GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Oundle, Northamptonshire

Client
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Survey Report
12990

Date
June 2018

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GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

Project name:
Oundle, Northamptonshire

SUMO Job reference:
12990

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Survey date:
15 June 2018

Report date:
27 June 2018

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1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted over approximately 3.7 ha of grassland at Oundle, Northamptonshire. No definite archaeological anomalies have been identified. A small number of discrete responses could be associated with Saxon sunken feature buildings, though their interpretation as such is tentative and it is unlikely that they would have been classified as such without *a priori* knowledge of the Saxon site to the east. Other discrete and linear anomalies are of uncertain origin. Linear responses associated with the former allotment gardens have been identified, along with evidence of ridge and furrow and areas of modern magnetic disturbance.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background synopsis

SUMO Geophysics Ltd were commissioned to undertake a geophysical survey of an area outlined for development. This survey forms part of an archaeological investigation being undertaken by **CgMs Heritage**.

2.2 Site details

NGR / Postcode	TL 034 880 / PE8 4BN
Location	The site is located to the west of Oundle, Northamptonshire, with Stoke Doyle Road forming the southern boundary of the site. Properties in Clifton Drive bound the site to the north, with Warren Bridge cul-de-sac to the east, a cemetery to the south-east and agricultural land to the west.
HER/SMR	Northamptonshire
District	East Northamptonshire
Parish	Oundle CP
Topography	The site occupies a slight ridge and slopes down from the centre of the site towards the north and south.
Current Land Use	Grassland
Geology	Solid: Rutland Formation - argillaceous rocks with subordinate sandstone and limestone is recorded across the north, east and south of the site with Blisworth Limestone Formation - limestone recorded across the central and western parts. Superficial: None recorded (BGS 2018).
Soils	Moreton Association (511b) - well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soils over limestone, in places shallow and brashy (SSEW 1983).
Archaeology	Evidence of Saxon settlement (HER No. 5366) is recorded immediately to the east of the site, and comprises the remains of sunken feature buildings (SFB's), ditches and walls. A Bronze Age urnfield / cemetery (HER No. 2418/1) is recorded immediately to the south in the present-day cemetery, while a flint scatter (HER No. 9428) approximately 600m to the north-west, north of Lyveden Brook, hints towards an area of possible Bronze Age occupation activity (NCC 2018).
Survey Methods	Magnetometer survey (fluxgate gradiometer)
Study Area	*c.* 3.7 ha

2.3 Aims and Objectives

To locate and characterise any anomalies of possible archaeological interest within the study area and to identify any evidence for sunken feature buildings.

3 METHODS, PROCESSING & PRESENTATION

3.1 Standards & Guidance

This report and all fieldwork have been conducted in accordance with the latest guidance documents issued by Historic England (EH 2008) (then English Heritage), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014) and the European Archaeological Council (EAC 2016).

3.2 Survey methods

Detailed magnetic survey was chosen as an efficient and effective method of locating archaeological anomalies.

Technique	Instrument	Traverse Interval	Sample Interval
Magnetometer	Bartington Grad 601-2	1.0m	0.25m

More information regarding this technique is included in Appendices A and B.

3.3 Data Processing

The following basic processing steps have been carried out on the data used in this report:

De-stripe; de-stagger; interpolate

3.4 Presentation of results and interpretation

The presentation of the results includes a 'minimally processed data' and a 'processed data' greyscale plot. Magnetic anomalies are identified, interpreted and plotted onto the 'Interpretation' drawings.

When interpreting the results, several factors are taken into consideration, including the nature of archaeological features being investigated and the local conditions at the site (geology, pedology, topography etc.). Anomalies are categorised by their potential origin. Where responses can be related to other existing evidence, the anomalies will be given specific categories, such as: *Abbey Wall* or *Roman Road*. Where the interpretation is based largely on the geophysical data, levels of confidence are implied, for example: *Probable*, or *Possible Archaeology*. The former is used for a confident interpretation, based on anomaly definition and/or other corroborative data such as cropmarks. Poor anomaly definition, a lack of clear patterns to the responses and an absence of other supporting data reduces confidence, hence the classification *Possible*.

4 RESULTS

The survey has been divided into three survey areas (Areas 1-3) and specific anomalies have been given numerical labels [1] [2] *which appear in the text below, as well as on the Interpretation Figure(s).*

4.1 *Probable Archaeology*

4.1.1 No magnetic responses have been recorded that could be interpreted as being of archaeological interest.

4.2 *Possible Archaeology*

4.2.1 A number of small, discrete positive anomalies [1] have been detected, predominantly in the central-southern part of the site. Though tentative, they have been interpreted as having possible archaeological origins given the context of Saxon sunken feature buildings (SFB) (HER No. 5366) having been identified immediately to the east. It is likely that they would not have been singled out as possible archaeological features without *a priori* knowledge of the SFB; they share similar characteristics to that of natural pitting which is observed over limestone geologies, or could equally be a result of old bonfires or more deeply buried ferrous objects.

4.3 *Uncertain*

4.3.1 Further small discrete positive anomalies [2] are visible in the data; unlike the above [1] they have been classified as having uncertain origins. They do not feature as clearly within the XY trace plot of the data (Fig. 06), and could simply be a result of natural magnetic variations or buried ferrous objects, possibly associated with the former allotment gardens.

4.3.2 A sub-circular anomaly and additional curvilinear trend [3] can be seen in the north-western corner of the site. Given the proximity of a Bronze Age burial site (HER No. 2418/1) to the south and possible occupation site (HER No. 9428) to the north-west, an archaeological origin for the responses cannot be ruled out entirely. They could also be a result of agricultural or modern activity.

4.3.3 A curving, positive linear response [4] runs along the northern boundary of the site. Given that the anomaly respects the line of the present-day field boundary, it seems unlikely to have an archaeological provenance. It is more likely to be a result of agricultural activity.

4.4 *Former Allotments*

4.4.1 A linear alignment of magnetic disturbance [5] can be seen in Area 1, on an approximate north-south alignment. This corresponds with a former trackway or boundary of the old allotment gardens, visible in the area on historic OS mapping.

4.4.2 Linear anomalies [6] [7] running at right angles to the former track [5] have also been detected. The central anomaly [6] corresponds with a former division within the allotment gardens, while the northern and southern responses are not visible on any historic mapping.

4.5 *Agricultural – Ridge and Furrow*

4.5.1 Widely spaced, slightly curved, parallel linear anomalies are present across the site and are a result of ridge and furrow cultivation.

4.6 ***Natural / Geological / Pedological / Topographic***

4.6.1 Two small, amorphous areas of increased magnetic response are visible in the west of Area 1 and are probably of natural origin, i.e. relating to the underlying limestone geologies.

4.7 ***Ferrous / Magnetic Disturbance***

4.7.1 An area of magnetic disturbance is visible in the south of Area 2, although there are manyf small scale ferrous responses scattered across the site. These are likely to have modern origins, and could be associated with the site's former use as allotments.

4.7.2 Ferrous responses close to boundaries are due to adjacent fences and gates. Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ("iron spikes") are present throughout the data and are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris (or brick / tile) in the topsoil; they are commonly assigned a modern origin. Only the most prominent of these are highlighted on the interpretation diagram.

5 DATA APPRAISAL & CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Historic England guidelines (EH 2008) Table 4 states that the average magnetic response on limestone is generally good. The results from this survey indicate the presence of possible sunken feature buildings; however, the data across the entire site is noisy from scattered ferrous debris. It is possible that this 'noise' may be masking small discrete features which could be associated with the sunken feature buildings, though it is likely that any substantial archaeological remains would have been detected. It is very unlikely that any remains associated with the Bronze Age urnfield (HER No. 2418/1) would be detected given the general background noise of the site; such features are difficult to detect even in perfect conditions.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The survey at Oundle has not revealed any anomalies of definite archaeological origin. A small number of discrete responses could be associated with Saxon sunken feature buildings, though without *a priori* knowledge of the Saxon site (HER No. 5366) to the east, the anomalies may not have been interpreted as such and remains tentative. Further discrete and linear anomalies are of uncertain origin. Evidence of ridge and furrow can be seen across the site, along with former divisions and a trackway associated with the former allotment gardens which occupied the site. The remaining features are modern or natural and include areas of ferrous disturbance from nearby metal objects, such as telegraph poles, fences and debris within the topsoil.

7 REFERENCES

BGS 2018 British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain viewer [Accessed 26/06/2018] *website*: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/home.html?Accordion1=1#maps

CIfA 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey.* Amended 2016. CIfA Guidance note. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS%26GGeophysics_2.pdf

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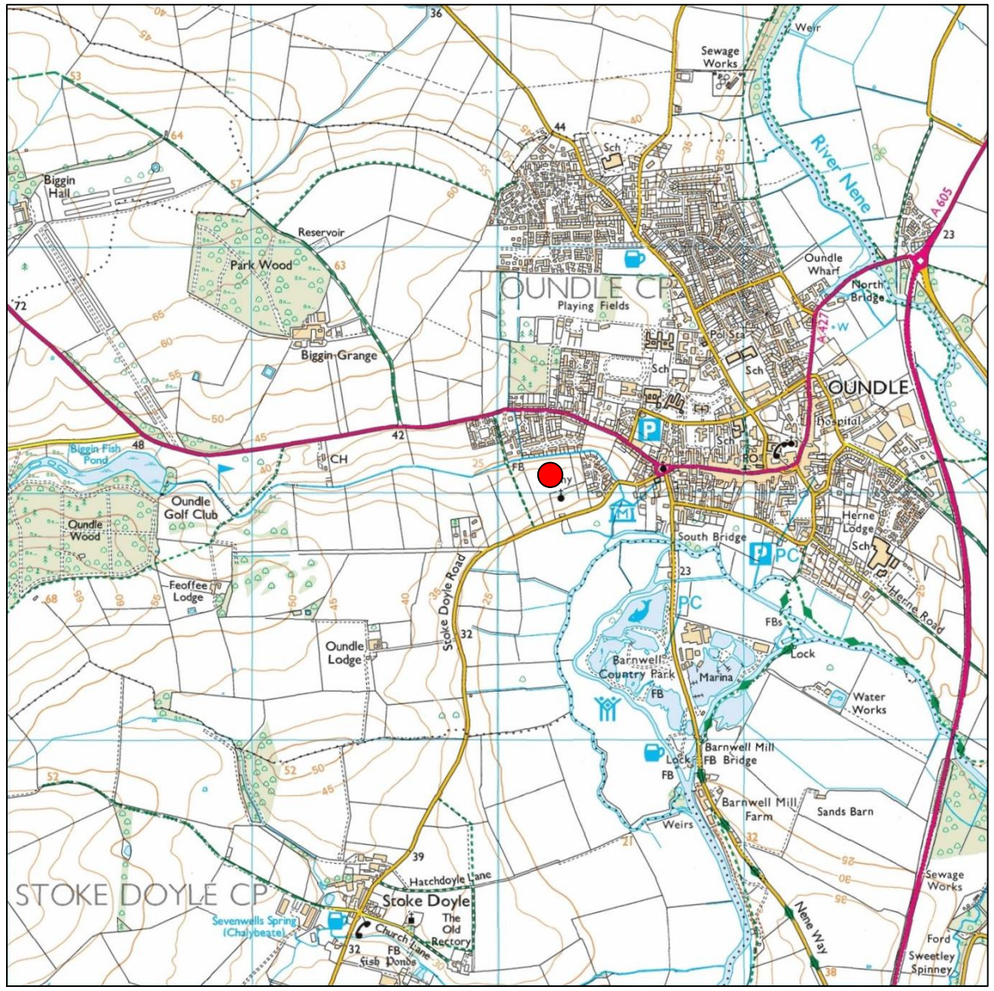
EH 2008 *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation.* English Heritage, Swindon https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/geophysical-survey-in-archaeological-field-evaluation/geophysics-guidelines.pdf/

NCC 2018 Northamptonshire County Council - Historic Environment Record [Accessed 26/06/2018] *website:* www.heritgaegateway.org.uk

SSEW 1983 *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 4, Eastern England*. Soil Survey of England and Wales, Harpenden.



N

Site Location

sumo Survey
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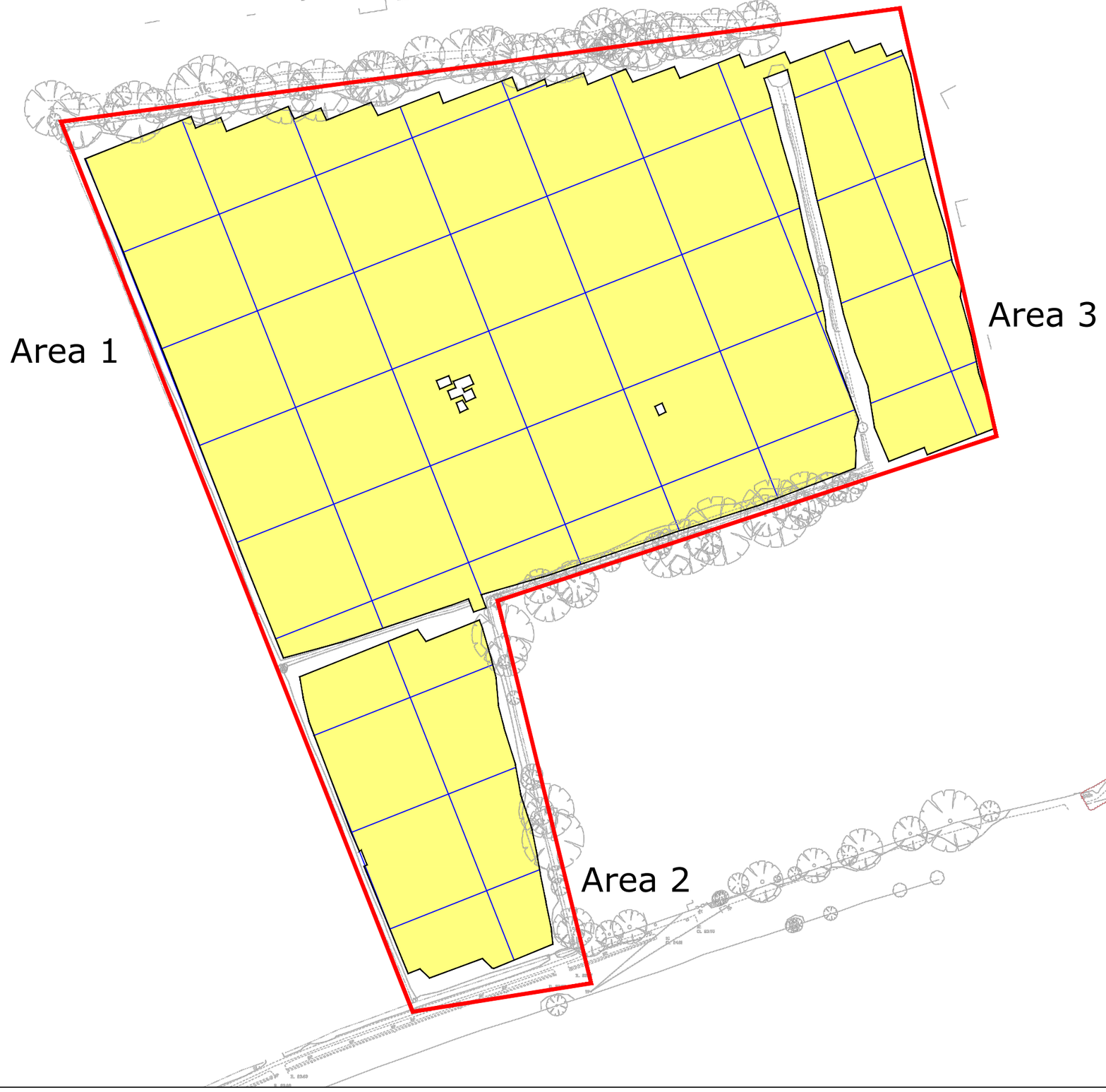
Title:
Site Location Diagram

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 1000
1:25000 @ A3

Fig No:
01



N

Survey Area - showing 30m grid

sumo Survey
GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Title:
Location of Survey Areas

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No:
02

N

+2nT

-1nT

sumo Survey

GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

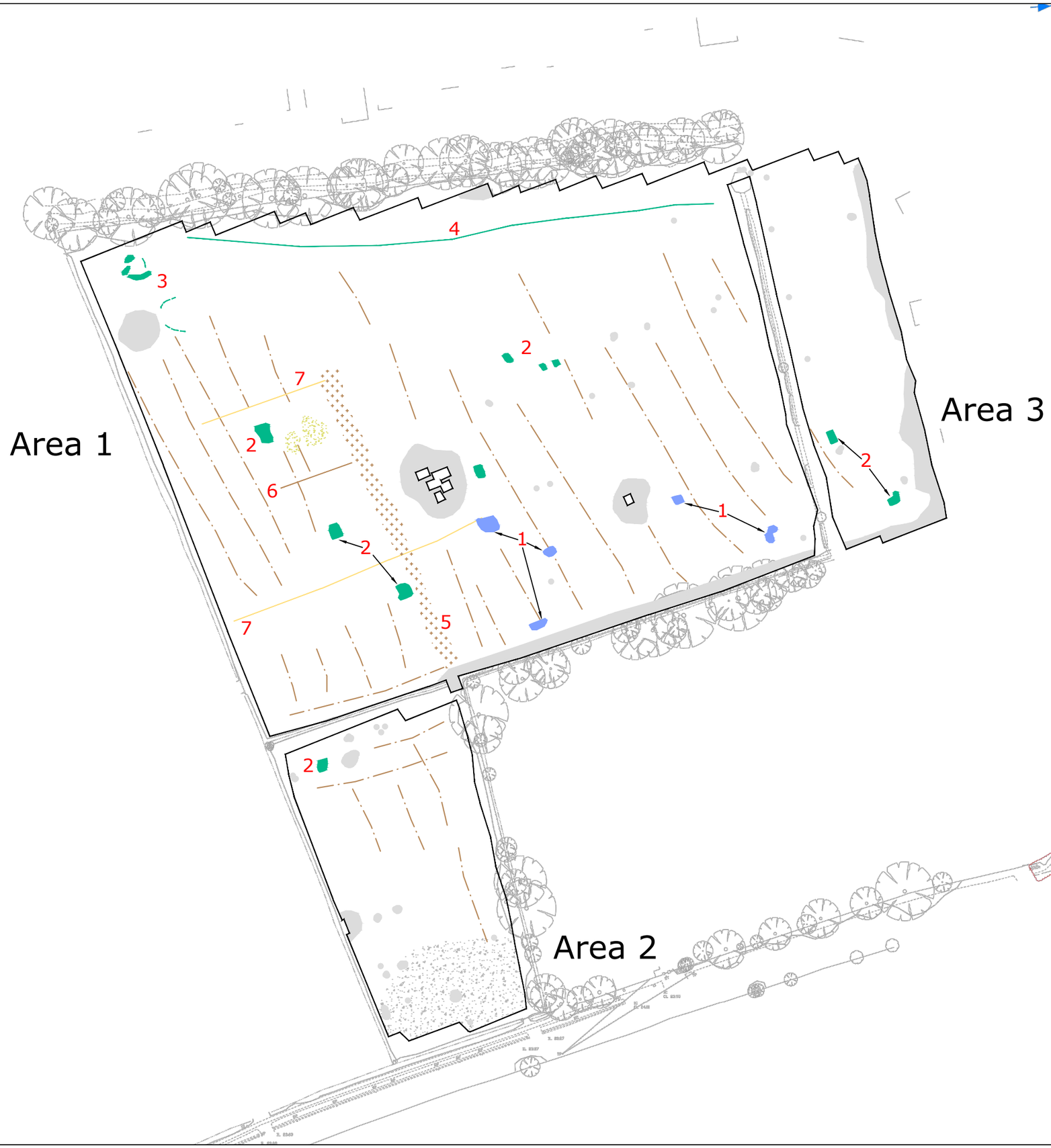
Title:
Magnetometer Survey - Greyscale Plots

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No:
03



N

KEY

	Possible archaeology (discrete anomaly)
	Uncertain Origin (discrete anomaly / trend)
	Former allotment boundary / track (corroborated)
	Former allotment boundary (conjectural)
	Agriculture (ridge and furrow)
	Natural (e.g. geological / pedological)
	Magnetic disturbance
	Ferrous

sumo Survey
GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

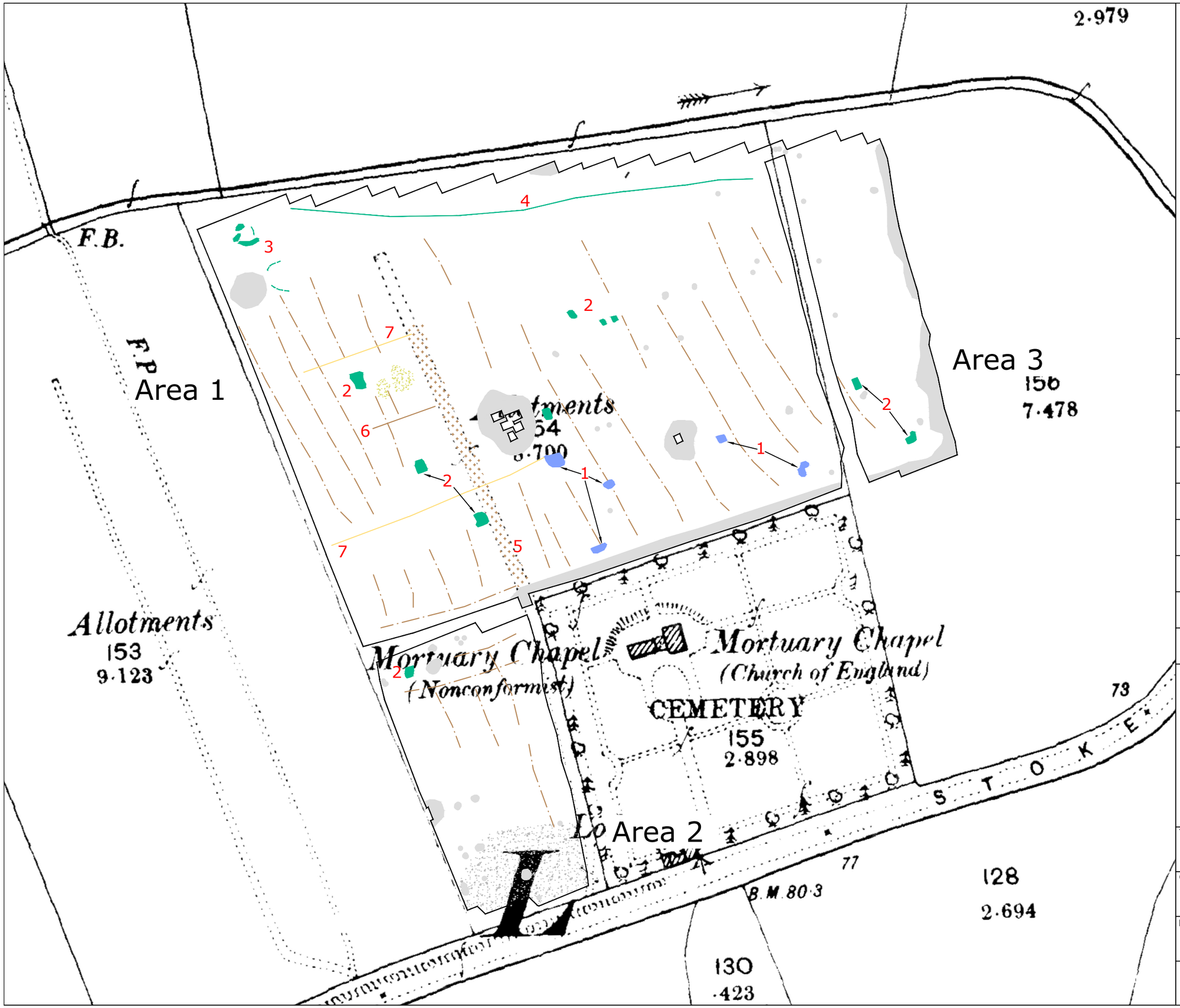
Title:
Magnetometer Survey - Interpretation

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No:
04



N

KEY

	Possible archaeology (discrete anomaly)
	Uncertain Origin (discrete anomaly / trend)
	Former allotment boundary / track (corroborated)
	Former allotment boundary (conjectural)
	Agriculture (ridge and furrow)
	Natural (e.g. geological / pedological)
	Magnetic disturbance
	Ferrous

sumo Survey
GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Title: Magnetometer Survey - Interpretation overlain on 1901 OS Map

Client: CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project: 12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale: 0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No: 05

N

30 nT

sumo Survey
GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

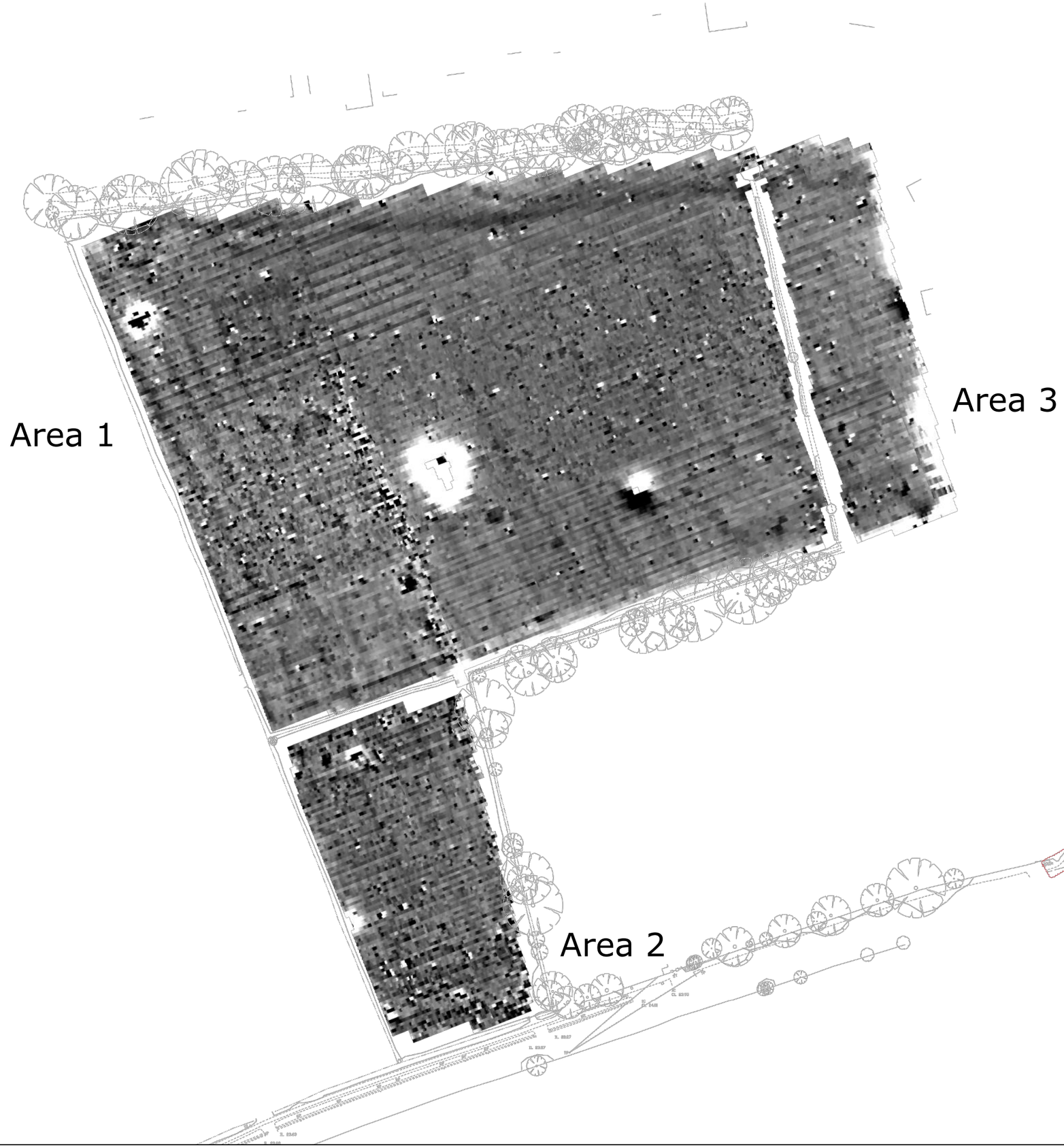
Title:
Magnetometer Survey - XY Traceplot
(clipped at +15/-15nT)

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No:
06



N

+5nT

-5nT

sumo Survey

GEOPHYSICS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY & ENGINEERING

Title:
Minimally Processed Data - Greyscale Plots

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
12990 - Oundle, Northamptonshire

Scale:
0 metres 62.5
1:1250 @ A3

Fig No:
07

Appendix A - Technical Information: Magnetometer Survey Method

Grid Positioning
For hand held gradiometers the location of the survey grids has been plotted together with the referencing information. Grids were set out using a Trimble R8 Real Time Kinematic (RTK) VRS Now GNSS GPS system.

An RTK GPS (Real-time Kinematic Global Positioning System) can locate a point on the ground to a far greater accuracy than a standard GPS unit. A standard GPS suffers from errors created by satellite orbit errors, clock errors and atmospheric interference, resulting in an accuracy of 5m-10m. An RTK system uses a single base station receiver and a number of mobile units. The base station re-broadcasts the phase of the carrier it measured, and the mobile units compare their own phase measurements with those they received from the base station. This results in an accuracy of around 0.01m.

Technique	Instrument	Traverse Interval	Sample Interval
Magnetometer	Bartington Grad 601-2	1m	0.25m

Instrumentation: Bartington *Grad* 601-2
Bartington instruments operate in a gradiometer configuration which comprises fluxgate sensors mounted vertically, set 1.0m apart. The fluxgate gradiometer suppresses any diurnal or regional effects. The instruments are carried, or cart mounted, with the bottom sensor approximately 0.1-0.3m from the ground surface. At each survey station, the difference in the magnetic field between the two fluxgates is measured in nanoTesla (nT). The sensitivity of the instrument can be adjusted; for most archaeological surveys the most sensitive range (0.1nT) is used. Generally, features up to 1m deep may be detected by this method, though strongly magnetic objects may be visible at greater depths. The Bartington instrument can collect two lines of data per traverse with gradiometer units mounted laterally with a separation of 1.0m. The readings are logged consecutively into the data logger which in turn is daily down-loaded into a portable computer whilst on site. At the end of each site survey, data is transferred to the office for processing and presentation.

Data Processing

Zero Mean Traverse	This process sets the background mean of each traverse within each grid to zero. The operation removes striping effects and edge discontinuities over the whole of the data set.
Step Correction (De-stagger)	When gradiometer data are collected in 'zig-zag' fashion, stepping errors can sometimes arise. These occur because of a slight difference in the speed of walking on the forward and reverse traverses. The result is a staggered effect in the data, which is particularly noticeable on linear anomalies. This process corrects these errors.

Display

Greyscale/ Colourscale Plot	This format divides a given range of readings into a set number of classes. Each class is represented by a specific shade of grey, the intensity increasing with value. All values above the given range are allocated the same shade (maximum intensity); similarly, all values below the given range are represented by the minimum intensity shade. Similar plots can be produced in colour, either using a wide range of colours or by selecting two or three colours to represent positive and negative values. The assigned range (plotting levels) can be adjusted to emphasise different anomalies in the data-set.

Interpretation Categories

In certain circumstances (usually when there is corroborative evidence from desk-based or excavation data) very specific interpretations can be assigned to magnetic anomalies (for example, *Roman Road, Wall,* etc.) and where appropriate, such interpretations will be applied. The list below outlines the generic categories commonly used in the interpretation of the results.

Archaeology / Probable Archaeology	This term is used when the form, nature and pattern of the responses are clearly or very probably archaeological and /or if corroborative evidence is available. These anomalies, whilst considered anthropogenic, could be of any age.
Possible Archaeology	These anomalies exhibit either weak signal strength and / or poor definition, or form incomplete archaeological patterns, thereby reducing the level of confidence in the interpretation. Although the archaeological interpretation is favoured, they may be the result of variable soil depth, plough damage or even aliasing as a result of data collection orientation.
Industrial / Burnt-Fired	Strong magnetic anomalies that, due to their shape and form or the context in which they are found, suggest the presence of kilns, ovens, corn dryers, metal-working areas or hearths. It should be noted that in many instances modern ferrous material can produce similar magnetic anomalies.
Former Field Boundary (probable & possible)	Anomalies that correspond to former boundaries indicated on historic mapping, or which are clearly a continuation of existing land divisions. Possible denotes less confidence where the anomaly may not be shown on historic mapping but nevertheless the anomaly displays all the characteristics of a field boundary.
Ridge & Furrow	Parallel linear anomalies whose broad spacing suggests ridge and furrow cultivation. In some cases, the response may be the result of more recent agricultural activity.
Agriculture (ploughing)	Parallel linear anomalies or trends with a narrower spacing, sometimes aligned with existing boundaries, indicating more recent cultivation regimes.
Land Drain	Weakly magnetic linear anomalies, quite often appearing in series forming parallel and herringbone patterns. Smaller drains may lead and empty into larger diameter pipes, which in turn usually lead to local streams and ponds. These are indicative of clay fired land drains.
Natural	These responses form clear patterns in geographical zones where natural variations are known to produce significant magnetic distortions.
Magnetic Disturbance	Broad zones of strong dipolar anomalies, commonly found in places where modern ferrous or fired materials (e.g. brick rubble) are present. They are presumed to be modern.
Service	Magnetically strong anomalies, usually forming linear features are indicative of ferrous pipes/cables. Sometimes other materials (e.g. pvc) or the fill of the trench can cause weaker magnetic responses which can be identified from their uniform linearity.
Ferrous	This type of response is associated with ferrous material and may result from small items in the topsoil, larger buried objects such as pipes, or above ground features such as fence lines or pylons. Ferrous responses are usually regarded as modern. Individual burnt stones, fired bricks or igneous rocks can produce responses similar to ferrous material.
Uncertain Origin	Anomalies which stand out from the background magnetic variation, yet whose form and lack of patterning gives little clue as to their origin. Often the characteristics and distribution of the responses straddle the categories of *Possible Archaeology* / *Natural* or (in the case of linear responses) *Possible Archaeology* / *Agriculture*; occasionally they are simply of an unusual form.

Where appropriate some anomalies will be further classified according to their form (positive or negative) and relative strength and coherence (trend: weak and poorly defined).

Appendix B - Technical Information: Magnetic Theory

Detailed magnetic survey can be used to effectively define areas of past human activity by mapping spatial variation and contrast in the magnetic properties of soil, subsoil and bedrock. Although the changes in the magnetic field resulting from differing features in the soil are usually weak, changes as small as 0.1 nanoTeslas (nT) in an overall field strength of 48,000 (nT), can be accurately detected.

Weakly magnetic iron minerals are always present within the soil and areas of enhancement relate to increases in *magnetic susceptibility* and permanently magnetised *thermoremanent* material.

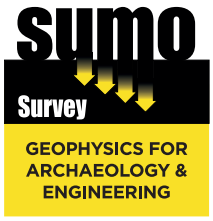
Magnetic susceptibility relates to the induced magnetism of a material when in the presence of a magnetic field. This magnetism can be considered as effectively permanent as it exists within the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic susceptibility can become enhanced due to burning and complex biological or fermentation processes.

Thermoremanence is a permanent magnetism acquired by iron minerals that, after heating to a specific temperature known as the Curie Point, are effectively demagnetised followed by re-magnetisation by the Earth's magnetic field on cooling. Thermoremanent archaeological features can include hearths and kilns; material such as brick and tile may be magnetised through the same process.

Silting and deliberate infilling of ditches and pits with magnetically enhanced soil creates a relative contrast against the much lower levels of magnetism within the subsoil into which the feature is cut. Systematic mapping of magnetic anomalies will produce linear and discrete areas of enhancement allowing assessment and characterisation of subsurface features. Material such as subsoil and non-magnetic bedrock used to create former earthworks and walls may be mapped as areas of lower enhancement compared to surrounding soils.

Magnetic survey is carried out using a fluxgate gradiometer which is a passive instrument consisting of two sensors mounted vertically 1m apart. The instrument is carried about 30cm above the ground surface and the top sensor measures the Earth's magnetic field whilst the lower sensor measures the same field but is also more affected by any localised buried feature. The difference between the two sensors will relate to the strength of a magnetic field created by this feature, if no field is present the difference will be close to zero as the magnetic field measured by both sensors will be the same.

Factors affecting the magnetic survey may include soil type, local geology, previous human activity and disturbance from modern services.



- Archaeological
- Geophysical
- Laser Scanning
- Measured Building
- Topographic
- Utility Mapping

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