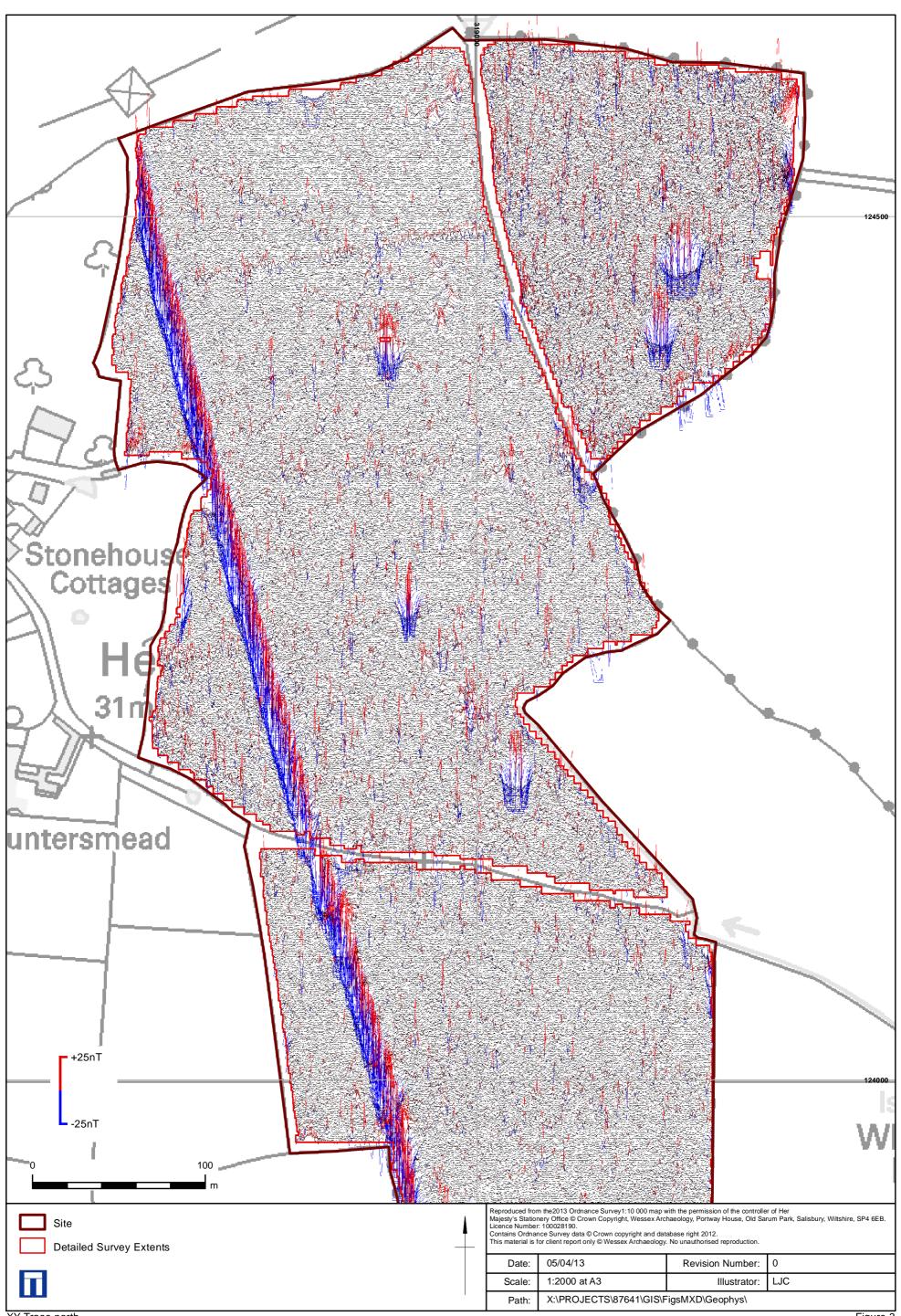
Finally, services such as water pipes are marked where they have been identified.



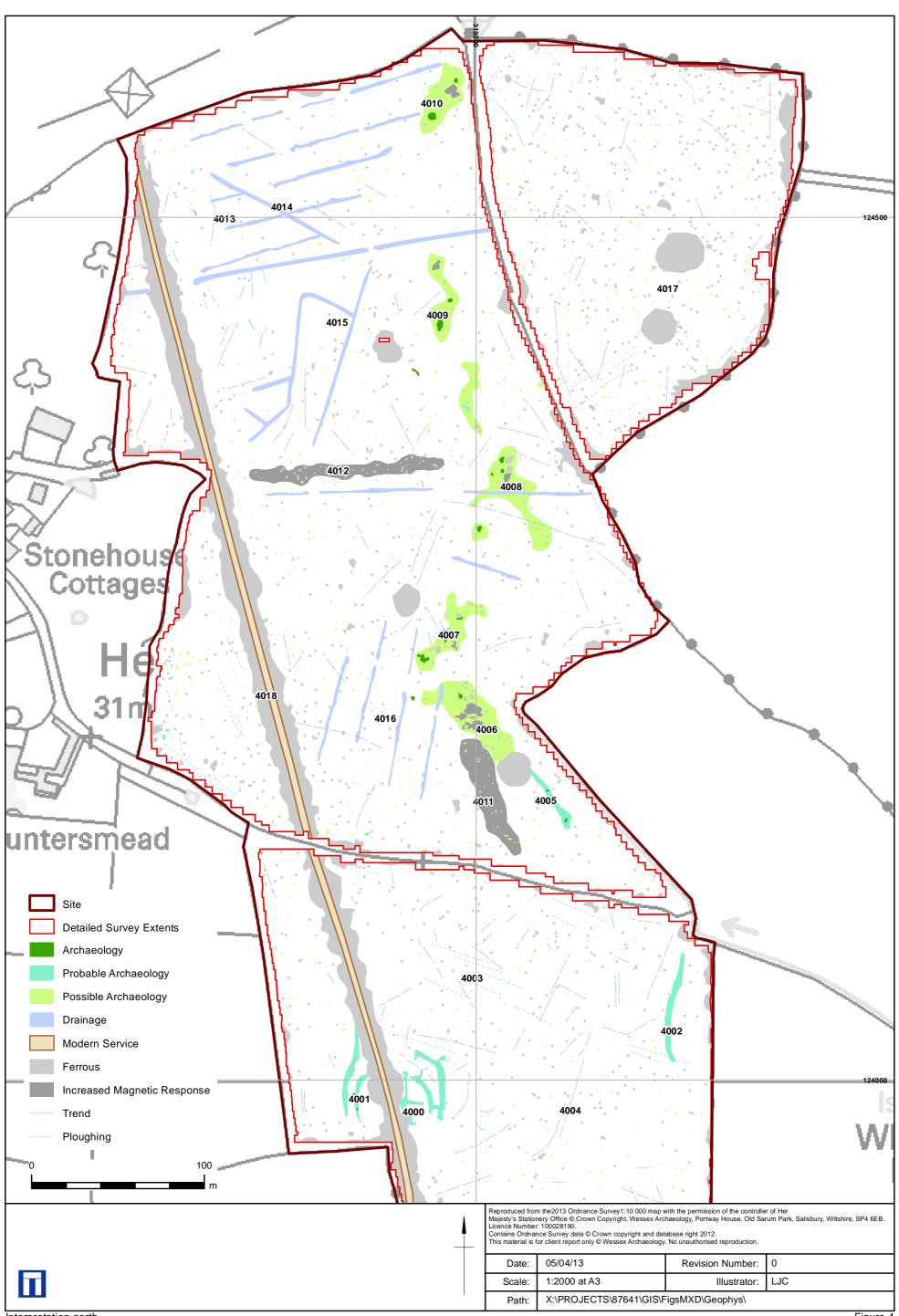
Site and survey location plan



Greyscale north



XY Trace north

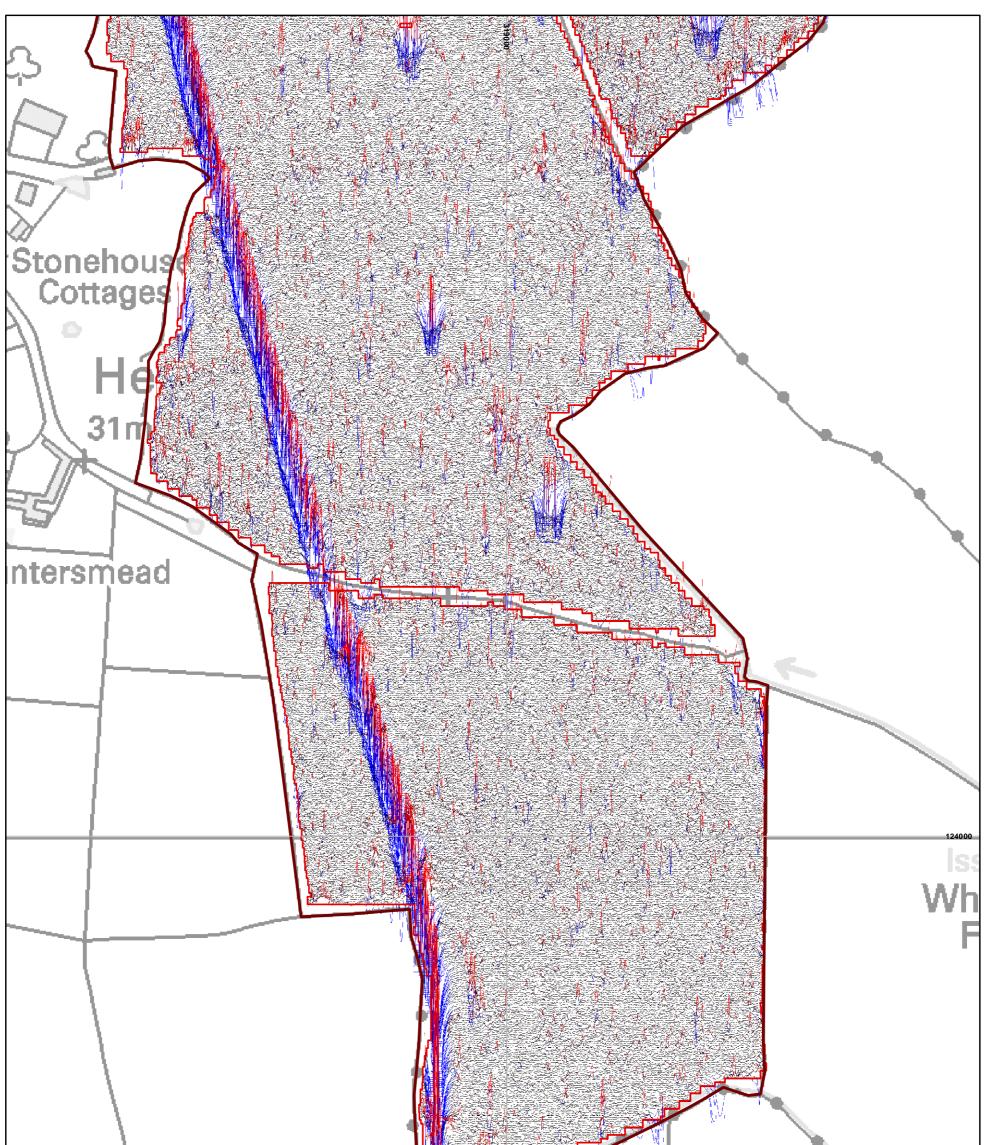


Interpretation north

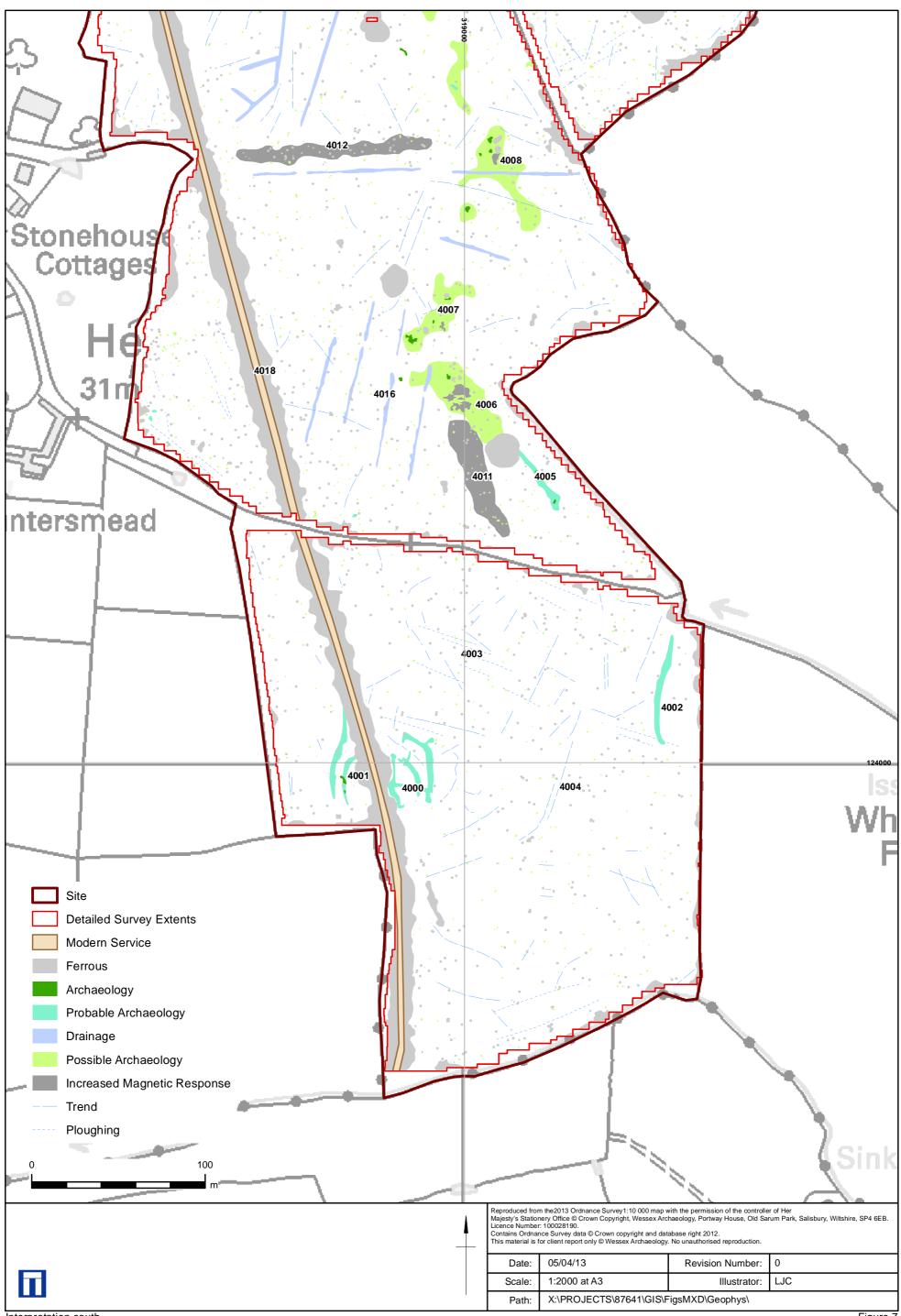


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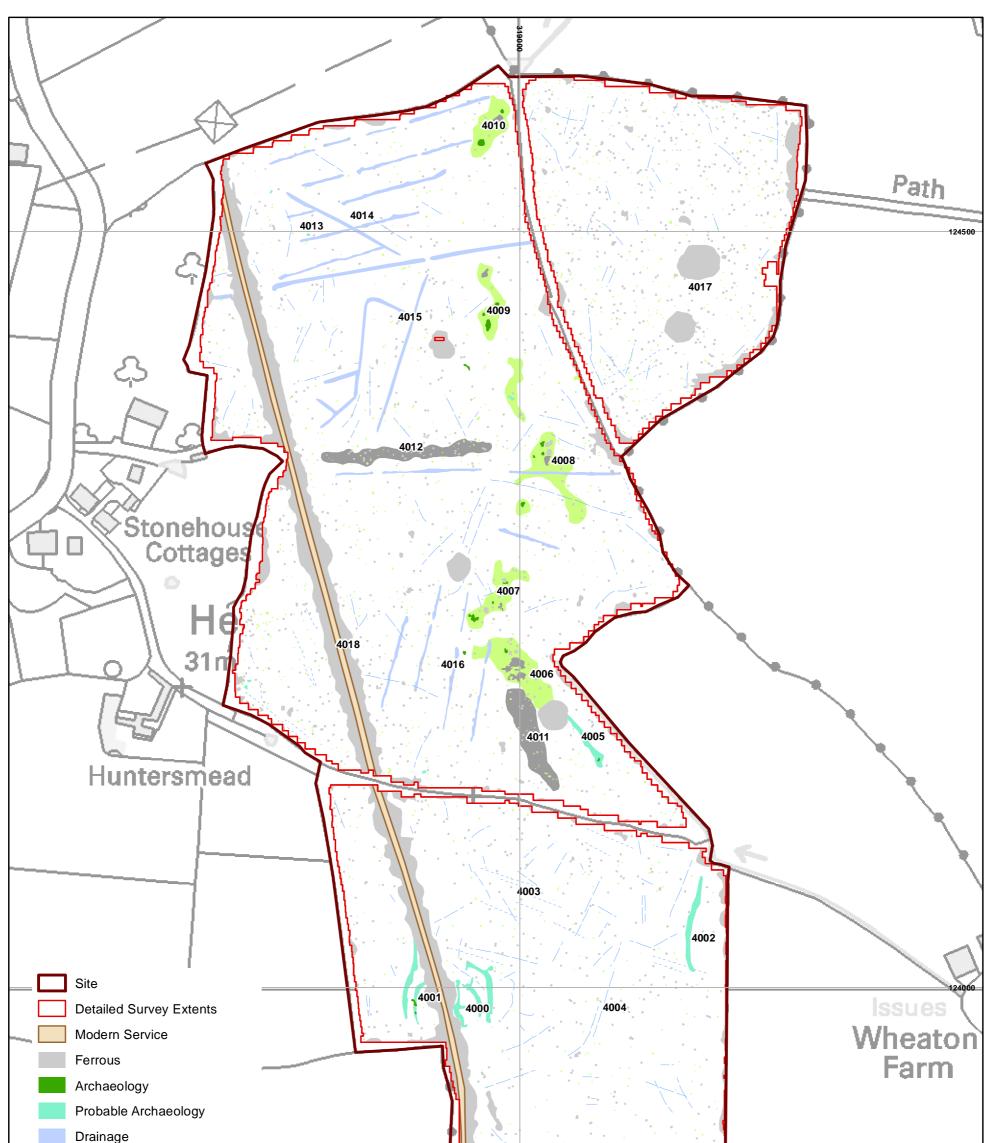
Greyscale south



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| XY Trace south               |   |   |   |  | Figure 6  |



Interpretation south



| Possible Archaeology<br>Increased Magnetic Response<br>Trend<br>Ploughing<br>0 125 |   |  |   |   |  |
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| Interpretation   |   | •  | •   |   | Figure 8   |

Interpretation





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