

**Surface Artefact Collection at the Proposed Site of
Clayhill Reservoir, Ringmer, East Sussex**

Centred at TQ 4590 1470
Project No. 2803

by
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with contributions by Lucy Allott and Luke Barber

April 2007

Summary

A programme of surface artefact collection was carried out in part of the site of the proposed reservoir in April 2007. As well as thin background scatters of struck flint, Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery, localised concentrations of fire-cracked flint, and one discrete area of Roman tile were identified. Large quantities of post-medieval brick and tile were also recovered from across the entire examined area.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Jacobs UK Limited on behalf of South East Water to undertake a surface artefact collection survey (part of a larger scheme of archaeological investigations) at the proposed site of Clayhill Reservoir, Ringmer, East Sussex (centred at TQ 4590 1470).

1.2 The proposed reservoir site covers a considerable area of agricultural land to the north of Ringmer and to the east of Barcombe Mills, (Fig. 1). According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area (Sheet 319, *Lewes*) the underlying geology at the site is predominantly Weald Clay with some Head Deposits and Alluvium to the north and west.

1.3 Following discussions with East Sussex County Council (Lewes District Council's advisers on archaeological issues), it was decided that it would be prudent to instigate a programme of archaeological surveys at the site as part of the feasibility study of the site which could provide supporting documentation should a planning application be brought forward

1.4 This current report provides the results of the surface-collection element of the project. Following consultation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeologist (Mr. Casper Johnson), a Specification for this work was provided by Jacobs UK Limited. This document outlined the methodology to be used in the field, and outlined the specific aims and objectives of the surface collection element of the overall archaeological programme. These were:

- to identify any possible surface concentrations of artefacts to the extent possible by the methods put forward in the Specification
- to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any finds recovered

1.5 The surface collection exercise was undertaken by a team comprising Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), Gemma Driver, Sally Mortimore, Elke Raemen, Caroline Russell and Michelle Stratton (Archaeologists) during late March 2007. The project was managed by Jon Sygrave (Projects Manager), and by Louise Rayner (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Details of the known archaeological finds and deposits in the area are given elsewhere,¹ but to summarise, the site lies in an area of East Sussex with known medieval remains, with some evidence of earlier activity. The course of a known Roman Road passes a little to the north of the site, before crossing the River Ouse further to the north at Isfield, where the former crossing is defended by a medieval earthwork widely described as a motte and bailey castle, but possibly a slightly later moated site.²
- 2.2** However, there is clear evidence of medieval activity closer to the site. The majority of the proposed reservoir lies within a former medieval deer park which may have been called Plashett Park (first mentioned in 1285³). The somewhat enigmatic medieval earthwork known as Clay Hill lies on the immediate southern boundary of the site.⁴ The Ringmer area was also a known centre of medieval pottery and tile production, which included particularly attractive glazed 'face jugs'.⁵
- 2.3** An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a limited number of geological test-pits at the site in May 2006. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified, but a small assemblage of fire-cracked flint was recovered from ploughsoil in the immediate vicinity of one of the test-pits, suggesting local prehistoric activity.⁶

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The basic field-walking methodology was outlined in the Specification provided by Jacobs UK Limited. The methodology matched that usually used by ASE during fieldwalking projects, itself based on the standard practice utilised by the Archaeological Field Projects Service of Essex County Council, as modified for use by ASE.

¹ Jacobs UK Limited. *Clay Hill Reservoir. Tender for Archaeological Surface Artefact Collection Section 2 Cultural Heritage Background* (undated) p.2-4

² M. Gardiner, Recent Work on the Earthworks at Isfield, East Sussex, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter SAC) **130** (1992) p.140-146

³ Jacobs UK Limited. *ibid.* p.4

⁴ R. Jones, Castles and Other Defended Site, in K. Leslie and B. Short, *An Historic Atlas of Sussex* (1999), p.50-51

⁵ K. Barton, *Sussex Medieval Pottery* (1979) Fig. 19

⁶ S. Stevens, *An Archaeological Watching Brief during Ground Investigations at the Proposed Site of Clayhill Reservoir, Ringmer, East Sussex*. Unpub. ASE Report No. 2341 (June 2006)

3.2 In short, the method involved dividing the accessible area into numbered hectare-sized squares (Fig. 2). Each hectare was then divided into 25 separate squares (lettered A-Z, omitting 'O'), each measuring 20m by 20m (hence the designations 1B, 5G etc.) Based on this grid, transects measuring 20m long, 2m wide and 20m apart were walked from south to north on the western edge of each grid square. All encountered archaeological artefacts were collected and bagged according to grid square, resulting in a 10% sample collection policy.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction (Figs. 1 and 2)

4.1.1 The fieldwork was carried out in late March 2007 during almost ideal weather conditions of good light with either strong sunshine or light, high cloud, and no daytime rain. Low crop provided good surface visibility, although the crop in Field G was a little taller than elsewhere, but this was not considered a serious issue and does not appear to have adversely affected the levels of recovery of artefacts.

4.1.2 The ploughsoil across the examined area was consistently light brown silty clay, with some limited localised flooding, and occasional deep wheel ruts. There was little 'natural' flint on the surface of the fields (although there was a little more evident in Field D), and all of the fields contained limited quantities on surface chalk resulting from marling.

4.1.3 Most of the ploughsoil showed evidence of weathering, recent waterlogging and subsequent drying, with numerous cracks, providing a good surface for recognition of artefacts. The exception to this was Field F, which had been recently ploughed resulting in poor visibility, clearly reflected in the level of retrieval (Figs. 3 - 10).

4.1.4 Topographically, the examined fields were generally undulating but showed a noticeable general trend of sloping downwards towards the watercourse running between Fields C and G, forming a noticeable valley running broadly east to west across the site. Other watercourse/ditches also ran into this, most obviously between Fields C and D. Hence Fields A, B, C, D, E and F sloped broadly north to south, but Field G sloped south to north.

4.2 Fire-Cracked Flint (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 The fire-cracked flint showed a distinctly uneven distribution across the examined area, with three noticeable concentrations of material (in Squares 3 and 7, 27 and 28, and 21 and 22 respectively), and a thin background scatter elsewhere.

4.3 The Struck Flint (Fig. 4)

4.3.1 The struck flint shows an even, if extremely thin, background scatter across the examined area. There were no obvious concentrations of this material.

4.4 The Romano-British Pottery (Fig. 5)

4.4.1 A single sherd of Samian ware was recovered from Square 20.

4.5 The Romano-British Ceramic Building Material (Fig. 6)

4.5.1 The Romano-British ceramic building material had an extremely localised distribution pattern with a clear concentration in the south-eastern part of the examined area; the majority of the material was recovered from Squares 9 and 19. No brick or tile of this date was recovered from any other parts of the site.

4.6 The Medieval Pottery (Fig. 7)

4.6.1 Only a small number of sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, with no concentrations.

4.7 The Medieval Ceramic Building Material (Fig. 8)

4.7.1 Only a small assemblage of fragments of medieval tile was encountered, with no concentrations.

4.8 The Post-Medieval Pottery (Fig. 9)

4.8.1 A thin scatter of post-medieval pottery was present across much of the examined area, with the majority of the material recovered from Field G. Even in this area, the spread was somewhat thin, with no obvious concentrations.

4.9 The Post-Medieval Ceramic Building Material (Fig. 10)

4.9.1 The post-medieval brick and tile was by far the most numerous class or artefact recovered during the field-walking. There was a fairly even distribution across much of the site, but with noticeably less material in Fields A and B, and clearly more in Field G.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 The Worked Flint by Lucy Allott

5.1.1 A small assemblage of worked and fire-cracked flint was collected. The worked flints are appended below with brief descriptions. A variety of flint types are present and they are likely to be derived from several sources. Many of the flints were flakes and cortical flakes with relatively fresh surfaces. Some damage, probably as a result of ploughing, was evident however the majority of the flints do not show significant transportation signs such as smoothing or rounding of ridges.

5.1.2 Several flints have secondary working, often abrupt to semi-abrupt scraper retouch. The worked flint assemblage is not considered diagnostic of a specific time period or lithic technology.

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The survey recovered a small assemblage of pottery. The earliest consists of a single Roman La Graufesenque samian dish sherd, in surprisingly fresh condition, from 20A. A single abraded shell-and flint-tempered sherd, of probable 11th- to 12th- century date, was the only early medieval sherd recovered (21S). Four abraded sherds of well-fired fine sand-tempered ware, of 15th- to early 16th- century date, were recovered from 5M, 6Z (x2) and 14F.

5.2.2 The remainder of the pottery is of later 18th- to 19th- century date. This material is spread widely, if thinly, across the area and probable relates to the spreading of night-soil. Wares include unglazed earthenware flowerpots, glazed red earthenware jars/bowls, English stoneware ink/ginger beer bottles and plain/transfer-printed china tablewares. The only imported material of this date is a German stoneware bottle sherd from 5P. All of the late 18th- to 19th- century pottery consists of small sherds with the exception of some glazed red earthenware sherds from 44R.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

5.3.1 A relatively large spread of ceramic building material was recovered. This includes a number of pieces of generally abraded medium/hard-fired Roman tile in a fine powdery fabric with iron oxide inclusions to 3mm. Square 9 (N, P, T and U) produced pieces of imbrex and tegula roofing tile. Square 12 (S and T) produced a *tegula* fragment (124g – the largest piece from the site) in a sandy fabric as well as a flat/floor tile. Square 18 (E, F and R) produced two imbrex fragments and a

flat/floor tile piece while Square 19 produced a box flue tile fragment (B), an *imbrex* fragment (C) and an over-fired flat/floor tile fragment (L). The presence of large quantities of Roman tile was noted during the Sussex Archaeological Society's excavations at the 'motte' at Clay Hill though the source of this material is still unknown.

5.3.2 Virtually no medieval roof tile was recovered. That identified is heavily abraded and in a medium fired sand-tempered fabric (e.g. 5H) of probable 13th- to 14th- century date. A few possible pieces of well-fired sparse fine sand-tempered early post-medieval peg tile were recovered (e.g. 14G) but never in any quantity. The vast majority of the ceramic building material consists of 18th- to 19th- century hard-fired fine sand tempered peg tile with occasional iron oxides to 4mm. A range of bricks of similar date and 19th- century land drain fragments was also present in the post-medieval assemblage.

5.4 The Other Finds by Luke Barber

5.4.1 This category includes material such as metalwork, slag, glass, foreign stone and clay pipe. As there were no obvious concentrations, and given that none of this material apparently predates the 19th century, none of these finds were plotted onto a distribution map, but descriptions are given below.

5.4.2 All of the metalwork is of 19th- to 20th- century date and generally consists of pieces of iron agricultural equipment including bolts (1T) and cast iron pipe fragments (5K and 20V).

5.4.3 All of the slag from the site consists of lightweight material undiagnostic of process, though not related to metalworking. It is probable that the material is the result of steam-ploughing or other high-temperature agricultural activities.

5.4.4 The entire assemblage of glass from the field-walking consists of 19th- to 20th- century material. Window, bottle and drinking vessel are all present in small quantities.

5.4.5 The majority of the stone consists of a sparse scatter of 19th- century Welsh slate over the whole area. A few pieces of medieval West Country slate were also noted (2Z, 7H and 18L had one piece each). Local stone includes a few Wealden sandstone and siltstone pieces (e.g. 5X) and some flint/quartz pebbles (e.g. 18A). More exotic material is represented by a little coal (33S), granite (2T) and pumice (21U) all of which may be 19th-century imports. The only worked stone consists of a fragment from a 19th- century round-sectioned whetstone in medium-grained sandstone (7C).

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1** The programme of surface artefact collection was carried out in ideal weather, with low crop growth, and a ploughsoil that allowed recognition and recovery of a range of artefacts.
- 6.2** The noticeable concentrations of fire-cracked flint (Fig. 3) are one example of this. The localised levels of recovery are less than encountered on the coastal plain, where a number of so-called 'burnt mounds' have been identified.⁷ However, the location of the Clayhill scatters, close to a watercourse on a clay-rich geology, does mirror that of excavated examples of this rather enigmatic prehistoric phenomenon (e.g. Patching).⁸
- 6.3** The distribution of the struck flint did not mirror that of the fire-cracked material. The scatter of worked flint is clearly rather thin across the site as a whole. The presence of a number of retouched flints is not in itself indicative of settlement, and the recognition of specific activities from such a small assemblage would be unwise.
- 6.4** The other material that showed a marked concentration was the Romano-British tile, with examples of *tegula*, *imbrex*, box-flue and floor tile in, and close to the south-eastern corner of Field D. The virtual absence of contemporary pottery is unusual, as this would have been a clearer indicator of a building.⁹ It is possible that the scatter represents material on the periphery of occupation, or that the material comes from a nearby tiler, a local Wealden example of which was initially identified by surface artefact collection.¹⁰
- 6.5** The later medieval and post-medieval material from the site shows no such clear concentration and appears to be the result of manuring of the fields from nearby settlements such as Ringmer itself, and other outlying hamlets and farms. The slightly larger assemblages of post-medieval material from close to Platchett Park Farm would support this.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

⁷ D. Dunkin, Metalwork, burnt mounds and settlement on the West Sussex Coastal Plain: a contextual study, *Antiquity* **75**, p.161-2 (2001)

⁸ S. Stevens, Excavations at Potlands Farm, Patching, West Sussex, SAC **135** p.59-70 (1997)

⁹ e.g. S. Stevens, *Field-Walking at Eastanton, Andover, Hampshire*. Unpub. ASE Report 1253

¹⁰ D. Rudling, The Excavation of a Roman Tiler on Great Cansiron Farm, Hartfield, East Sussex, *Britannia* **17**, p.191-230

- 7.1 Thanks are due to all those living and working at Plashett Park Farm for their co-operation.

Appendix 1

Catalogue of Struck Flint

Descriptions by Lucy Allott

- 3C End struck flake
- 5K End struck flake. On the dorsal side the right lateral surface and distal end of the flake are very steep, possibly resulting from attempted removals, although this is not clear retouch and may in fact represent previous platform/surface preparation on the original core prior to this flake being removed. Possible use damage is evident along the left lateral on the dorsal and ventral surfaces.
- 5N Broken end struck flake
- 6D Core with three flake removals
- 6H Broken end struck flake. Left lateral portion removed (possibly deliberately). Retouch present at the proximal end on the dorsal surface.
- 7D Large flake with retouch and use damage on the distal surface along the right lateral, at the distal end. A small number of flake removals and damage is evident on the left dorsal and corresponding right ventral surface. The dorsal ridges show evidence of plough damage.
- 9E Small side struck flake with bulb of percussion removed through retouch.
- 12R Semi cortical flake with semi-abrupt retouch around the right lateral and right distal portions on the distal side. The left lateral towards the distal end has abrupt scraper retouch.
- 12Z Large end struck flake measuring 58 x 48 x 11 mm with semi-abrupt retouch focused on the dorsal side along the right lateral and right distal portions of the flake.
- 18E Small struck flake
- 18T Cortical end struck flake

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- 20W End struck flake with crushed platform. Dorsal surface is mostly cortical with a small accidental flake removal opposing the bulb of percussion.
- 21U End struck flake with possible burin removal along the right lateral and small retouch removals at the distal end.
- 22A Possible core with some evidence of plough damage
- 24W Broken side struck flake
- 27S End struck flake with retouch at the distal end on the dorsal side and some possible use damage along the right lateral
- 28U End struck flake
- 29B Side struck flake
- 33T Possible core fragment?
- 34H End struck flake with single dorsal ridge. Retouch is located in two places: at the distal end to the right of the ridge and along the right lateral.
- 39U End struck flake with no secondary working
- 41Q Flint nodule used as a core with three clear removals
- 42R Semi cortical end struck flake with platform preparation
- 45H Small end struck flake
- 49R Partially cortical end struck flake (bulb of percussion missing). Platform preparation evident on dorsal side. Cortex confined to medial and distal left hand side of dorsal surface. Some possible retouch or damage at distal end (dorsal surface) and along the left ventral surface.

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Clayhill Reservoir Surface Artefact Collection Survey

SMR Summary Sheet

Site Code	CHR 07					
Identification Name and Address	Site of Proposed Reservoir, Clayhill, Ringmer					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes District, East Sussex					
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	Centred at TQ 4590 1470					
Archaeology South-East Proj. No.	2803					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Field Walking ✓	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB.	Field-Walking <i>March 2007</i>		
Sponsor/Client	Jacobs UK Limited on behalf of South East Water					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo. ?✓	BA ?✓	IA	RB ✓
	AS	MED ✓	PM ✓	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>A programme of field-walking was carried out in part of site of the proposed reservoir in April 2007. As well as thin background scatters of struck flint, Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery, localised concentrations of fire-cracked flint, and one discrete area of Roman tile were identified. Large quantities of post-medieval brick and tile were also recovered from across the entire examined area.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-26319

Project details

Project name	Field-Walking at Proposed Site of Clayhill Reservoir
Short description of the project	A limited area of the proposed land-take for the reservoir was field-walked in March 2007. In addition to background scatters of other materials, distinct concentrations of fire-cracked flint and Roman tile were encountered
Project dates	Start: 26-03-2007 End: 30-03-2007
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	2803 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CHR 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Significant Finds	FIRE-CRACKED FLINT Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Investigation type	'Systematic Field Walking'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES RINGMER Proposed Clayhill Reservoir

Archaeology South-East
Clayhill Reservoir Surface Artefact Collection Survey

Postcode BN8 5SJ

Study area 30.00 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 4590 1470 50.9127272243 0.07565046797790 50 54 45 N
000 04 32 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator Jacobs UK Limited

Project design originator consultant

Project director/manager JON SYGRAVE

Project supervisor Simon Stevens

Type of sponsor/funding body Water Authority/Company

Name of sponsor/funding body South East Water

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Lewes Museum

Physical Contents 'Ceramics','Industrial','other'

Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive recipient Lewes Museum

Paper Contents 'other'

Paper Media available 'Correspondence', 'Map', 'Miscellaneous Material', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Field-walking at the Proposed Site of Clayhill Reservoir

Author(s)/Editor(s) Stevens, S

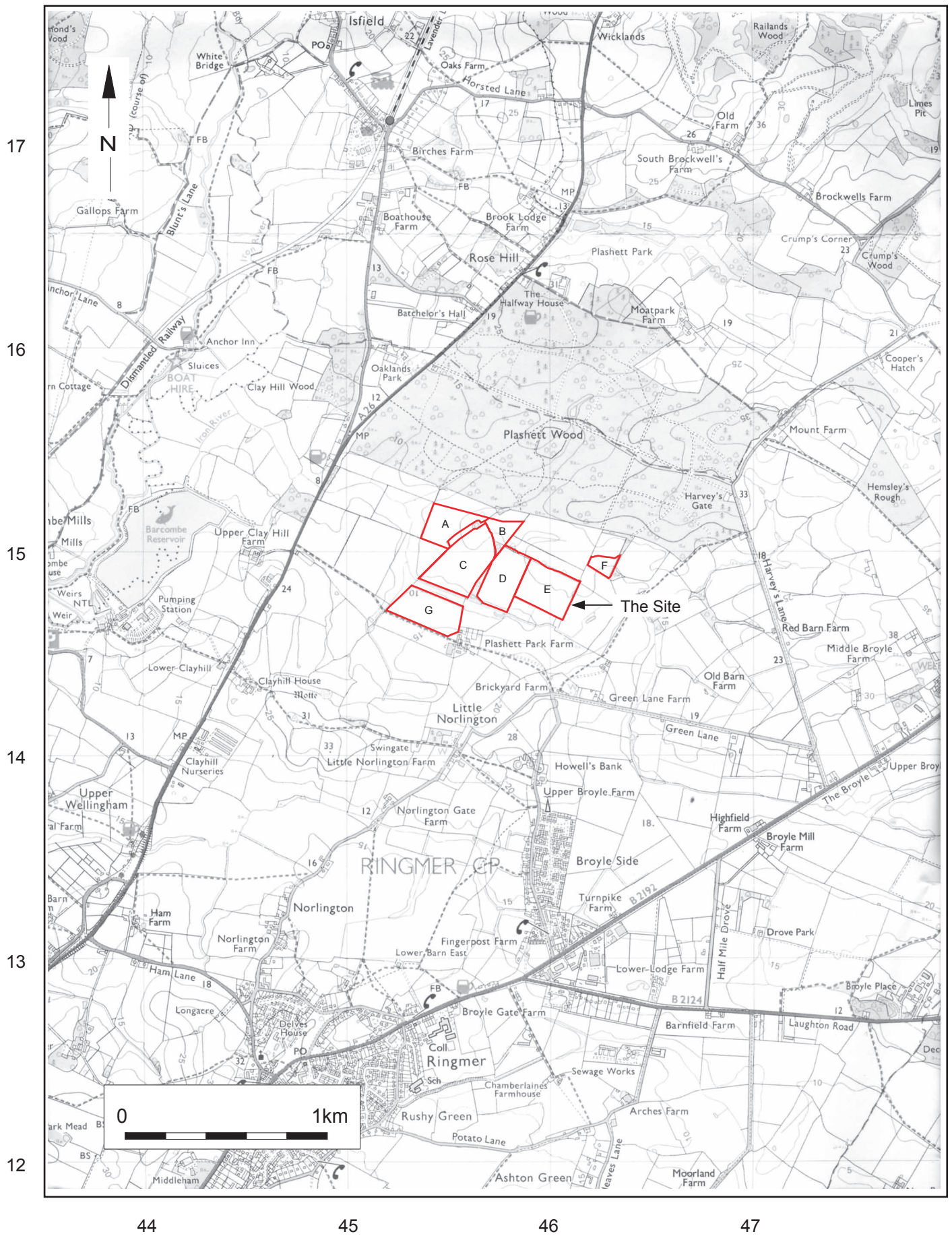
Other bibliographic details Project No. 2803

Date 2007

Issuer or publisher Archaeology South-East

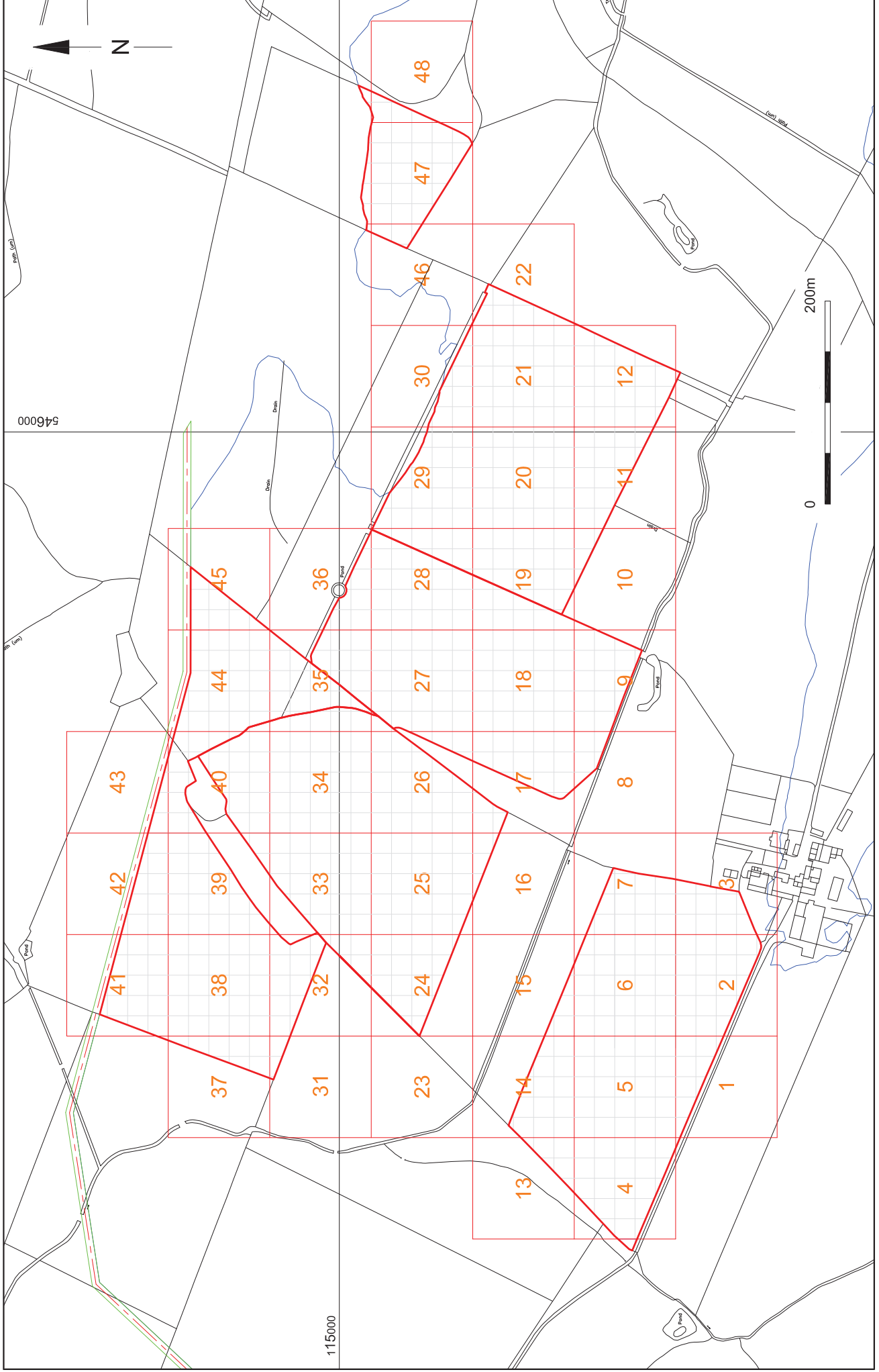
Place of issue or publication Sussex

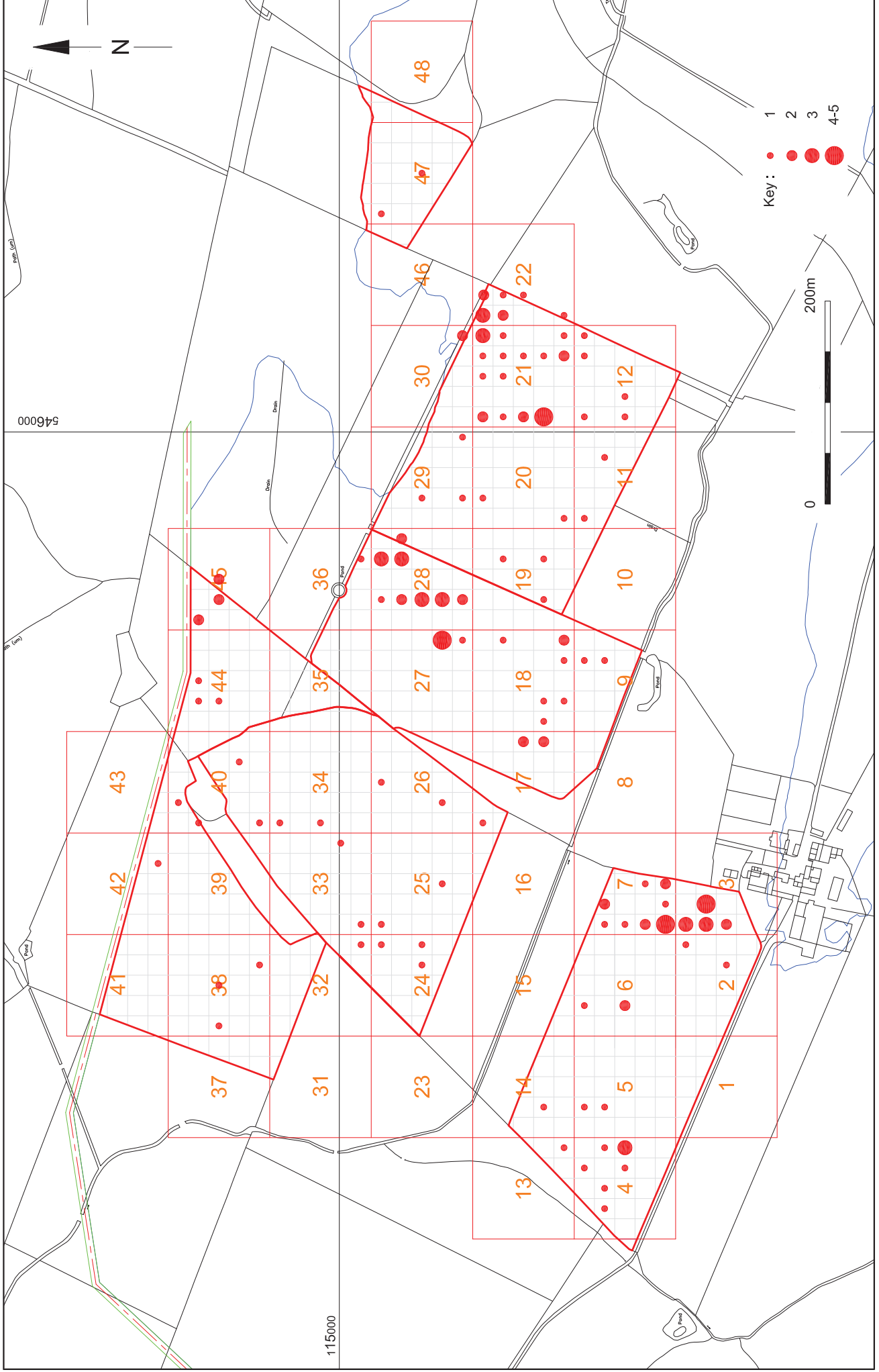
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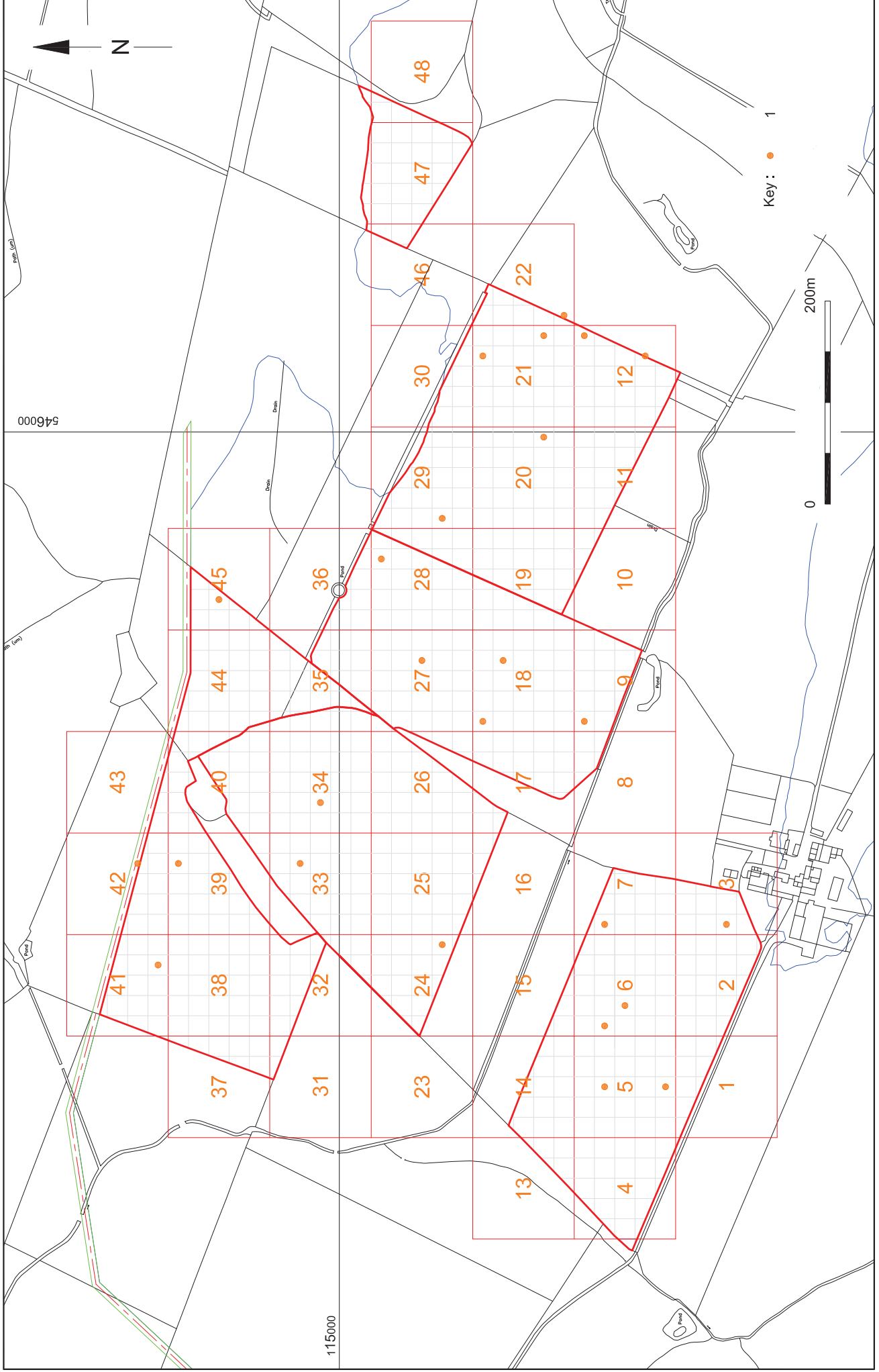


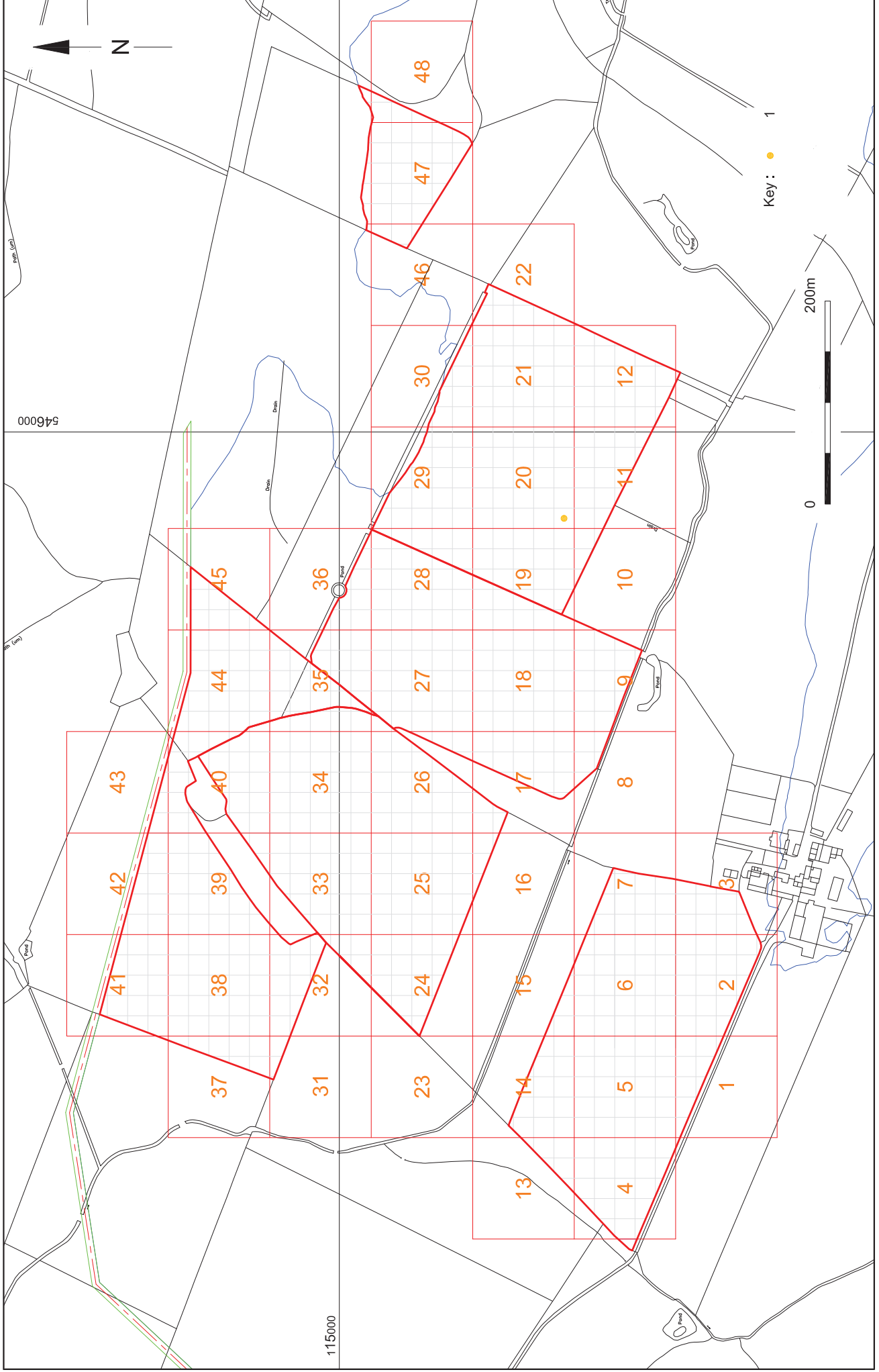
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Ref: 2803	April 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

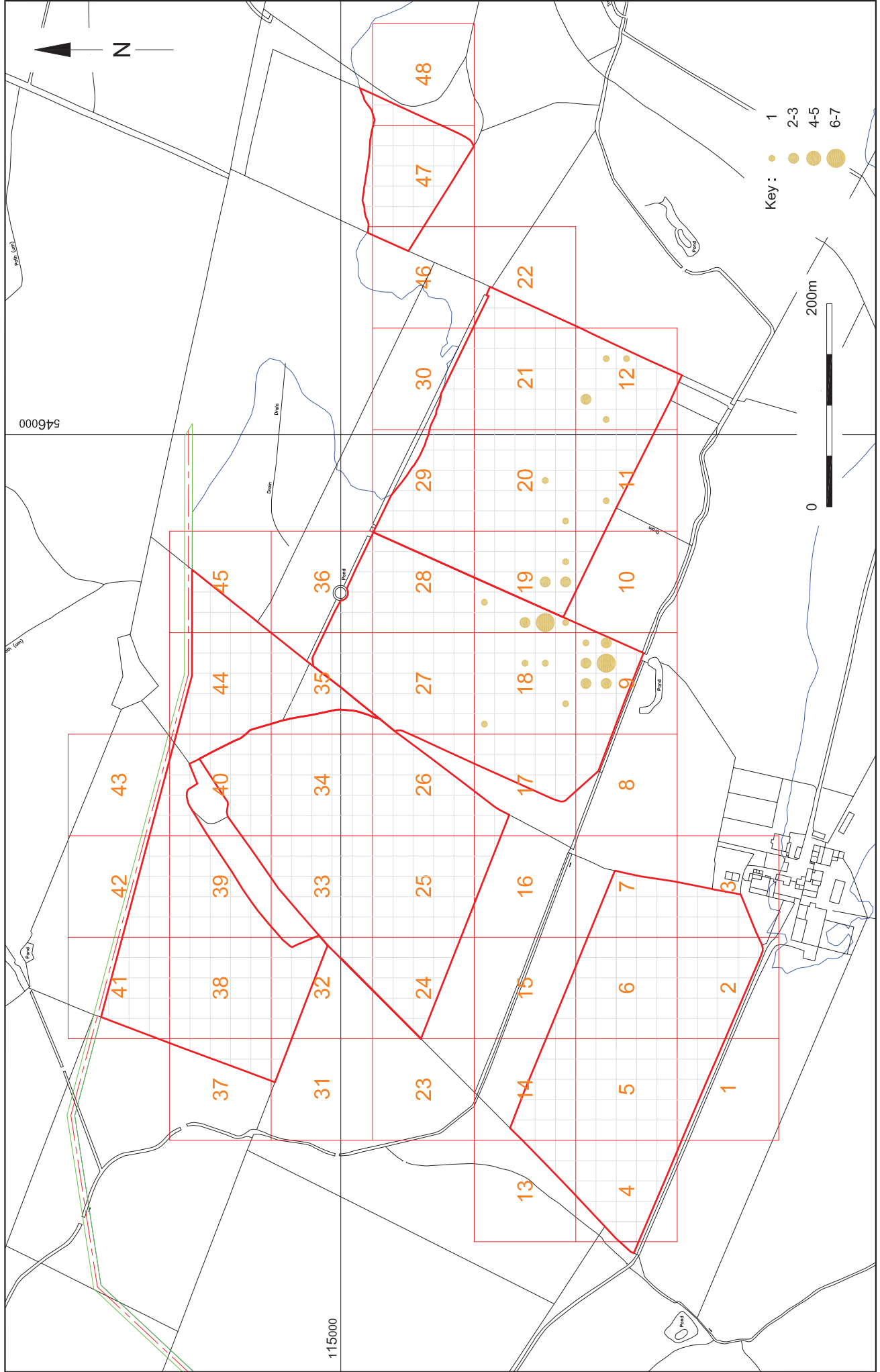
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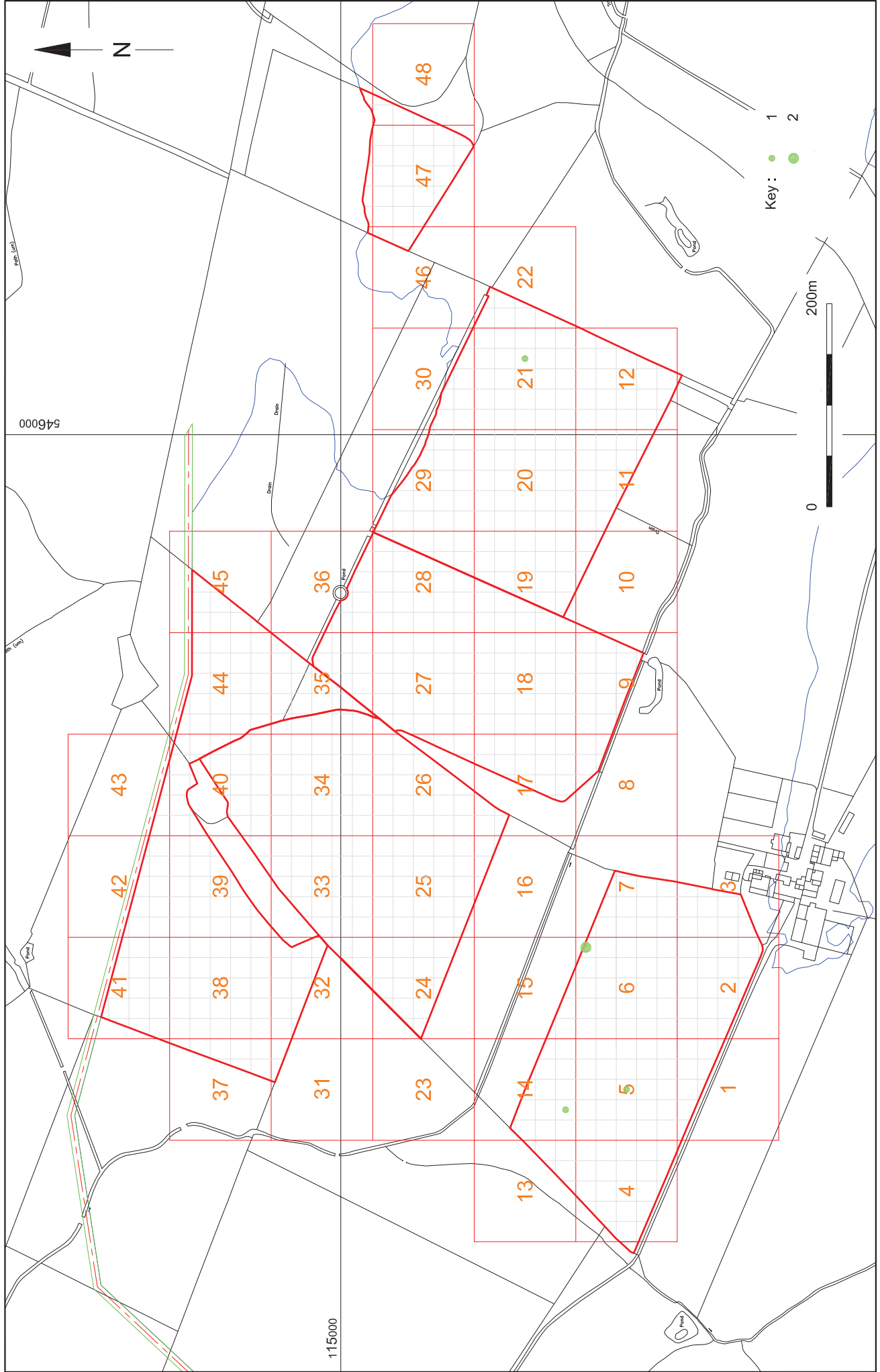




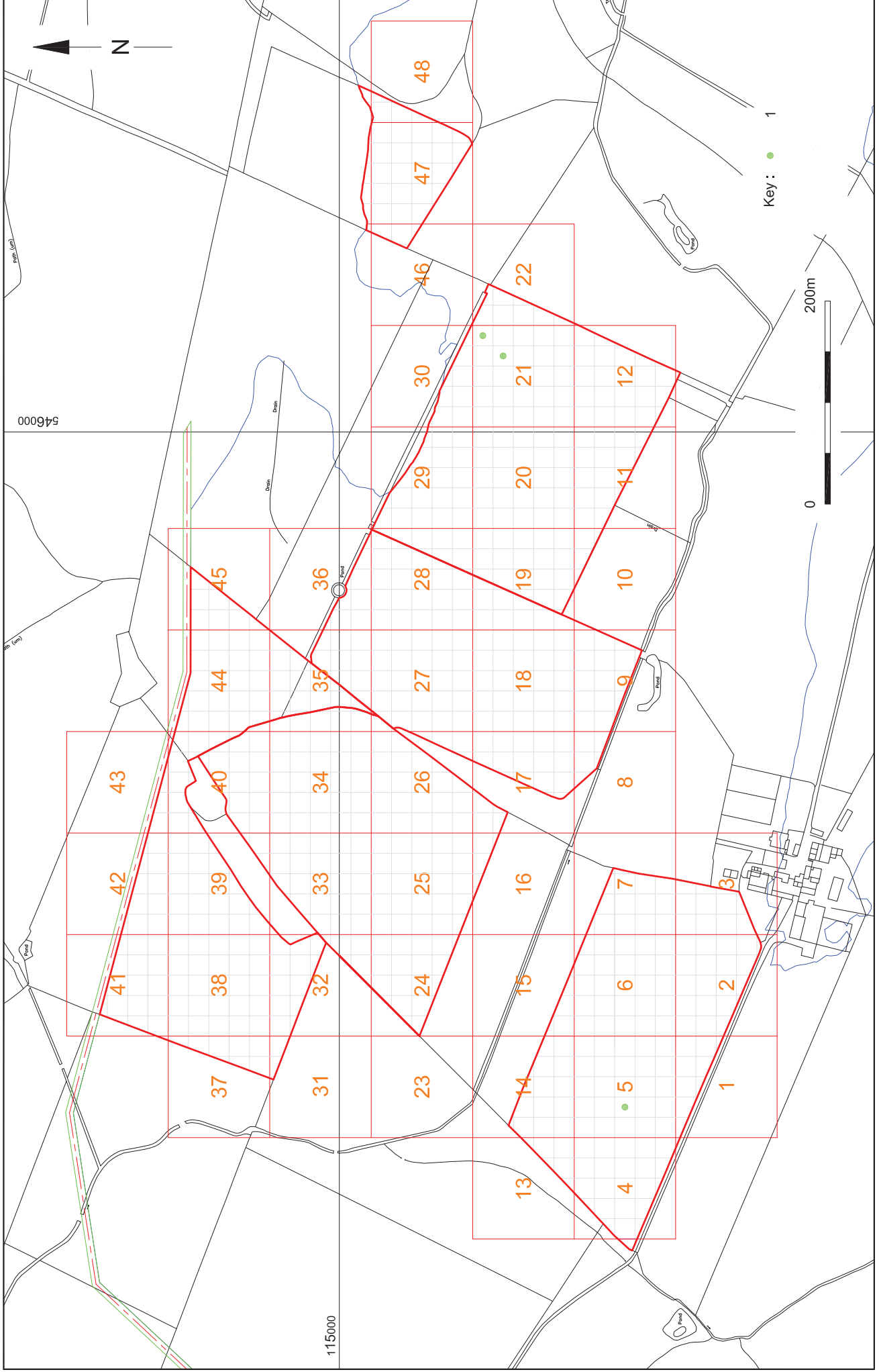




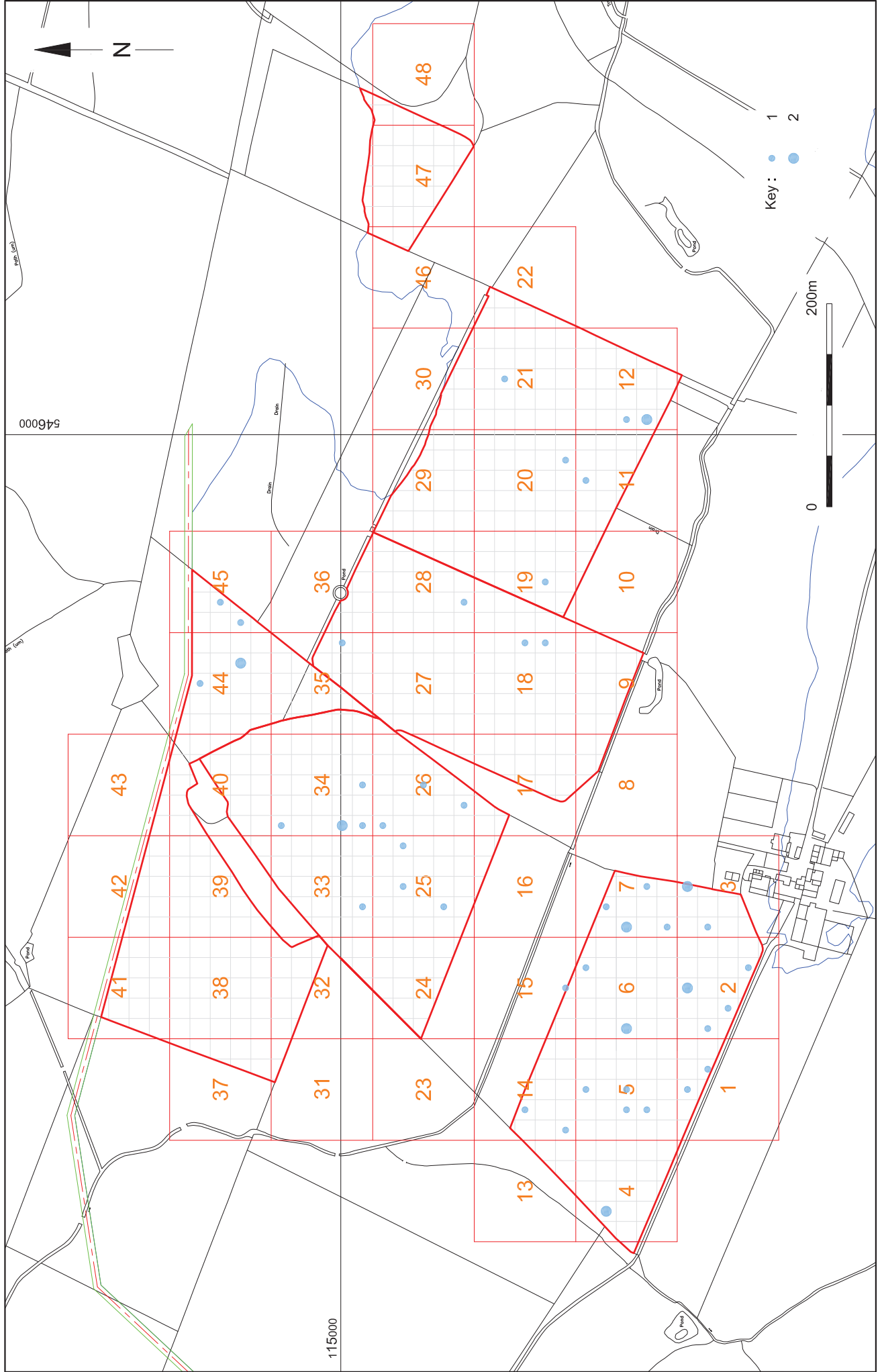
© Archaeology South-East		Clayhill Reservoir Fieldwalking	
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April 2007		Drawn by: JLR	
		Fig. 6	



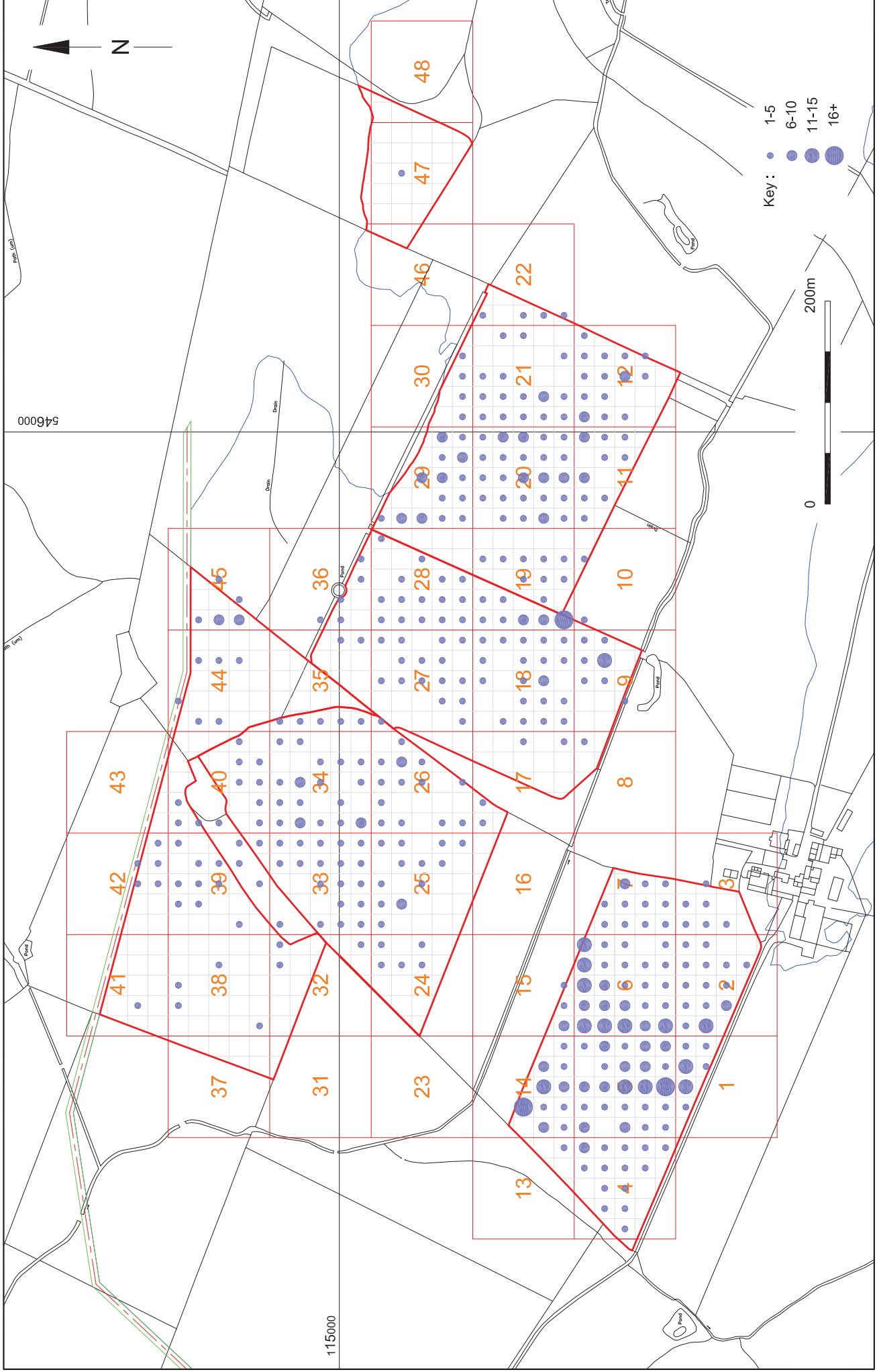
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 Distribution of Medieval Pottery
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 Fig. 7



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Drawn by: JLR		Fig. 8	



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 Distribution of Post-Medieval Pottery
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 Fig. 9



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