



NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report

Report Ref.: 259030.03
February 2022



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Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk

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Document Information

Document title NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent
Document subtitle Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report
Document reference 259030.03

Client name AECOM

Address Earl Grey House 75 - 85
Grey Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne & Wear
NE1 6EF

Site location Isle of Grain
County Kent
National grid reference 587600 176400 (TQ 87600 76400)
Statutory designations None
Planning authority Kent County Council

WA project name NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent
WA project code 259030
Dates of fieldwork 17 January 2022 – 21 January 2022
Fieldwork directed by Amy Dunn
Project management by Tom Richardson
Document compiled by Brett Howard
Graphics by Brett Howard

Quality Assurance

Issue	Date	Author	Approved by
1	16/02/2022	BH	



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Summary

A gradiometer survey was conducted over land on the Isle of Grain, Kent (centred on NGR 587600 176400). The project was commissioned by AECOM with the aim of establishing the presence, or otherwise, and nature of detectable archaeological features in support of a planning application for the development of the site as an onshore cable route and converter station, associated with the electrical interconnector between the UK and Germany.

The survey comprises 17.2 ha of agricultural land across three separate parcels. An additional 5.1 ha linear portion of the development area extending to the east and north was not subject to survey.

The results of the survey suggest an area of dense settlement activity. The settlement activity appears to be in three clusters, comprising circular anomalies with associated openings which indicate roundhouses.

To the north of the clusters of activity, a circular arrangement of postholes around a central pit or hearth feature. These postholes suggest a different construction method of roundhouse, or an alternative use of this feature, perhaps as an enclosure.

It is likely these areas of activity relate to Iron Age or Romano-British settlement activity, such as that recorded to the south-west and north-east of the site.

Further archaeological activity is evident toward the north of the survey area, in the form of curvilinear and rectilinear anomalies, which may continue north outside the survey boundary, and could indicate ditch and enclosure features.

Modern services and land drains indicate a more modern and contemporary level of activity in the area.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank AECOM for commissioning the geophysical survey. The assistance of Tom Cramond is gratefully acknowledged in this regard.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Amy Dunn and Jake Bishop. Rok Plesnicar processed the geophysical data. Brett Howard interpreted the data, wrote the report, and prepared illustrations. The geophysical work was quality controlled and managed on behalf of Wessex by Tom Richardson.



NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by AECOM to carry out a geophysical survey on the Isle of Grain, Kent (centred on NGR 587600 176400) (**Figure 1**). The survey forms part of an ongoing programme of archaeological works being undertaken in support of a planning application for the development of the site as an onshore cable route and converter station associated with the electrical interconnector between the UK and Germany.

1.2 Scope of document

1.2.1 This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed by the detailed survey results and the archaeological interpretation of the geophysical data.

1.3 The site

1.3.1 The geophysical survey area is located on the Isle of Grain, 1 km to the west of the village of Grain, 10 km east of Hoo St. Werburgh, in the county of Kent.

1.3.2 The survey area comprises 17.2 ha of agricultural land across three separate parcels. The site is bounded by agricultural fields to the north and east, Grain Road to the south, and scrub land to the west. A 30 m wide corridor extending to the east and north of the survey area forms part of the wider site connecting with the sea cable route but was not subject to survey.

1.3.3 The survey area is on a slight incline sloping from 2 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the north-western edge, to 7 m aOD at the south-eastern edge.

1.3.4 The solid geology comprises Clay and Silt of the London Clay Formation with overlying superficial Head deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel in the north-western portion of the survey area. River Terrace Deposits of sands and gravels are recorded to the south-east of the survey area and along the cable route extension to the east and north (BGS 2022).

1.3.5 The soils underlying the survey area are likely to consist of stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the 572r (Ratsborough) association (SSEW SE Sheet 6 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 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was compiled using publicly available online resources and considered the recorded historic environment resource within a 500 m study area of the proposed development. While not exhaustive, the following background is a summary of findings considered relevant to the geophysical survey.



2.2 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.2.1 Two scheduled monuments are noted in the wider landscape. Second World War coastal artillery defence installations (NHLE 1019955) are located 1.2 km to the east of the site, immediately east and south-east of Grain village. A Second World War QF P-series oil bombing decoy (NHLE 1425319) is located 2 km to the north-west of the site.
- 2.2.2 One Palaeolithic flint artefact was found during fieldwork associated with the Medway Valley Palaeolithic Project in 2005 200 m to the south of the site.
- 2.2.3 An Iron Age settlement was excavated 540 m to the south-west of the site in 1978. In addition, an Iron Age enclosure and an Iron Age roundhouse were discovered 300 m to the north-east of the site. A Roman cemetery was discovered in the immediate vicinity of the Iron Age enclosure and roundhouse.
- 2.2.4 A 1st or early 2nd century cordoned flask vessel of Upchurch ware was found in 1951, near Wallend Farm, 250 m to the south-west of the site.
- 2.2.5 Several ring ditches and a field system of unknown date are visible from cropmarks, 300 m to the south of the site. A further three ring ditches have been noted in a field 250 m south of the site.
- 2.2.6 Earthwork remains of a 30 m x 45 m irregular mound, thought to be a medieval saltern mound, is located 100 m north-west of the site.
- 2.2.7 An old sea wall is located 360 m to the north-west of the site. This potentially dates to the post-medieval or modern period.
- 2.2.8 A group of four rectilinear structures, set in a square, seen on 1945 RAF aerial photography is situated 50 m south of the survey area. These structures range in size from 3.5 m x 12 m to 3.5 m x 20 m. Immediately to the north-east, are five structures between 1 m and 2 m across, which may be part of the same complex. It is not clear if these are agricultural or military structures, but they are not seen on later photographs of the area.
- 2.2.9 Four listed buildings are recorded within the study area. Located 980 m to the east of the site, in the village of Grain, the 12th century parish church of St. James (NHLE 1085755) is a Grade I listed building. There are two Grade II listed buildings in the village of Grain. Located 1 km east of the site is an 18th century farmhouse, White House (NHLE 1204482). The Hogarth inn (NHLE 1336496), a late 16 century building, is located 750 m east of the site. Further, the Second World War anti-tank defences on the foreshore (NHLE 1393145) are located along the coastline, 50 m to the north-east of the site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The geophysical survey was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology's in-house geophysics team between 17 – 21 January 2022. Field conditions were adequate throughout the period of survey. An overall coverage of 14.5 ha was achieved, with reductions attributable to areas of vegetation obstruction and wet ground which prevented access by the survey team.
- 3.1.2 The methods and standards employed throughout the geophysical survey conform to that set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex archaeology 2022), as well as to current best practice, and guidance outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA 2014) and European Archaeologiae Consilium (Schmidt *et al.* 2015).



3.2 Aims and objectives

3.2.1 The aims of the survey comprise the following:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the nature of the detectable archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices; and
- To inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2.2 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the geophysical survey are:

- To conduct a geophysical survey covering as much of the specified area as possible, allowing for on-site obstructions;
- To clarify the presence/absence of anomalies of archaeological potential; and
- Where possible, to determine the general nature of any anomalies of archaeological potential.

3.3 Fieldwork methodology

3.3.1 The cart-based gradiometer system used a Leica Captivate RTK GNSS instrument, which receives corrections from a network of reference stations operated by the Ordnance Survey (OS) and Leica Geosystems. Such instruments allow positions to be determined with a precision of 0.02 m in real-time and therefore exceeds European Archaeologiae Consilium recommendations (Schmidt *et al.* 2015).

3.3.2 The detailed gradiometer survey was undertaken using four SenSys FGM650/3 magnetic gradiometers spaced at 1 m intervals and mounted on a non-magnetic cart. Data were collected with an effective sensitivity of 0.03 nT at a rate of 20 Hz, producing intervals of 0.08 m, along transects spaced 4 m apart.

3.4 Data processing

3.4.1 Data from the survey were subjected to minimal correction processes. These comprise a 'Destripe' function (± 5 nT thresholds), applied to correct for any variation between the sensors, and an interpolation used to grid the data and discard overlaps where transects have been collected too close together.

3.4.2 Further details of the geophysical and survey equipment, methods and processing are described in **Appendix 1**.

4 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The geophysical survey has produced evidence of magnetic anomalies across the site. Results are presented as a series of greyscale plots archaeological interpretations at a scale of 1:1,500 (**Figures 2 to 7**) and 1:3,000 for the overview figures (**Figures 8 and 9**). The data are displayed at -6 nT (white) to +9 nT (black) for the greyscale image.

4.1.2 The interpretation of the datasets highlights the presence of potential archaeological anomalies, ferrous responses, burnt or fired objects, and magnetic trends (**Figure 3, 5, 7**,

9). Full definitions of the interpretation terms used in this report are provided in **Appendix 2**.

4.1.3 Numerous ferrous anomalies are visible throughout the dataset. These are presumed to be modern in provenance and are not referred to, unless considered relevant to the archaeological interpretation.

4.1.4 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 present than have been identified through geophysical survey.

4.1.5 Gradiometer survey may not detect 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.

4.2 Gradiometer survey results and interpretation

4.2.1 A concentration of magnetic anomalies, located toward the south of the main survey area, are characterised by strong positive, curvilinear, and ring-shaped responses with an associated negative response (**4000, 4001; Figures 3, 5, and 9**). The anomalies evident at **4000** cover an area of 50 m by 40 m, and comprise curvilinear anomalies with a width of 2 m. Better defined anomalies present at **4001**, immediately north of **4000**, are characterised as ring shapes with an overall diameter of 15 m and a width of 2 m. Further, an additional weaker, positive anomaly (**4002**) immediately east of the circular anomalies of **4001**, is 25 m long on a north – south orientation, with a width of 2 m. The positive anomalies indicate a dense collection of ditch-features with associated uplifted material shown by the negative responses. These anomalies are indicative of prehistoric settlement activity, such as roundhouses, with **4002** a delineation ditch to the east.

4.2.2 Two groups of strong dipolar, rectilinear anomalies are present 23 m north-west of **4001** at **4003**, and 30 m south-west of **4000** at **4004** (**Figures 3, 5, and 9**). The anomalies at **4003** cover a 45 m by 55 m area, with individual anomalies at a width of 2 – 3 m. Whereas, the anomalies at **4004** cover 40 m by 30 m, and a width of 2 – 3 m for the individual anomalies. These groups of anomalies suggest further ditches and possible settlement activity, similar to that seen at **4000** and **4001**.

4.2.3 An arrangement of strong positive anomalies, around a singular, central dipolar anomaly, is evident at **4005** (**Figures 3, 5, and 9**). The anomalies form a circle with a diameter of 21 m. The individual anomalies are 2 m in diameter and indicate pit or posthole features. This arrangement of anomalies is indicative of postholes for a roundhouse. While the central feature may represent a hearth, there is no clear evidence of thermoremanence in the geophysical data.

4.2.4 A strong, dipolar curvilinear anomaly is present in the northern portion of the survey area at **4006** (**Figures 3, 7, and 9**). The anomaly is 55 m long east – west and 4 m wide. This anomaly indicates the presence of a ditch, potentially associated with further settlement activity.

4.2.5 A strong, dipolar, curvilinear anomaly is present at the north-eastern boundary of the main field survey area (**4007; Figures 3, 7, and 9**). At 16 m in length east – west and 3 m in width, **4007** suggests a partial ring ditch. Additionally, at **4008** is a collection of amorphous and linear strong dipolar anomalies, covering an area of 30 m by 22 m. These could be an extension of the anthropogenic activity at **4007**.

4.2.6 At the southern extent of the survey area is a collection of weak and strong positive anomalies, with the larger sections indicating an area of rectilinear shapes (**4009; Figures**

3, 5, and 9). The rectilinear anomalies are 14 m by 15 m in area and have an individual width of 2 – 3 m. These anomalies may indicate further settlement ditches and activity however, they may also be a product of the local geology.

- 4.2.7 There is a group of weak positive, linear anomalies 14 m south-east of **4004** at **4010** (**Figures 5 and 9**). These anomalies have a diameter of 2 – 3 m and, due to the morphology of the alignments, could indicate the presence of a double-ditch boundary feature. However, they could equally relate to natural features or modern agricultural processes.
- 4.2.8 A weak, positive curvilinear anomaly is present 20 m east of **4000**, at **4011**, and is 3 m wide (**Figures 3, 5, and 9**). This anomaly may indicate a ditch feature, however due to the weak, amorphous character similar to **4009**, this feature may also be a product of the local geology.
- 4.2.9 There are multiple linear and curvilinear trends across the area, which may indicate further settlement activity, but are too weak to make a definitive interpretation.
- 4.2.10 A series of strong dipolar, linear anomalies are present in the north-east of the survey area (**4012 – 4014; Figures 3, 7, 9**). These anomalies indicate the presence of modern services.
- 4.2.11 An area of increased magnetic response (**4015; Figures 5 and 9**) is evident in the southern-most portion of the survey area and is related to the modern trackway.
- 4.2.12 Two former field boundaries are indicated in the drawings, as marked on historic mapping.
- 4.2.13 Extensive superficial geology, corresponding to local variations of Head deposits and river terraces, are present along the south-western area of the site, and as a broad band through the centre of the site, on a south-east to north-west orientation.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The gradiometer survey has identified anomalies of archaeological origin across the survey area, with dense concentrations of activity focussed towards the central southern area. In addition to these, anomalies interpreted as modern services, linear/curvilinear trends, land drains, superficial geology and widespread ferrous have been identified.
- 5.1.2 The results of the survey suggest an area of dense settlement activity. The topography of the settlement infers that it was built upon an area of high ground, bounded to the north-east and south-west by areas of wetland, indicated by Head and river terrace deposits. The settlement activity appears to be in three clusters, comprising circular anomalies with associated openings which indicate roundhouses.
- 5.1.3 To the north of the clusters of activity, a circular arrangement of postholes around a central pit or hearth feature. These postholes suggest a different construction method of roundhouse, or an alternative use of this feature, perhaps as an enclosure.
- 5.1.4 It is likely these areas of activity relate to Iron Age or Romano-British settlement activity, such as that recorded to the south-west and north-east of the site.
- 5.1.5 Further suggestion of archaeological activity is evident toward the north of the survey area, in the form of curvilinear and rectilinear anomalies, which may continue north outside the survey boundary, and could indicate ditch and enclosure features.
- 5.1.6 Modern services and land drains indicate a more modern and contemporary level of activity in the area.



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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists [CIfA] 2014 *Standards and guidance for archaeological geophysical survey*. Reading, CIfA

Schmidt, A, Linford, P, Linford, N, David, A, Gaffney, C, Sarris, A and Fassbinder, J. 2015 *Guidelines for the use of geophysics in archaeology: questions to ask and points to consider*. EAC Guidelines 2, Belgium: European Archaeological Council.

Wessex Archaeology, 2022, *Written Scheme of Investigation for NeuConnect: Geophysical Survey, Isle of Grain, Kent*

Cartographic and documentary sources

Ordnance Survey 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales Sheet 6, Soils of Midland and Western England*. Southampton.

Online resources

British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer (accessed January 2022) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html#>

Historic England (HE) website <http://historicengland.org.uk>, (accessed January 2022)

Old Maps (accessed January 2022) <https://www.old-maps.co.uk>



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Equipment and Data Processing

Survey methods and equipment

The magnetic data for this project were acquired using a non-magnetic cart fitted with four SenSys FGM650/3 magnetic gradiometers. The instrument has four sensor assemblies fixed horizontally 1 m apart allowing four 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 0.03 nT over a ± 100 nT range, and measurements from each sensor are logged at intervals of 0.25 m. The data are transmitted to, and recorded by, MonMX software. The program also receives measurements from a GPS system, which is fixed to the cart at a measured distance from the sensors, providing real time locational data for each data point.

The cart-based system relies upon accurate GPS location data which is collected using a Leica Captivate system with rover and base station. This 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 European Archaeologiae Consilium recommendations (Schmidt *et al.* 2015) for geophysical surveys.

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 0.125 m intervals along traverses spaced up to 0.25m apart.

Post-processing

The magnetic data collected during the detail survey are downloaded from the SenSys cart 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.

The cart-based system generally requires a lesser amount of post-processing than the handheld Bartington Grad 601-2 fluxgate gradiometer instrument. This is largely because mounting the gradiometers on the cart reduces the occurrence of operator error; caused by inconsistent walking speeds and deviation in traverse position due to varying ground cover and topography.

Typical data and image processing steps may include:

- GPS DeStripe – Determines the median of each transect and then subtracts that value from each datapoint in the transect. May be used to remove the striping effect seen within a survey caused by directional effects, drift, etc.
- GPS Base Interpolation – Sets the X & Y interval of the interpolated data and the track radius (area around each datapoint that is included in the interpolated result).



- Discard Overlaps - Intended to eliminate a track(s) that have been collected too close to one another. Without this, the results of the interpolation process can be distorted as it tries to accommodate very close points with potentially differing values.

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. XY plots can be made available upon request.
- 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 four main categories: archaeological, modern, agricultural, and uncertain origin/geological.

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 sub-divided into three groups, implying a decreasing level of confidence:

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

The modern category is used for anomalies that are presumed to be relatively modern in date:

- Ferrous – used for responses caused by ferrous material. These anomalies are likely to be of modern origin.
- Modern service – used for responses considered relating to cables and pipes; most are composed of ferrous/ceramic material although services made from non-magnetic material can sometimes be observed.

The agricultural category is used for the following:

- Former field boundaries – used for ditch sections that correspond to the position of boundaries marked on earlier mapping.
- Ridge and furrow – used for broad and diffuse linear anomalies that are considered to indicate areas of former ridge and furrow.
- Ploughing – used for well-defined narrow linear responses, usually aligned parallel to existing field boundaries.
- Drainage – used to define the course of ceramic field drains that are visible in the data as a series of repeating bipolar (black and white) responses.

The uncertain origin/geological 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.
- Superficial geology – used for diffuse edged spreads considered to relate to shallow geological deposits. They can be distinguished as areas of positive, negative, or broad bipolar (positive and negative) anomalies.



Appendix 3: OASIS form

Project Details:

Project name		NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent			
Type of project		Detailed gradiometer survey			
Project description		<p>The results of the survey suggest that an area of dense settlement activity was present on the site.</p> <p>The topography of the settlement infers that it was built upon an area of high ground, bounded to the north-east and south-west by areas of wetland, indicated by the superficial geology. There is evidence to suggest there was a double-ditched feature to the south of the settlement, indicating a defensive ditch or a delineation of land, segregating the dry-ground approach to the settlement.</p> <p>Further suggestion of settlement activity is evident toward the north of the site, in the form of curvilinear and rectilinear features, which may continue north outside the survey boundary.</p> <p>Modern services and land drains indicate a more modern and contemporary level of activity in the area.</p>			
Project dates		Start: 17/01/2022	End: 21/01/2022		
Previous work		Not known			
Future work		Not known			
Project Code:	259030	HER event no.	N/A	OASIS form ID:	wessexar1-504261
		NMR no.	N/A		
		SM no.	N/A		
Planning Application Ref.					
Site Status		None			
Land use		Agricultural			
Monument type		none	Period	e.g. Iron Age (700 BC – AD 43)	

Project Location:

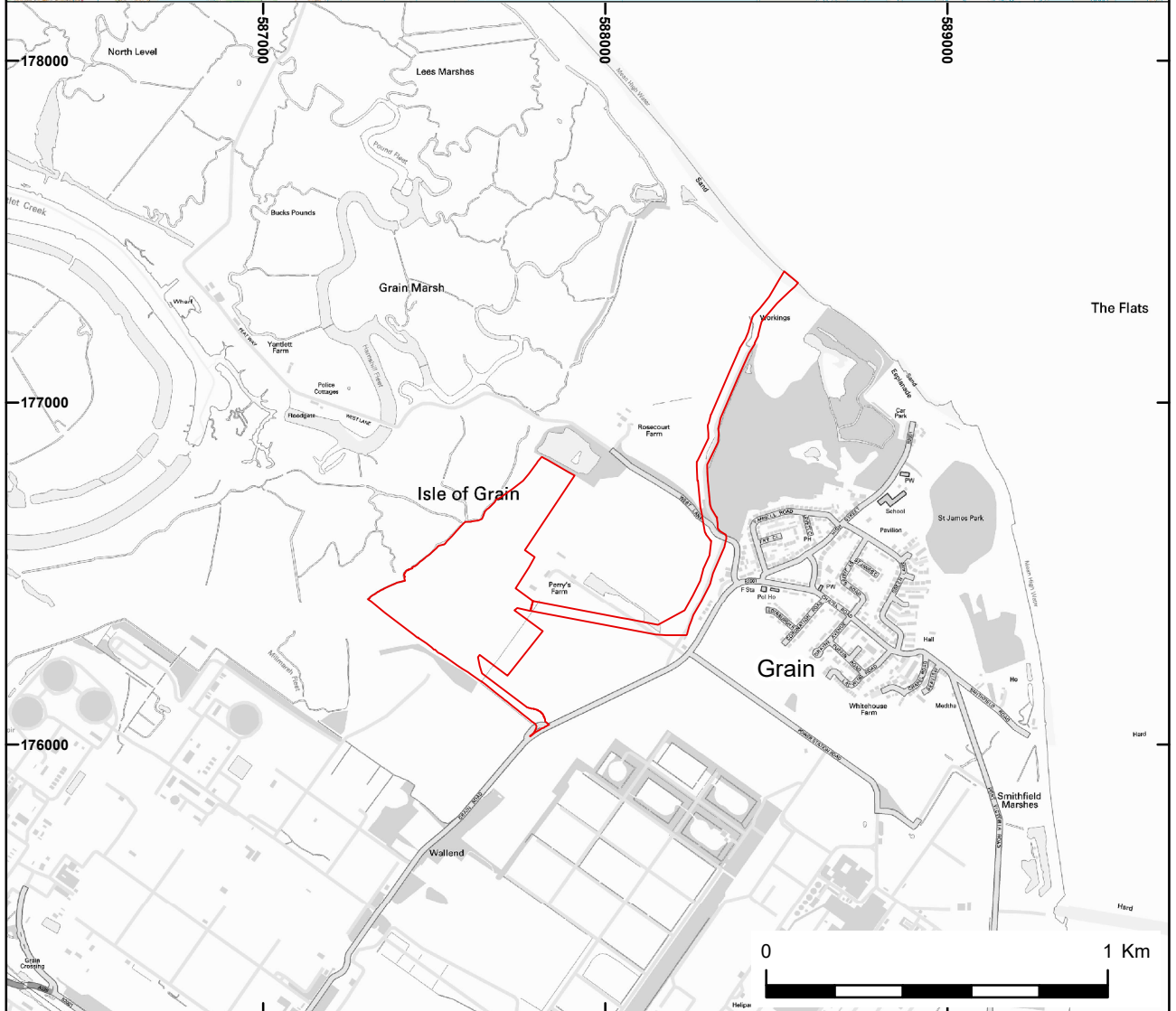
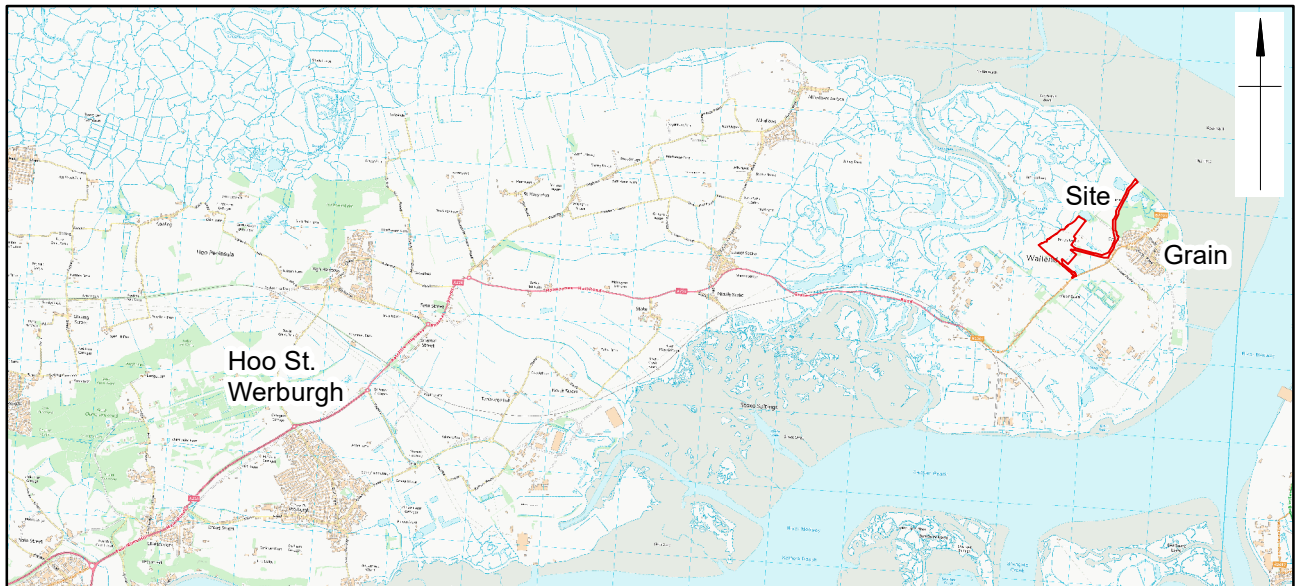
Site Address				Postcode	
County	Kent	District	Medway	Parish	Isle of Grain
Study Area	14.5 ha	Height OD	2 - 7 m aOD	NGR	TQ 87600 76400



Project Creators:

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology				
Project brief originator	AECOM	Project design originator		AECOM	
Project Manager	Tom Richardson	Project Supervisor		Amy Dunn	
Sponsor or funding body	Client	Type of Sponsor		Client	

Project Archive and Bibliography:

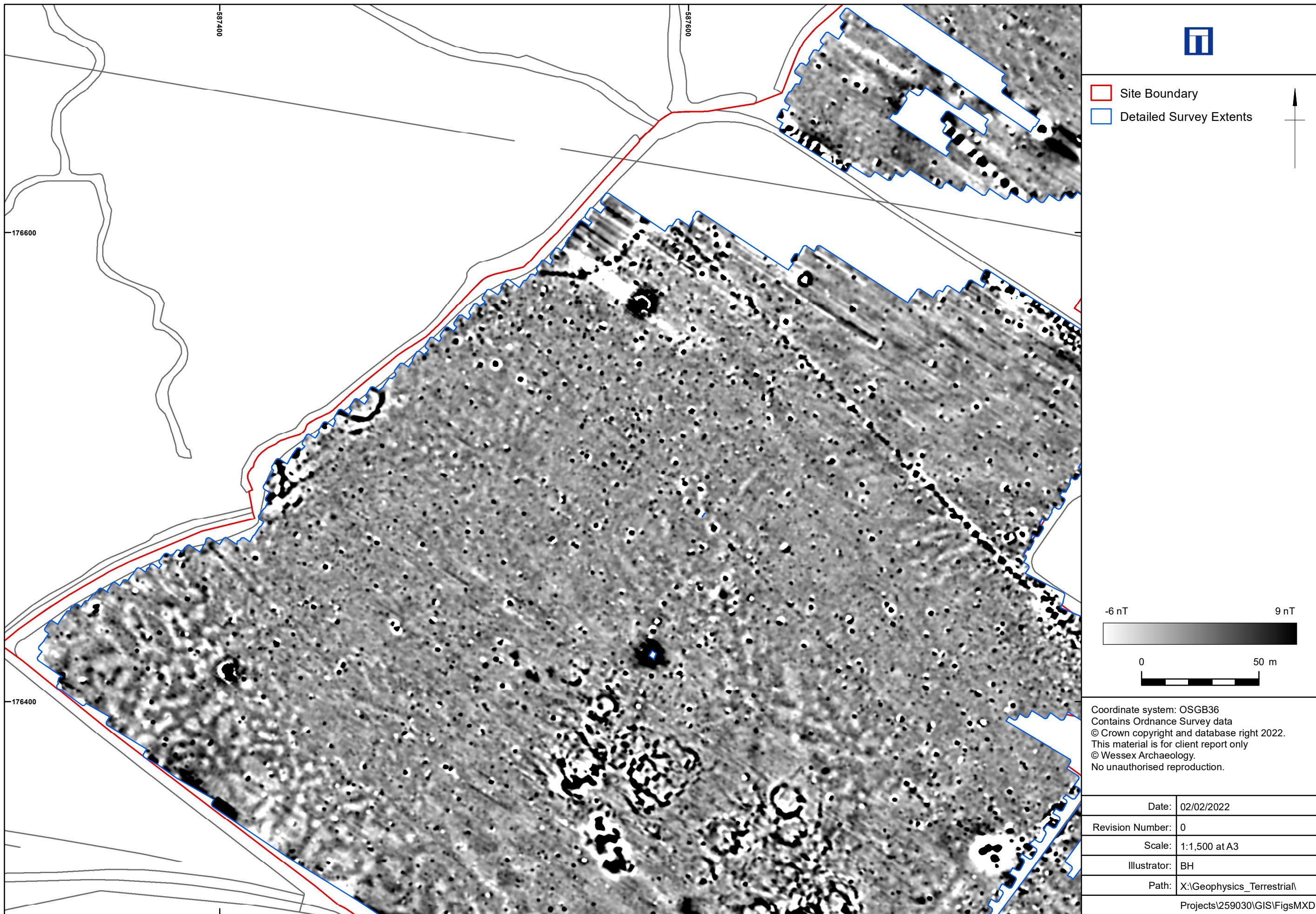
Physical archive	N/A	Digital Archive	Geophysical survey and report	Paper Archive	N/A
Report title	NeuConnect, Isle of Grain, Kent			Date	2022
Author	Wessex Archaeology	Description	Unpublished report	Report ref.	259030.03



 Site Boundary 	Coordinate system: OSGB36 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
	Date:	02/02/2022	Revision Number:	0
	Scale:	1:100,000 & 20,000 at A4	Illustrator:	RP
	Path:	X:\Geophysics_Terrestrial\Projects\259030\GIS\Figs\MXD\		

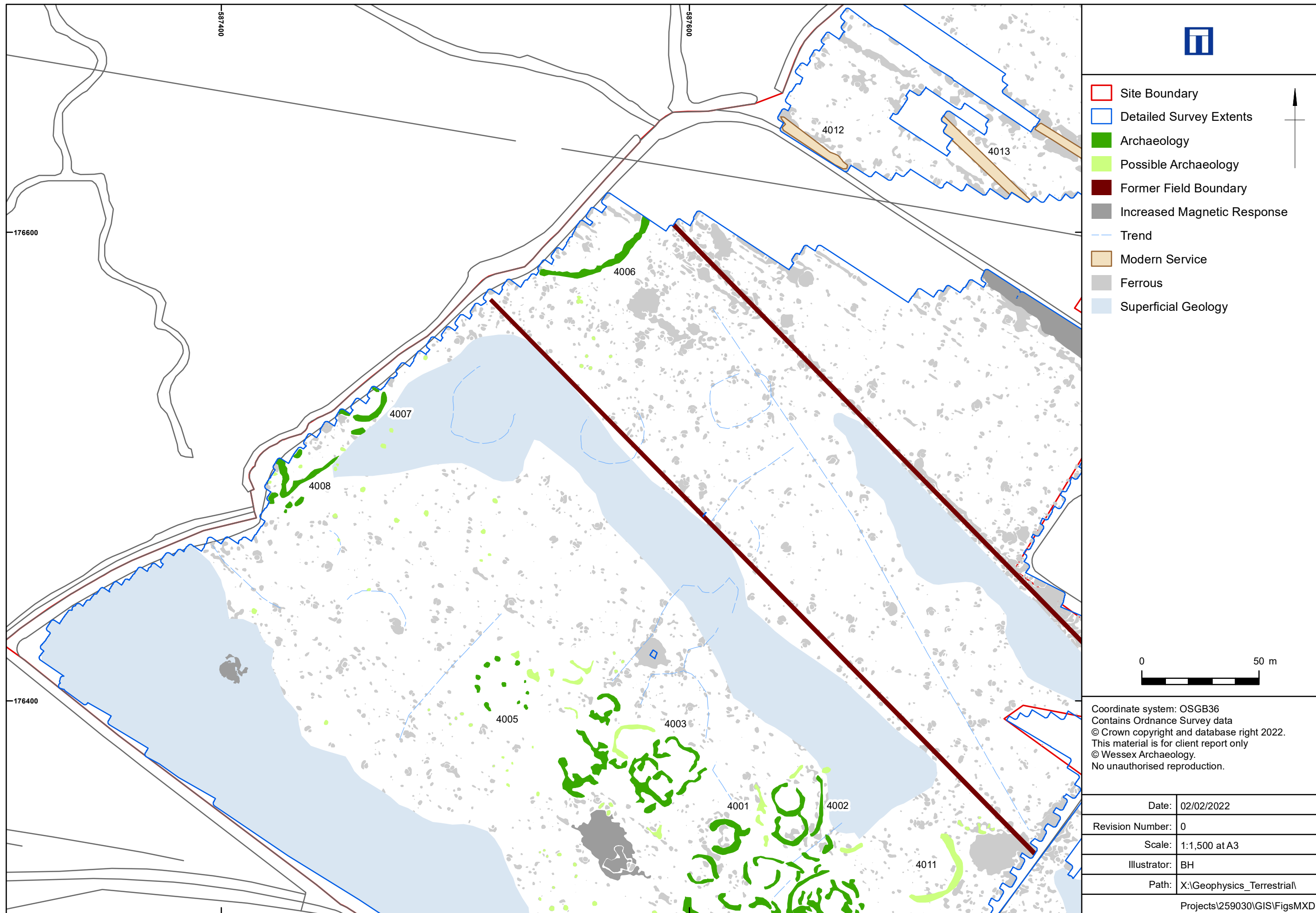
Site location and survey extents

Figure 1



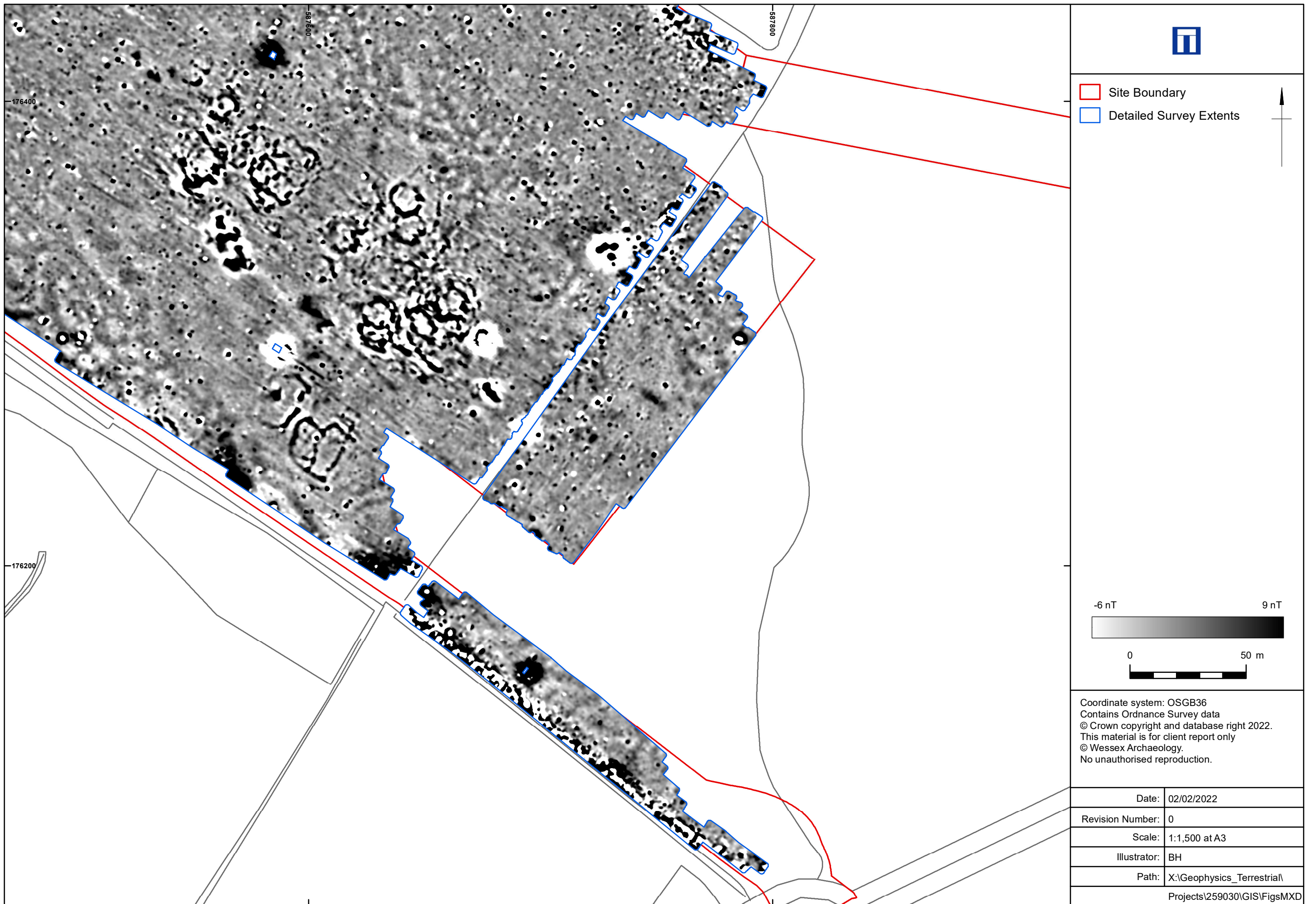
Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (centre)

Figure 2



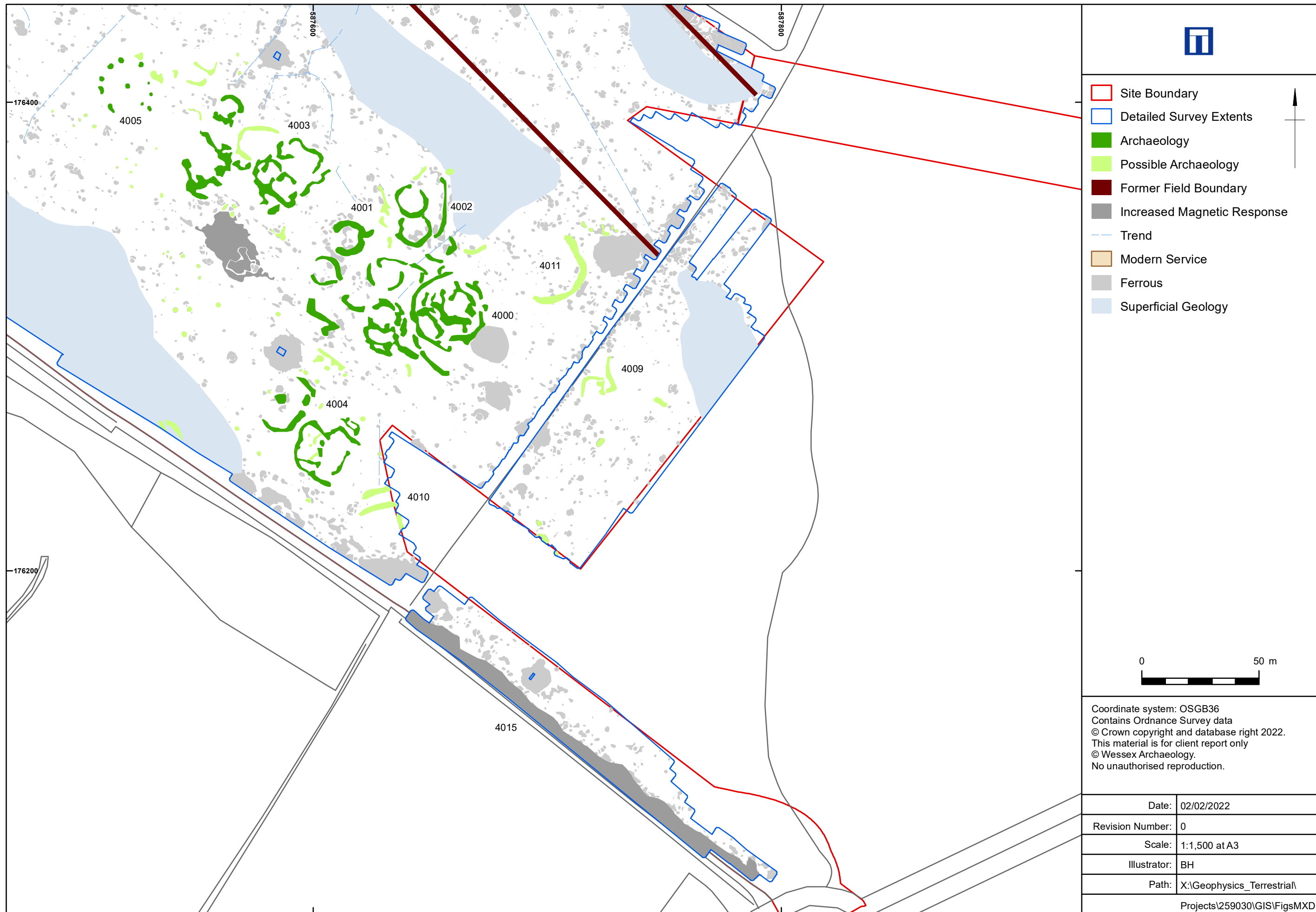
Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (centre)

Figure 3



Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (south)

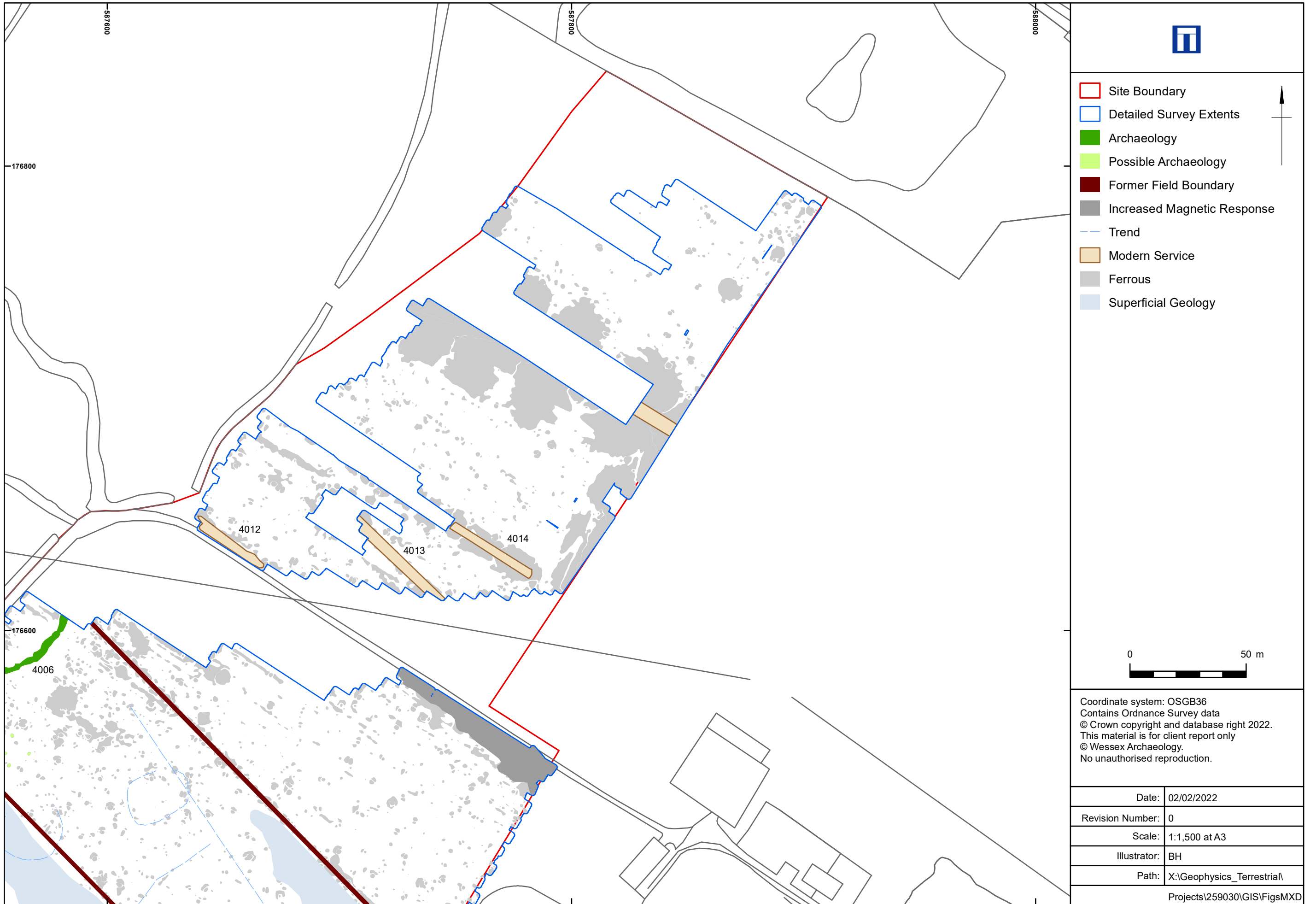
Figure 4



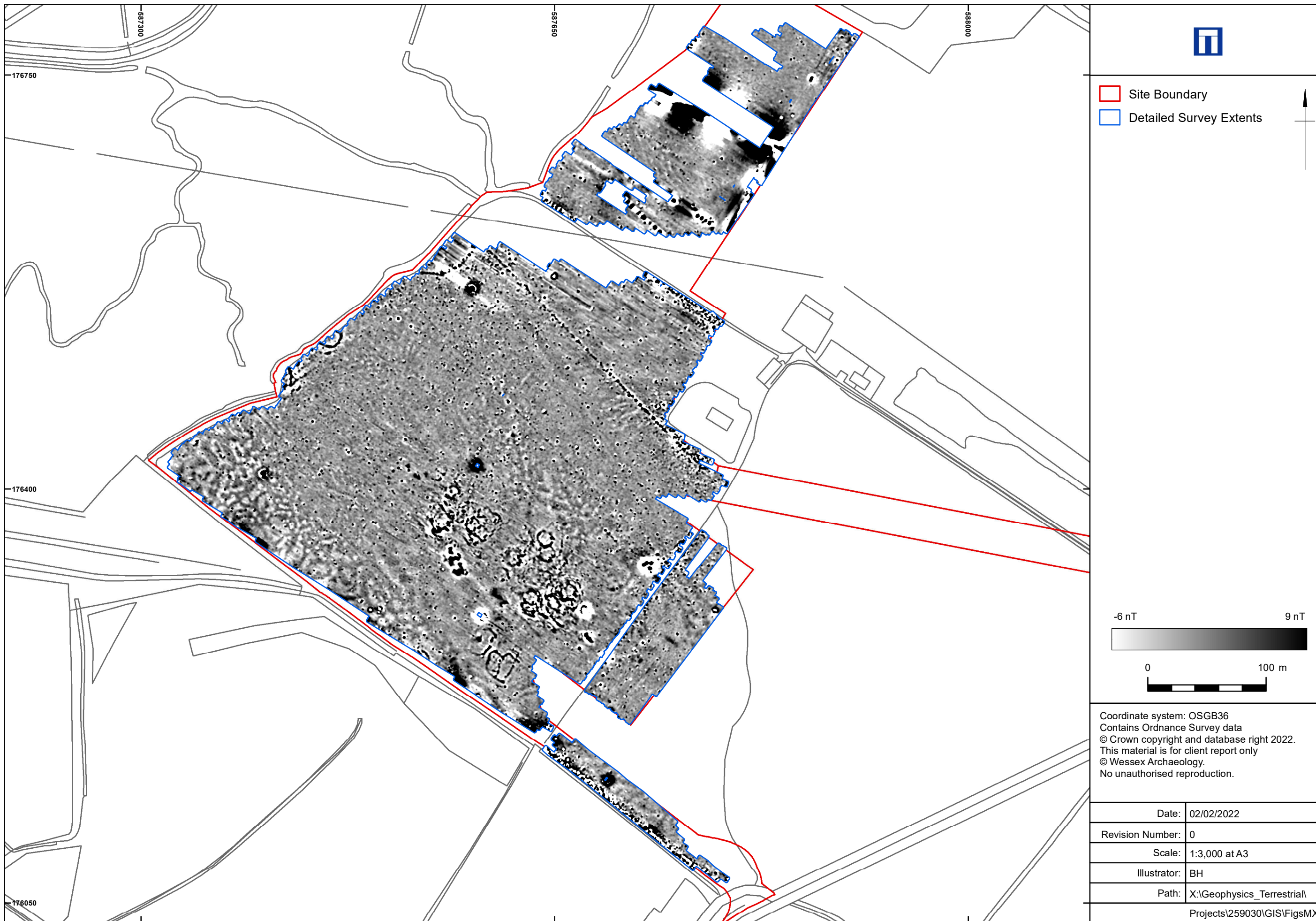
Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (south)



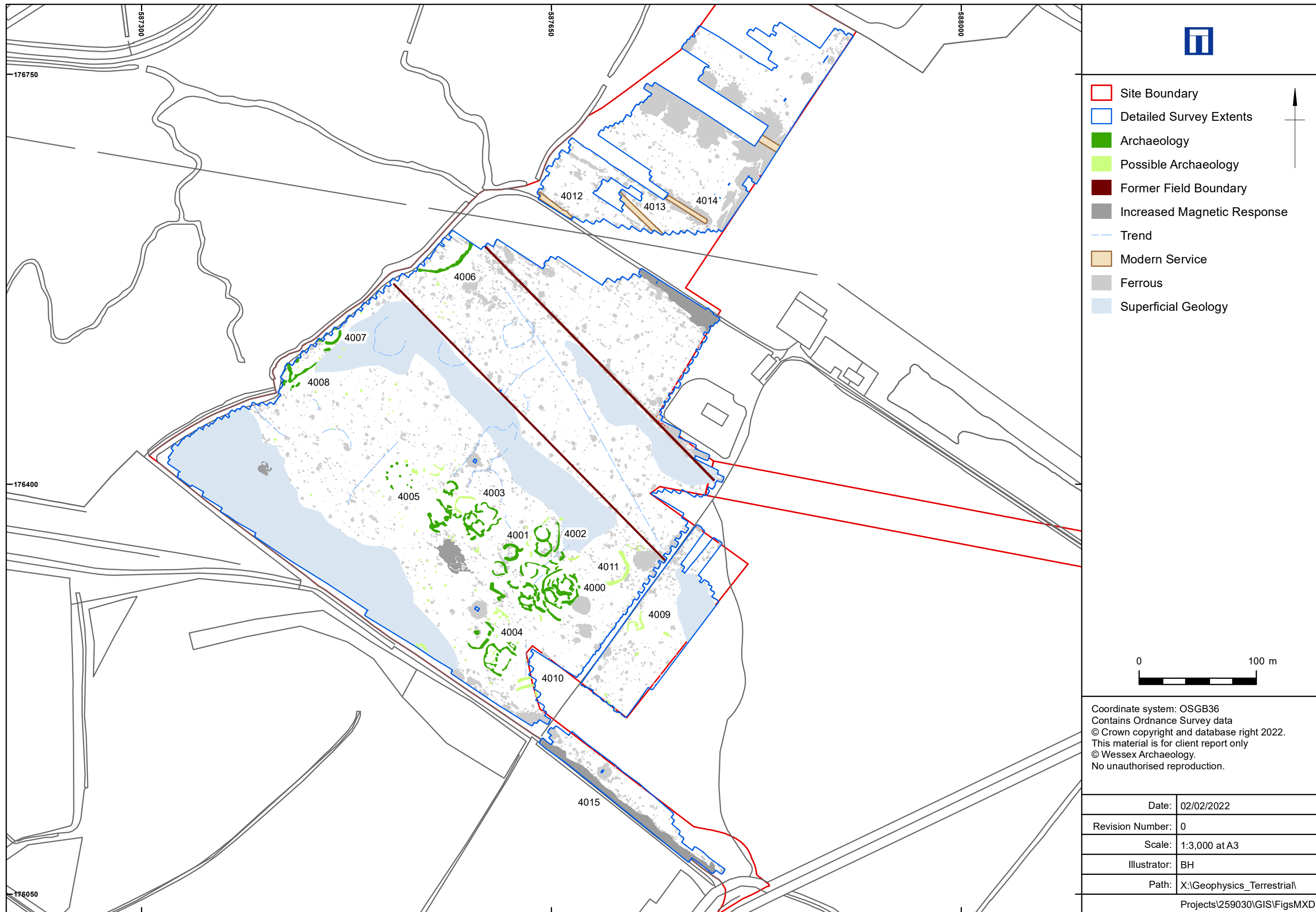
Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (north)



Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot (north)



Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale overview plot



Detailed gradiometer survey results: interpretation overview



Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



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