



# Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report

Accession Number: X.A58.2023  
Document Ref.: 276041.03  
July 2023



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## Document Information

Document title Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire  
Document subtitle Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report  
Document reference 276041.03

Commissioned by The CDS Group  
Address Building 51  
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Site location Blaby, Leicester  
County Leicestershire  
National grid reference 457500 297550 (SP 57500 97550)  
Museum accession code X.A58.2023

WA project name Blaby Cemetery Extension  
WA project code 276041  
Date of fieldwork 06/07/2023  
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## Quality Assurance

Issue	Date	Author	Approved by
1	10/07/2023	RP	 PE



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## **Summary**

A detailed gradiometer survey was conducted at Blaby, Leicestershire (centred on NGR 457500 297550). The project was commissioned by The CDS Group 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 extension of an adjacent cemetery.

The site comprises arable fields located adjacent to Blaby Cemetery, Blaby, Leicester, Leicestershire, covering an area of 1.3 ha. The geophysical survey was undertaken on 6 July 2023. The geophysical survey did not identify any anomalies that could be considered archaeological in origin.

The area is dominated by an increased magnetic response which is the result of modern farming practices or landscaping. It is possible, however, that weaker archaeological features are present on site but they have been obscured by the distribution of more magnetic material.

## **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank The CDS Group for commissioning the geophysical survey. The assistance of Eliot Winter is gratefully acknowledged in this regard.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Instone-Brewer and Manasi Patil. Rok Plesnicar processed and interpreted the geophysical data and wrote the report with contributions from Jack Trueman. The geophysical work was quality controlled by Alastair Trace. Illustrations were prepared by Rok Plesnicar. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Patricia Edwards.



# Blaby Cemetery Extension Blaby, Leicester, Leicestershire

## Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The CDS Group to carry out a geophysical survey at Blaby Cemetery, Blaby, Leicestershire (centred on NGR 457500 297550) (**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 extension of the existing cemetery adjacent to the site.

#### 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 site is located east of the village of Blaby and 6.8 km south-south-west of the city centre of Leicester, in the county of Leicestershire.

1.3.2 The survey comprises 1.3 ha of scrubland. The site is bounded by the field boundary of the Old Chapel to the north, the field boundaries of Blaby Cemetery to the west with a farmyard and agricultural land to the east and the south of the site.

1.3.3 The site is on a slight incline of 72 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the northern edge to 73 m aOD at the southern edge. Local topography falls gently to the north-westwards towards the valley of the River Sence which joins the River Soar 2.5 km north-west of the site.

1.3.4 The solid geology comprises mudstone of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation with overlying superficial geological deposits of diamicton in the western part and sands and gravels in the eastern part of the survey area (BGS 2023).

1.3.5 The soils underlying the site are likely to consist of typical stagnogley soils of the 711t (Beccles 3) association (SSEW SE Sheet 4 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 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology for the land at Blaby which examined the potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains within the development area and a 1 km study area (WA 2023). The following background is not exhaustive but is summarised from aspects of the DBA that are considered relevant to the interpretation of the geophysical survey data.

### 2.2 Summary of the archaeological resource

#### *Later Prehistoric (9,500 BC-AD 43)*

- 2.2.1 A limited selection of records held by the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (LHER) reflects activity within the study area through the later-prehistoric period. A single Mesolithic flint has been recovered 400 m west of the site at Bouskell Park. In addition, further lithic finds include a Neolithic or Bronze Age flint from Wigston Road, Blaby (400 m north-west of site), a Bronze Age Palstave 750 m south-east of the site, and a selection of lithic flakes from Glen Ford Grange, Glen Parva 700 m north-west of site, are also recorded by the LHER, however these have only been given a broad prehistoric date. In addition, the LHER also records the later-Bronze Age settlement (MLE140) at Glen Parva approximately 550 m north of the site. Finally, the LHER also records a set of cropmarks including a trackway of probable Iron Age date situated approximately 150 m east of the site.

#### *Romano-British (AD 43-410)*

- 2.2.2 The site is located 750 m east of the Roman road heading south from the regional centre of Leicester (*Ratae Corieltavorum*) which links with Watling Street at Caves Inn. Further limited evidence of Romano-British period activity has been identified within the wider study area including several findspots of pottery and coins. Within Blaby finds include a coin from Wigston Road, 650 m west of the site and pottery from Bouskell Park, 300 m west of the site. In addition, a gully identified during archaeological trial trenching at Blaby Hall Farm has been dated to the Romano-British period.
- 2.2.3 A further spread of Romano-British findspots within the study area are situated north of the site in and around Glen Parva. These include tile and other finds at findspots 650 m north of the site, and a findspot 700 m north-east of the site.

#### *Saxon and Medieval (AD 410-1500)*

- 2.2.4 The site is situated 500 m east of the medieval core of Blaby. The village of Blaby is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 with 36 Households under the lordship of the Count of Meulan. The Domesday Book also records Blaby as having been under the lordship of Brictrmer and Ulf at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066.
- 2.2.5 Further evidence in the form of findspots and buried remains has also evidenced the medieval settlement at Blaby. In addition, within the wider hinterland of Blaby, the LHER records the likely site of a medieval mill at Blaby (450 m north-east of the Site) and two findspots, a purse frame and coins, recovered from 700 m south-west and 900 m south of the site respectively.
- 2.2.6 In addition, the other nearby foci of early-medieval and medieval settlement is at Glen Parva (500 m north of the site) on the north bank of the River Sence. It has been put forward that



the Saxon settlement at Glen Parva once represented a key settlement within the 9th century Great Glen royal estate.

- 2.2.7 Several sites in and around Glen Parva attest to the further development of the village in the medieval period which is then understood to have subsequently declined from the 13th century. Most notably the Scheduled Monument remains at Glen Parva (**NHLE 1008259**) include the remains of a moated manor and hut circle. Further medieval sites included the likely location of a chapel at Glen Parva which served as a chapel of ease of Atherstone and is first documented in 1220. Further remains in the form of earthworks, findspots and a well around Glen Parva are also recorded by the LHER and are understood to represent the remains of the shrunken.
- 2.2.8 Further evidence of medieval activity and settlement within the study area includes several remnant areas of ridge and furrow extending south and east of Blaby which can be identified from analysis of LiDAR data. Further areas of ridge and furrow were also identified by a 2010 geophysical survey in the area approximately 150 m southeast of the site. The presence of ridge and furrow indicates a likely phase of gradual enclosure of the area east of Blaby in the later-Medieval or early post-Medieval period as the use of land shifted towards livestock dominated agriculture. Furthermore, the extensive nature of this surrounding ridge and furrow also indicates that the site was likely under cultivation during the medieval period.

#### *Post-medieval (AD 1500-1800)*

- 2.2.9 Within Blaby most of the post-medieval features recorded by the LHER relate to Blaby Hall and farmhouse and their grounds approximately 400 m west of the Site. Several of the features relate to elements of 18<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape including fishponds, Tree Belts, and boundary walls. In addition, a Clay Pit and section of trackway have also been identified within Bouskell Park (previously grounds of Blaby Hall) which likely predate the development of the parkland landscape.
- 2.2.10 Several further sites in and around Blaby are also recorded by the LHER as post-medieval in date. These include a portion of the Bakers Arms Public House and the churchyard walls. Within the hinterland of Blaby the LHER also identifies the possible site of a post-medieval windmill and a series of possible post-medieval ditches at Blaby Mill (450 m east of the Site). The LHER also records the route taken by the Foston Lane to Osbaston and Leicester to Lutterworth turnpikes which pass through Blaby.
- 2.2.11 A further concentration of post-medieval sites listed by the LHER are concentrated around the hamlet of Glen Parva, at the Manor Restaurant which is likely of late 16th century or early 17th century date, and Glen Ford Grange.

#### *19th century and modern (AD 1800-present day)*

- 2.2.12 The LHER records a number of sites of 19 century date within the study area. These include the original extent of Blaby Cemetery to the north-west of the site which opened in 1863. Further 19 century sites in Blaby include an icehouse in the grounds of Blaby Hall (now Bouskell Park), a milepost on Lutterworth Road, and several buildings such as Blaby Baptist Chapel and Blaby Baptist School. Several further LHER records concerning sites of 19th century date relate to site in the vicinity of Glen Parva, including the London and North Western Railway and Glen Ford Grange.





- 2.2.13 Survey mapping dated 1886, the site is shown as part of a larger field within an extensive area of rectilinear fields representing post-medieval planned enclosure on the south side of Mill Lane. Within the immediate vicinity of the site the most notable changes shown on historic mapping is the emergence of allotment gardens on the field east of the site by the 1930 map which are then subsequently developed into Highfields Farm as shown on the 1971 map. These maps also show that up until the recent past, the site was part of a larger field. These maps also illustrate a pond along the western boundary of the site, at a location now occupied by the cemetery driveway and turning circle.

#### *Undated*

A single undated record is recorded by the LHER at Glen Parva (660 m north of the site), situated in a field of ridge and furrow, this feature recorded during works in 1972 likely predates the ridge and furrow and therefore it is probably at least medieval or earlier in date.

## **2.3 Recent investigations in the area**

### *Geophysical*

- 2.3.1 The LHER records a geophysical survey 150 m to the south-west of the site which uncovered ridge-and-furrow activity dating from the medieval period.

### *Excavations*

- 2.3.2 The LHER also identifies several excavations, watching briefs and trial trenches which have taken place in the study area these include several around the centre of Blaby, at Glen Parva and on the southern fringe of Blaby.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 The geophysical survey was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology's in-house geophysics team on 6 July 2023. Field conditions at the time of the survey were good throughout the period of the survey. An overall coverage of 0.9 ha was achieved across two land parcels. The unsurveyed area was due to the fences along the field boundaries.
- 3.1.2 The methods and standards employed throughout the geophysical survey conform 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 Carlson BRX-7 RTK GNSS instrument, which receives corrections from a network of reference stations operated by the Ordnance Survey (OS). 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  $\pm 8 \mu\text{T}$  over  $\pm 1000 \text{ nT}$  range at a rate of 100 Hz, producing intervals of 0.02 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 ( $\pm 5 \text{ nT}$  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 detailed gradiometer survey has identified magnetic anomalies across the site. Results are presented as a series of greyscale plots and archaeological interpretations at a scale of 1:800 (**Figures 2 to 3**). The data are displayed at  $-2 \text{ nT}$  (white) to  $+3 \text{ nT}$  (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**). 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 Strong positive and negative anomalies have been identified across the entire site. This indicates an area of increased magnetic response that is a result of magnetically enhanced material in the ground which is likely the result of landscaping or modern farming practices.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

- 5.1.1 The geophysical survey was not successful in detecting anomalies considered to be archaeological in origin.
- 5.1.2 The area is dominated by an increased magnetic response which is the result of modern farming practices or landscaping. It is possible, however, that weaker archaeological features are present on site but they have been obscured by the distribution of more magnetic material.



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British Geological Survey 2023. *Geology of Britain Viewer*

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### Online resources

Archaeology Data Service (accessed July 2023) [Archaeology Data Service](#)

British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer (accessed July 2023)

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Heritage Gateway (accessed July 2023) [Heritage Gateway - Search](#)

National Library of Scotland (accessed July 2023) [Georeferenced Maps - Map images - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](#)



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Gradiometer Survey Equipment and Data Processing (Sensys)

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 0.6 m 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  $\pm 8 \mu\text{T}$  over  $\pm 1000 \text{ nT}$  range. All of the data are then relayed to a CS35 tablet, running the MONMX program, which is used to record the survey data from the array of FGM650/3 probes at a rate of 20 Hz. 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 0.01 m intervals along traverses spaced up to 0.25m apart.

### Post-processing

The magnetic data collected during the survey is downloaded from the 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.

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 within the defined window. May be used to remove the striping effect seen within a survey caused by directional effects, drift, etc.
- 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.
- 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).

Typical displays of the data used during processing and analysis:



- 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.
- 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 trace plots available on request)



## 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.



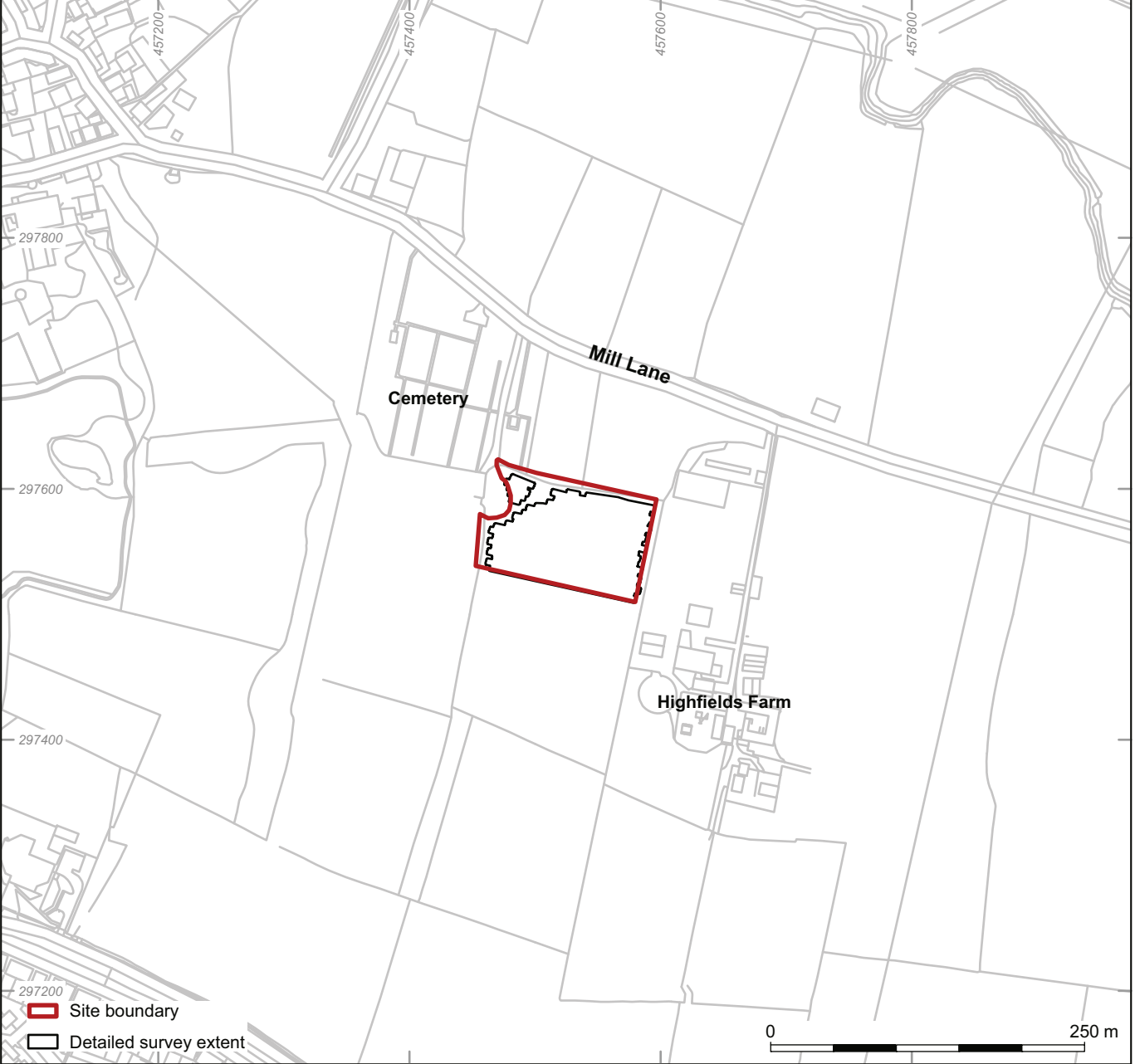
### Appendix 3 OASIS form

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-517836
Project Name	Geophysical Survey at Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire
Sitename	Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire
Sitecode	276041
Project Identifier(s)	276041, Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire
Activity type	Geophysical Survey, MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Pre application
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	06-Jul-2023 - 06-Jul-2023
Location	Blaby Cemetery Extension, Blaby, Leicestershire NGR: SP 57527 97566 LL: 52.5728796004009, -1.152602157303784 12 Fig: 457527,297566
Administrative Areas	Country: England County: Leicestershire District: Blaby Parish: Blaby
Project Methodology	The cart-based gradiometer system used a Carlson BRX-7 RTK GNSS instrument, which receives corrections from a network of reference stations operated by the Ordnance Survey (OS). Such instruments allow positions to be determined with a precision of 0.02 m in real-time and therefore exceeds European Archaeologiae Consilium recommendations. 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 $\pm 8 \mu\text{T}$ over $\pm 1000 \text{ nT}$ range at a rate of 100 Hz, producing intervals of 0.02 m along transects spaced 4 m apart.
Project Results	The area is dominated by an increased magnetic response which is the result of modern farming practices or landscaping. It is possible, however, that weaker archaeological features are present on site, but they have been obscured by the distribution of more magnetic material.
Keywords	
Funder	Private or public corporation CDS Group
HER	Leicestershire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Patricia Edwards





HER Identifiers	
Archives	



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Figure 1: Site location and survey extent





- Site boundary
- Detailed survey extent



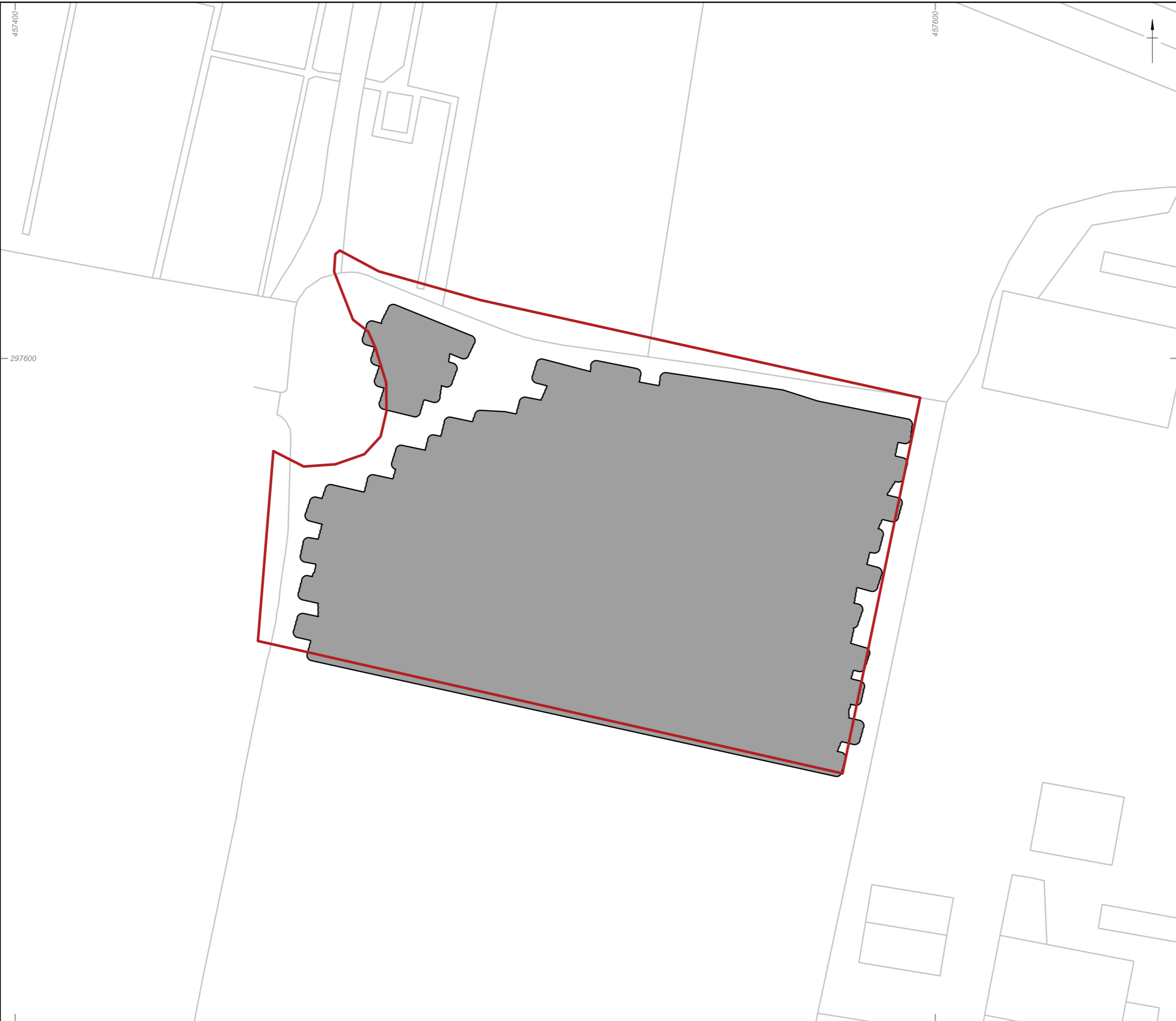
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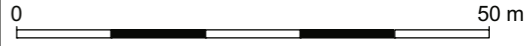
Scale: 1:800 Revision: 0



Figure 2: Detailed gradiometer survey results: greyscale plot



- Site boundary
- Detailed survey extent
- Increased response



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Figure 3: Detailed gradiometer survey results: interpretation



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