Surface Artefact Collection (2nd phase) at Ringmer, East Sussex

Centred at TQ 4590 1470

Project No. 2803
ASE Report No. 2008009

by
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Summary

A second phase of surface artefact collection was carried out on part of the site in November 2007 in order to survey fields not available during the first phase of surface collection in March 2007.

A background scatter of worked flint and fire-cracked flint were identified alongside more widespread distributions of post-medieval pottery and ceramic building material. Only a single fragment of Roman tile, possibly imbrex, was recovered.

CONTENTS

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) near Ringmer, East Sussex (centred at TQ 4590 1470).

1.2 The study area covers agricultural land to the north of Ringmer and to the east of Barcombe Mills, (Fig. 1). According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50000 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 as part of the feasibility study which could provide supporting documentation should a planning application be brought forward.

1.4 This current report presents the results for the second phase of the surface-collection element of the project. The first phase of this programme was undertaken in April 2007 (Stevens 2007). 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 This second phase took place within two fields (DR1 and D1) which were not covered during the first phase of surface artefact collection, due to them lying fallow at that time.

1.6 The surface collection exercise was undertaken by a team comprising Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), Andrew Margetts (Archaeologist), Dave Atkin and Jim Ball (Site Assistants) during early November 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 (Jacobs 2007., 2-4), but in summary, the site lies in an area of East Sussex with known medieval remains and 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 (Gardiner 1992, 140-146).

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 1285) (Jacobs UK Ltd 2007., 4). The somewhat enigmatic medieval earthwork known as Clay Hill lies on the southern boundary of the area (Jones 1999, 50-51). The Ringmer area was also a known centre of medieval pottery and tile production, which included particularly attractive glazed 'face jugs' (Barton 1979, fig. 19).

2.3 An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a limited number of geological test-pits in the area 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 (Stevens 2006).

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.

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 early November 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 the southwest of field DR1 was 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. However the northern half of field DR1 was still fallow on arrival and surface collection here was impossible.

4.1.2 The ploughsoil across the examined area was consistently light brown silty clay. The soil condition was moist but not wet. There was little 'natural' flint on the surface of the fields, and both of the fields contained limited quantities of surface chalk resulting from marling.

4.1.3 Most of the ploughsoil showed evidence of weathering, providing a good surface for recognition of artefacts.

4.1.4 Topographically, the examined fields were generally undulating but showed a noticeable general trend of sloping downwards towards the watercourse located to the northeast. There was also a visible rise in the centre of field D1 creating a slight knoll.

4.2 **Worked Flint** (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 The worked flint shows a fairly even, if extremely thin, background scatter across the examined area. There were no obvious concentrations of this material.

4.3 **Fire-Cracked Flint** (Fig. 4)

4.3.1 The fire-cracked flint showed a distinctly variable distribution across the examined area, with noticeable concentrations of material within field D1 (Squares 59 and 65), and a thin background scatter elsewhere.

4.4 **Roman Ceramic Building Material** (Fig. 5)

4.4.1 A single fragment of possible Roman imbrex tile was recovered from square 58.

4.5 **Post-Roman Ceramic Building Material** (Fig. 6)

4.5.1 The post-Roman CBM had a generally even distribution pattern across the site however there was a noticeably large concentration of fragments recovered from square 69.

4.6 **The 16th to 18th Century Pottery** (Fig. 7)

4.6.1 A single sherd of 17th century green glazed Wealden buff earthenware was recovered from square 69.

4.7 **The 18th to 19th Century Pottery** (Fig. 8)

4.7.1 A thin scatter of post-medieval pottery was present across much of the examined area, with the majority of the material recovered from Field D1. Even in this area, the spread was somewhat thin, with no obvious concentrations.

4.8 **The Other Finds**

4.7.1 A thin scatter of other finds was recovered from across the area. These finds were all of a post-medieval date and showed no particular concentrations.

5.0 FINDS

5.1 **The Worked Flint** by Chris Butler

5.1.1 A small assemblage of 12 pieces of worked flint weighing 139gms was recovered during the work, and are summarised in Table 1. All of the flint is either mottled grey or black in colour, with a buff cortex where present.

Type	Number
Hard hammer-struck flakes	6
Soft hammer-struck flake	1
Chip	1
Fragment	1
Core fragment	1
Arrowheads	2
Total	***12***

Table 1: The Prehistoric flintwork

5.1.2 The debitage is predominantly hard hammer-struck (65I, 51N, 70Q, 64S, 64W, 53Z), with just a single soft hammer-struck flake (58M), and no evidence of any platform preparation, and therefore is undiagnostic.

5.1.3 There are two arrowheads; firstly a leaf-shaped arrowhead (69Q) with invasive retouch around the lateral edges of both faces, but the central part of each face is not flaked. This is an Early Neolithic piece. The second arrowhead is a transverse arrowhead (69R), possibly a chisel variety. These tend to occur in the later Neolithic, but there is some overlap, with some evidence for leaf-shaped arrowheads continuing into the later Neolithic period (Green 1984). Given the presence of these two pieces in close association, it is possible that the debitage could also come from the later Neolithic period.

5.2 **The Fire-cracked Flint** by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The small assemblage of fire-cracked flint is dominated by blue/grey examples that probably relate to sparse prehistoric activity. However, a number of pieces are white and notably 'smoother' (eg 59A). These may well have been heated during lime-burning and spread on the fields during agricultural improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries.

5.3 **The Pottery** by Luke Barber

5.3.1 The field-walking recovered a small assemblage of pottery. The earliest consists of a single 17th- century sherd of green glazed Wealden buff earthenware (69Y). The remaining sherds are all of 19th- century date and are generally of a small size. A mixture of wares is present including both coarsewares and 'tablewares'. The coarsewares consist of fragments of unglazed earthenware flower pots (eg 51N), glazed red earthenware bowls/jars (eg 65G), English

stoneware ginger beer/ink bottles (eg 70C), yellow ware bowls (eg 59Z) and even a fragment of German stoneware seltzer bottle (64T). The tablewares include a range of plain/transfer-printed china and pearlware plates and bowls (eg 59C and 66A respectively) as well as a few pieces of English porcelain teawares (eg 58Q). As with the earlier fieldwalking, the lack of early sherds is surprising, particularly for the medieval period, and it may be the area has not been subjected to a long enough regime of recent cultivation to bring earlier material to the surface. The 19th- century assemblage represents a sparse scatter probably relating to the spreading of night-soil.

5.4 **The Ceramic Building Material** by Luke Barber

5.4.1 A low – density scatter of ceramic building material was recovered. By far the largest group was from transect 69R which produced 22 pieces (1,350g). The remaining transects produced notably less material. A single possible fragment of Roman imbrex tile was located (58E) in a well fired medium sand tempered fabric.

5.4.2 No definite medieval roof tile was recovered. The vast majority of the assemblage consists of peg tile fragments in medium/well fired fine sand tempered fabrics with occasional iron oxides. Although some could be of 16th/17th- century date all are most likely to belong to the 18th and 19th centuries. A single 18th/19th- century unglazed floor tile fragment was recovered from transect 59U and several 19th- century land drain fragments were also collected. The few pieces of brick can all be placed in the 18th to 19th centuries.

5.5 **The Clay Tobacco Pipe** by Luke Barber

5.5.1 The few pieces recovered consist entirely of plain stem fragments of mid/late 17th- to 19th- century date.

5.6 **The Geological Material** by Luke Barber

5.6.1 The majority of the stone consists of a sparse scatter of 19th- century Welsh slate, coal and coal shale. The few other pieces of stone include hard granites etc which would be in keeping with 19th- century road or railway track ballast.

5.7 **The Other Material** by Luke Barber

5.7.1 The fieldwalking also produced a very sparse scatter of glass bottle fragments, iron nails and animal bone. All, based on type, form and/or condition, appear to be of 19th- century date.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 The programme of surface artefact collection was carried out in ideal weather, with low crop growth, and where it was exposed (see section 4.1.1) a ploughsoil that allowed recognition and recovery of a range of artefacts.

6.2 There was generally a thin, background scatter, of fire-cracked flint (Fig. 4). However, the slightly increased density of material within field D1 (Grid Squares 59 and 65 and possibly 60 and 54) may show a localised concentration of prehistoric activity. The limited amount of fire-cracked flint recovered does not suggest intensive activity (for example that associated with burnt mounds). There was less fire-cracked flint recovered than in the phase 1 surface collection which may suggest that any focus of prehistoric activity lay to the east, possibly in association with the water course (Stevens 2007).

6.3 The worked flint recovered showed an even thinner distribution and probably relates to a 'background' scatter of material rather than representing intensive, repeated episodes of flint-working. There may be a slight, though far from strong, correlation between the fire-cracked flint and worked flint distribution in squares 64 and 65, and also 54 and 60.

6.4 Unlike the phase 1 surface collection survey, there was little Roman material recovered, with only one piece of possible imbrex tile collected. This would suggest that these fields lay beyond any focus of Roman occupation.

6.5 There was a thin spread across the site of 18th-19th century pottery and post-Roman CBM which probably derived from manuring and is not likely to correspond to any significant occupation focus. The possible exception to this is the increased concentration of post-roman CBM found in square 69. It is unclear whether or not this is a random anomaly in the distribution pattern. There is no corresponding increase in the post-Roman pottery recovered from this vicinity (which would, perhaps, be indicative of the presence of a building). It may be significant that this grid square lies adjacent to the existing road, the A26, perhaps indicating that the field was accessed from this vicinity and that material derived from manuring tended to concentrate here.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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HER 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 *November 2007*		
Sponsor/Client	Jacobs UK Limited on behalf of South East Water					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo. ✓	BA	IA	RB ✓
	AS	MED ✓	PM ✓	Other		

100 Word Summary.

A second phase of surface artefact collection was carried out in part of the site of the proposed reservoir in November 2007 in order to survey fields not available during the first phase of surface collection in March 2007.

A background scatter of worked flint and fire-cracked flint were identified alongside more widespread distributions of post-medieval pottery and ceramic building material. Only a single fragment of Roman tile, possibly imbrex, was recovered.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-37106

Project details

Project name	Field-Walking (phase 2) at proposed site of Clayhill Reservoir
Short description of the project	A second area of the proposed land-take for the reservoir was field-walked in November 2007 in fields unavailable during phase 1 undertaken in March 2007. Small quantities of artefacts were recovered including thin scatters of fire-cracked flint and worked flint.
Project dates	Start: 05-11-2007 End: 07-11-2007
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2803 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CHR07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Significant Finds	ARROWHEAD Neolithic
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Significant Finds	POT Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Fieldwalking'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES RINGMER Proposed Clayhill Reservoir
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','Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Correspondence','Diary','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Surface Artefact Collection (phase 2) at Proposed site of Clayhill Reservoir
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Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No. 2008009
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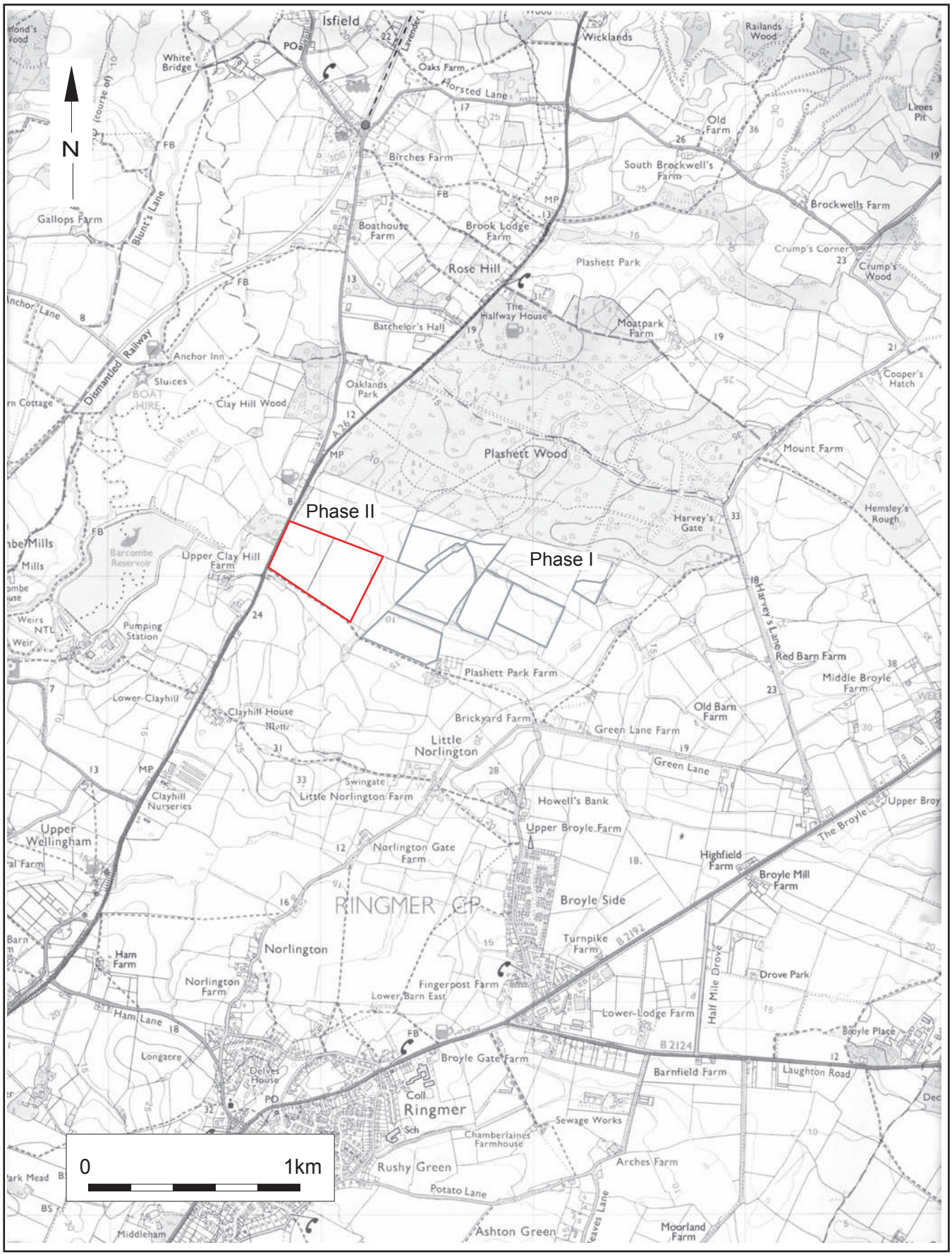

© **Archaeology South-East**		Clayhill Reservoir Surface Artefact Collection	Fig. 1
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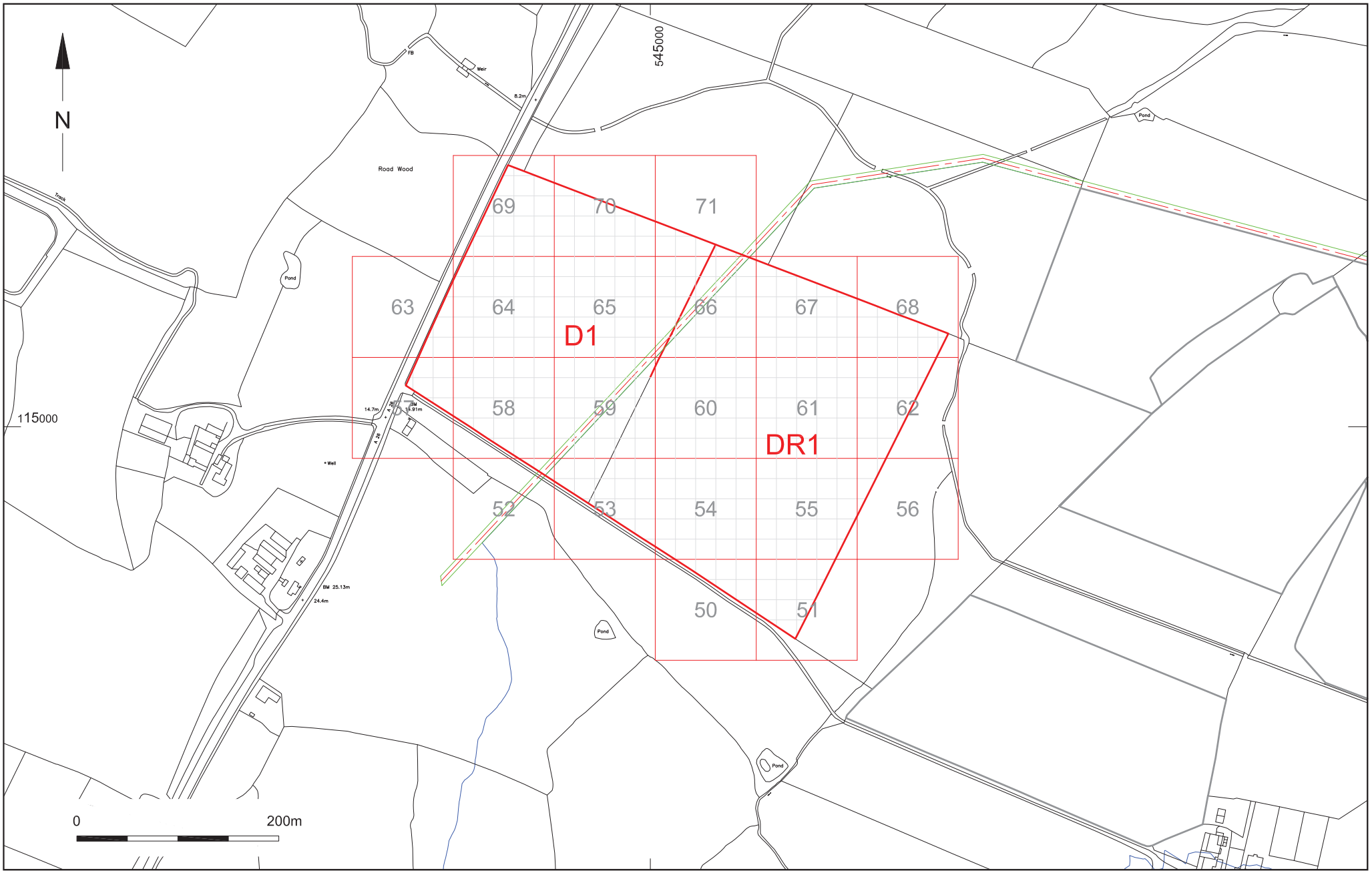
Report Ref: 2008009	Drawn by: JLR		



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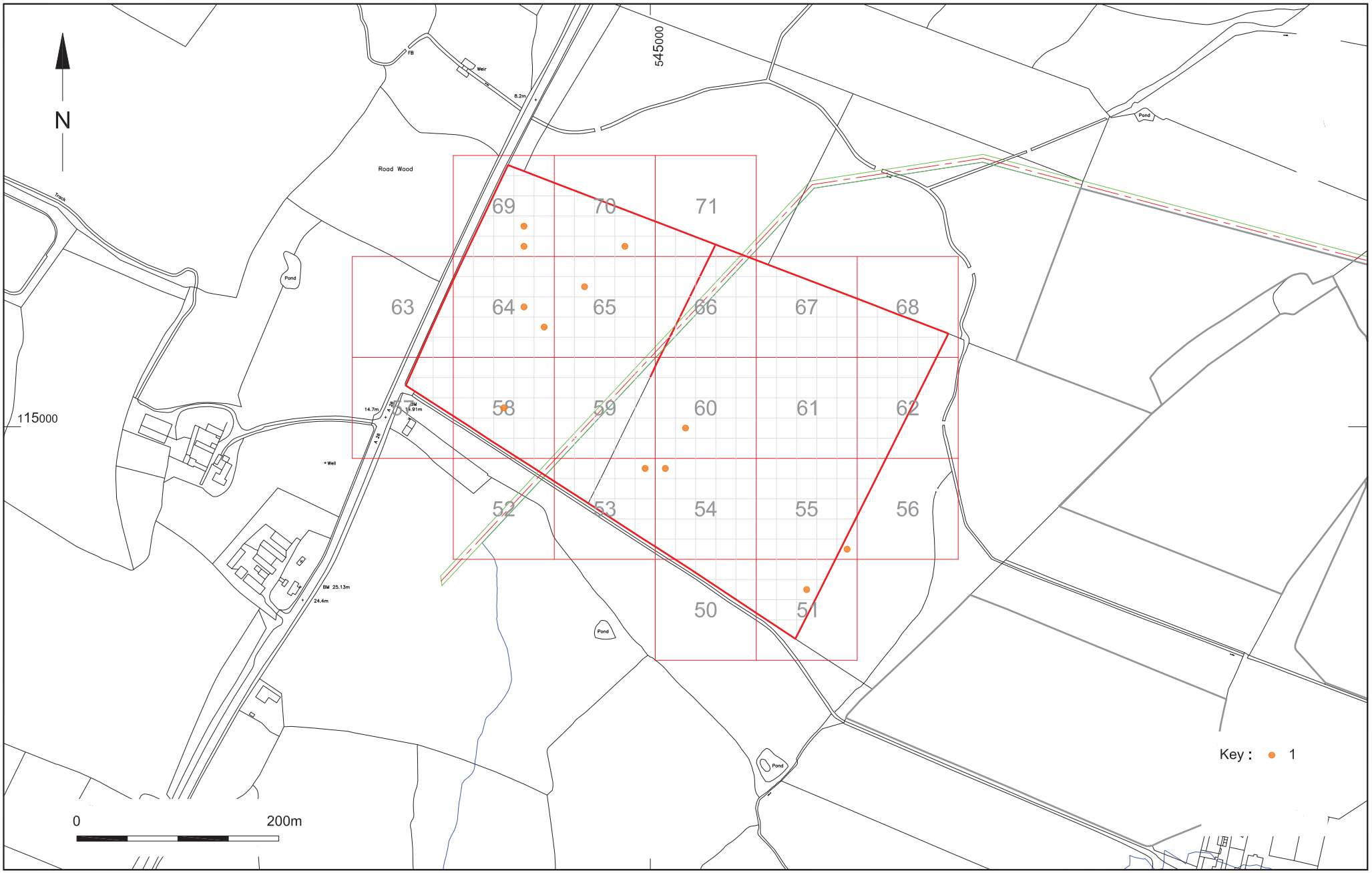
Report Ref: 2008009	Drawn by: JLR		



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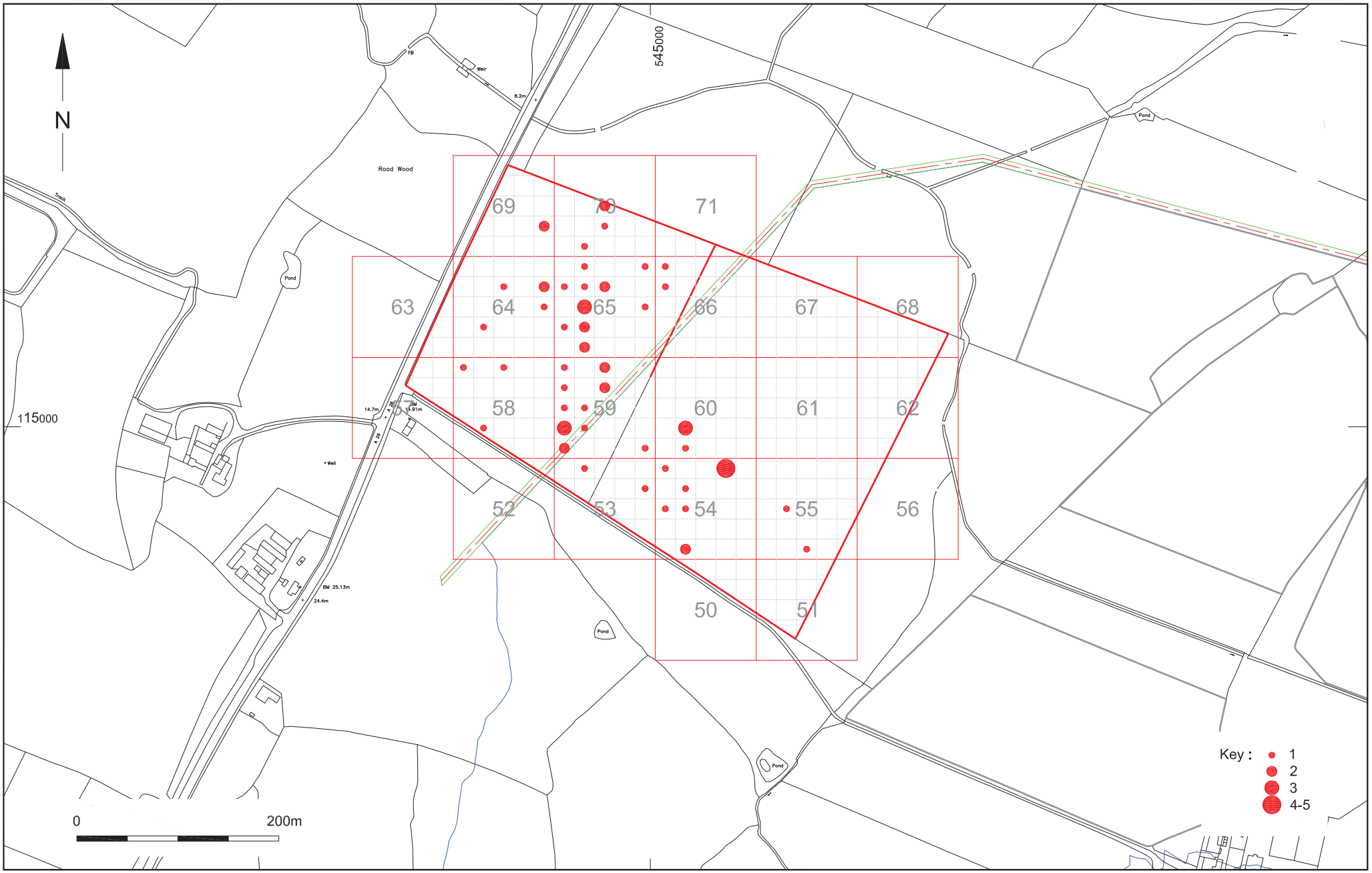

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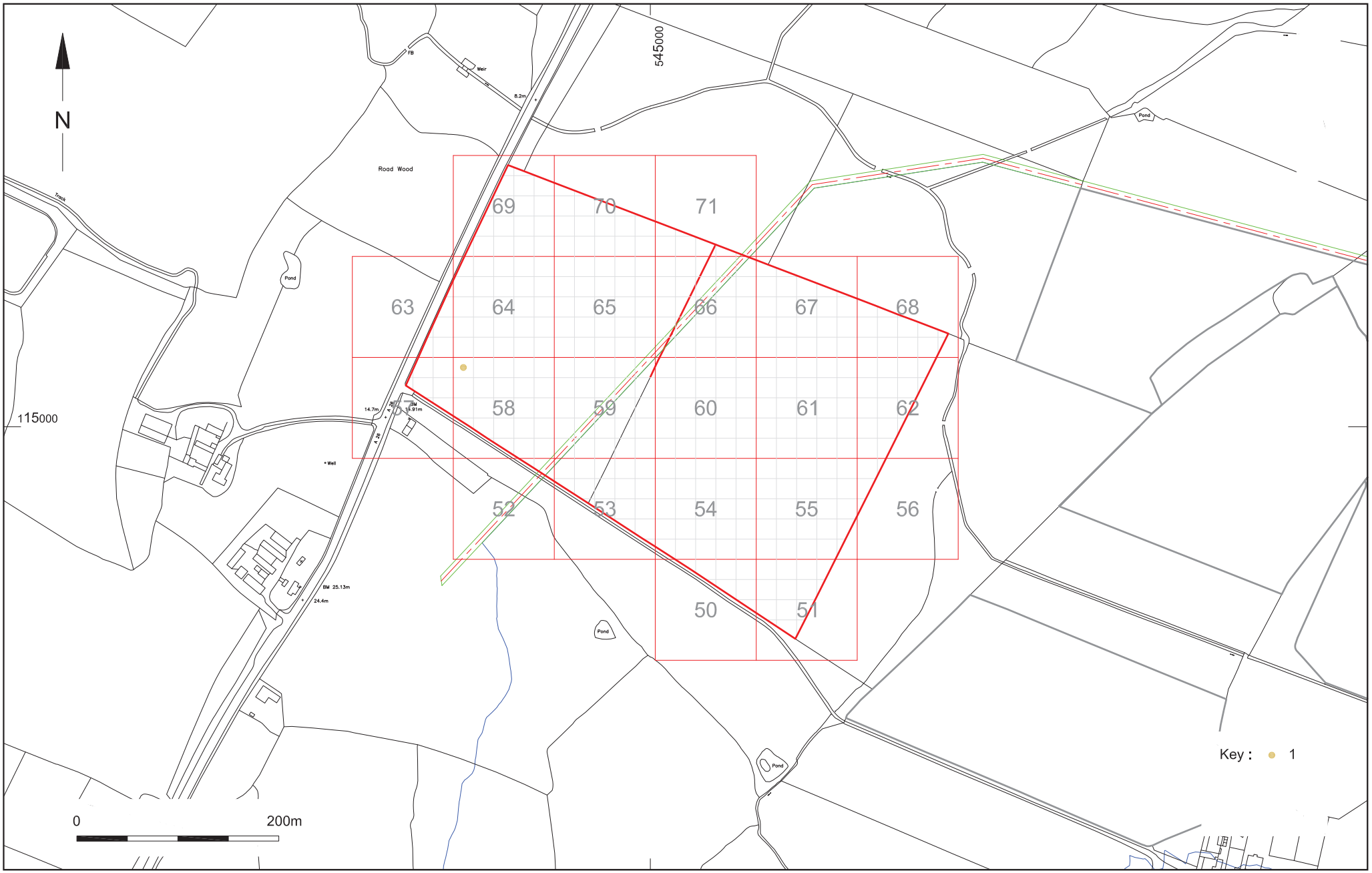

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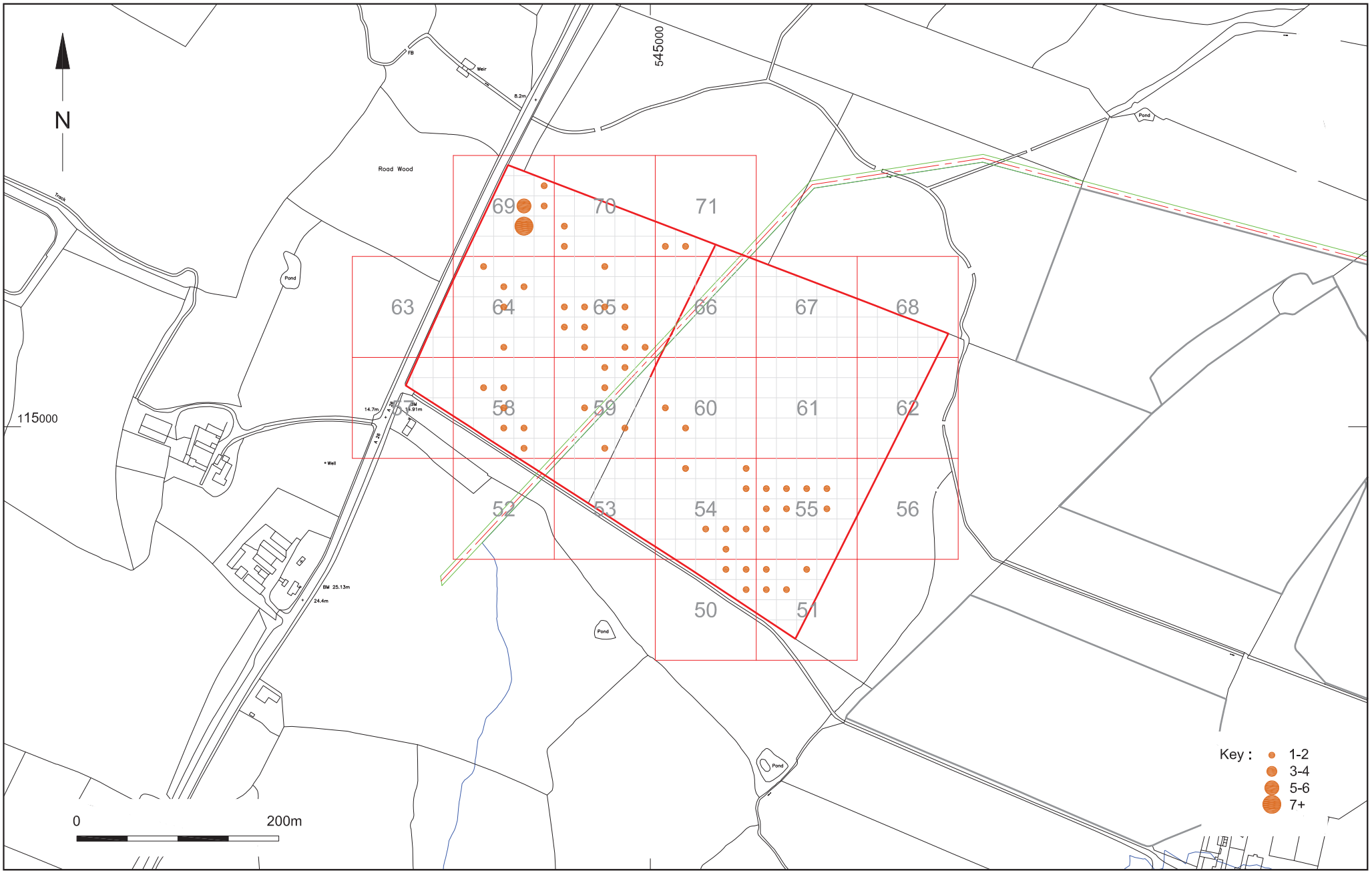

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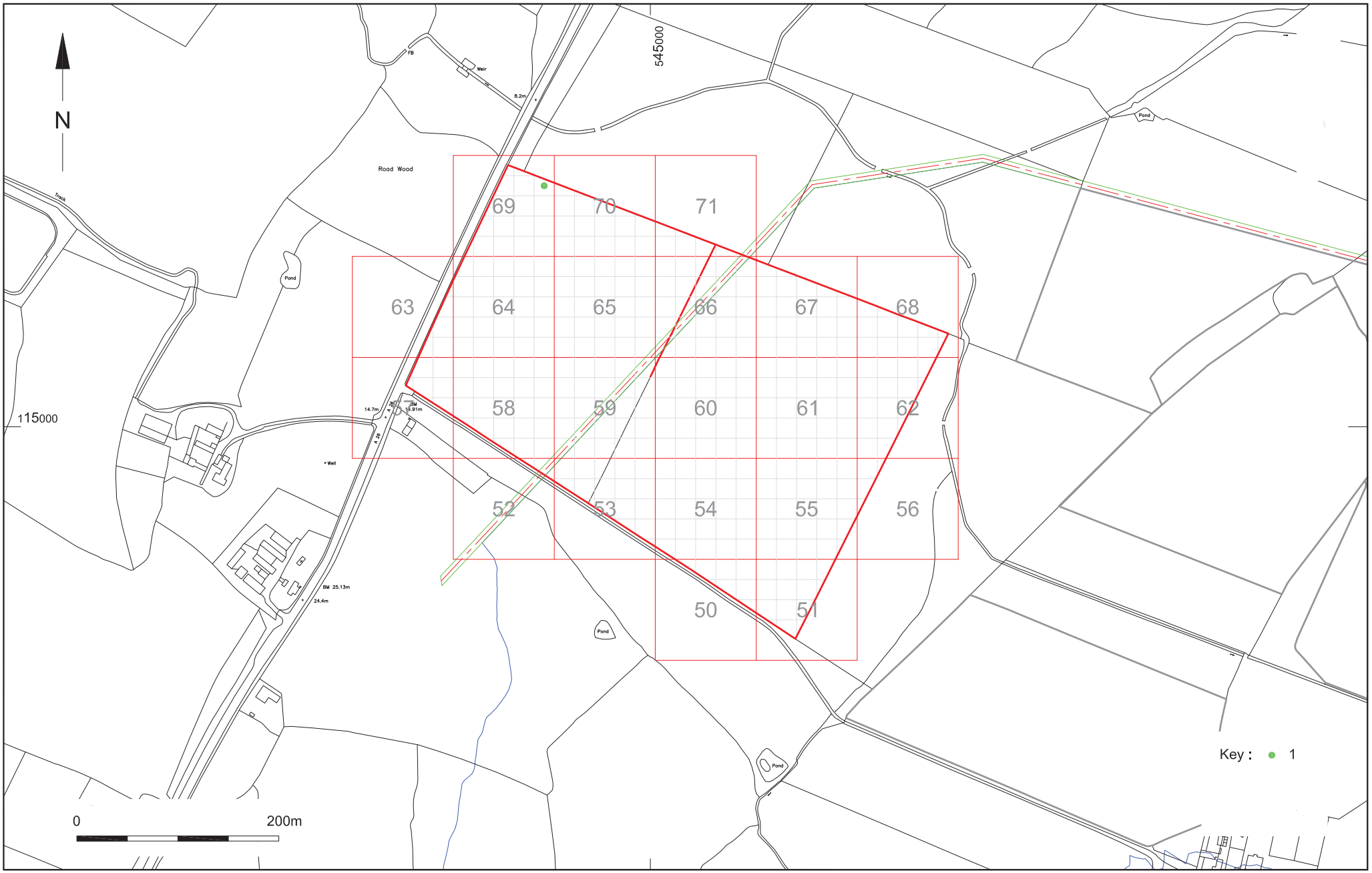

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Project Ref: 2803	Jan 2008	Distribution of mid 16th to early 18th Century pottery	
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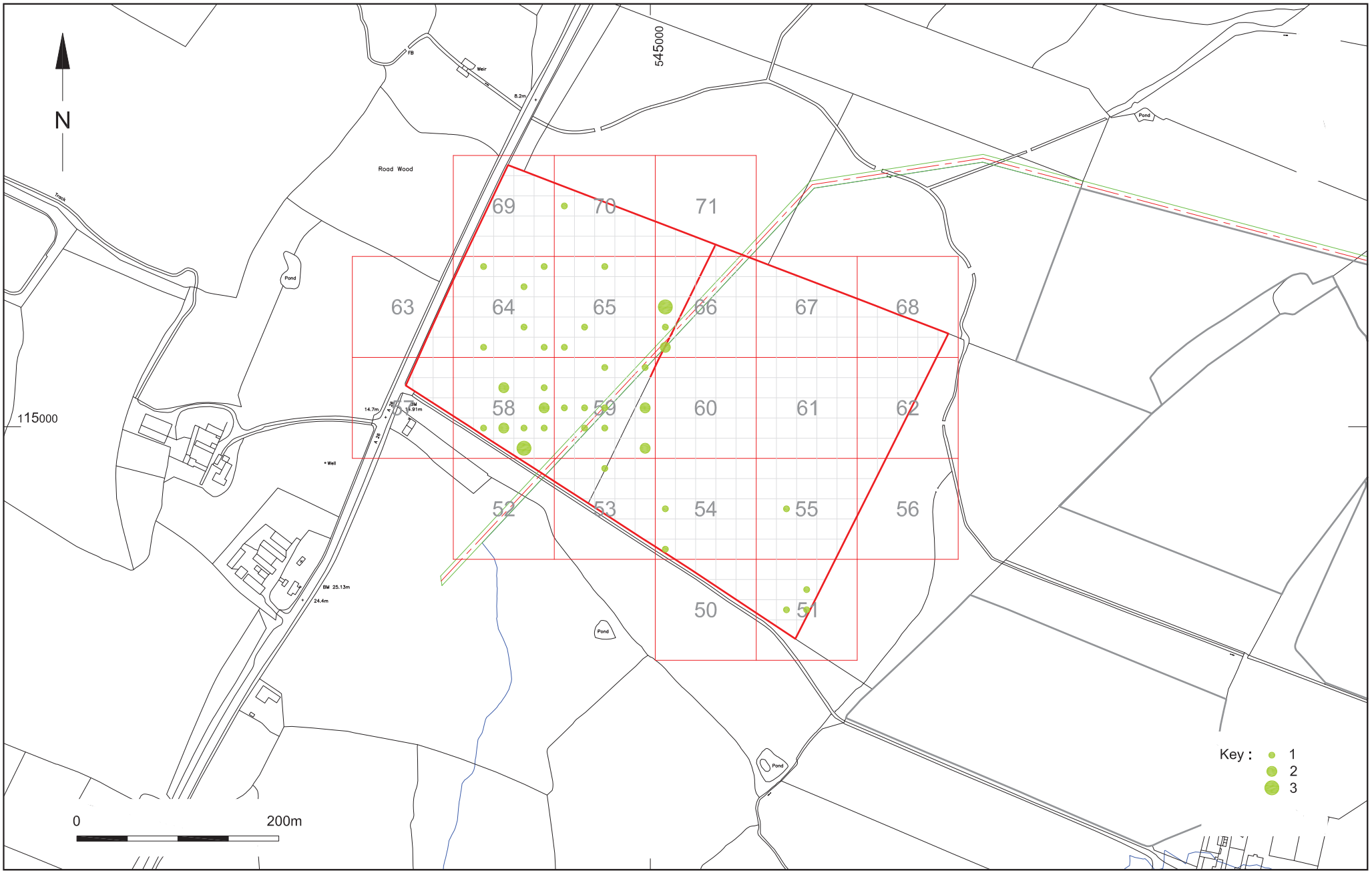

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Project Ref: 2803	Jan 2008	Distribution of 18th to 19th Century pottery	
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