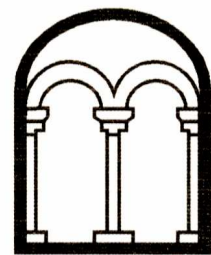


**PROPOSED NEWT PONDS AT  
CHAMBERLAINS BARN  
EASTERN LEIGHTON LINSLADE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**Albion**  
archaeology



**PROPOSED NEWT PONDS AT  
CHAMBERLAINS BARN  
EASTERN LEIGHTON LINSLADE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

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Christiane Meckseper	Drew Shotliff

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## Preface

*All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.*

*This document was researched and written by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer) and approved by Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager). The figures were prepared by Christiane Meckseper. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

*Albion Archaeology is grateful to Dave Watson of Sibelco Ltd. for commissioning the statement.*

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## Version History

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<i>1.0</i>	<i>30/04/2012</i>	<i>n/a</i>

## Key Terms

Throughout this report the following abbreviations are used:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
Client	Sibelco Ltd.
EH	English Heritage
HER	Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record, Central Bedfordshire Council
IFA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OS	Ordnance Survey



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Planning Background*

Sibelco Ltd are gathering information in support of a planning application for the construction of four ecology ponds for great crested newts on land within the Chamberlains Barn development area, Eastern Leighton Linlade. As part of this work, Albion Archaeology has been commissioned to prepare this heritage statement.

The heritage statement is in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which requires any application that affects a heritage asset to be accompanied by a description of the significance of the asset, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the asset, or assets, and their setting.

The heritage statement builds on an earlier desk-based assessment (Albion 2011) which was produced for Hives Planning in support of the planning application for the proposed Chamberlains Barn development.

### 1.2 *Objectives*

This statement collates existing archaeological, historical and topographical information about the historic environment in order to characterise the nature, likely date and significance of known and potential heritage assets within the application site and provides an assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on any potential heritage assets.

It concentrates solely on the area of the proposed newt ponds and does not discuss the wider historic environment in detail. This is provided in the previous desk-based assessment (Albion 2011).

### 1.3 *Site Location and Description*

The application site is located to the north-east of Leighton Buzzard between Heath Road and Vandyke Road and to the south of Shenley Hill Road. It is centred on NGR SP 9341 2703.

The 2011 desk-based assessment subdivided the Chamberlains Barn application site into separate fields to facilitate discussion of their nature and heritage assets (Albion 2011, fig. 15). This numbering has been retained for the current assessment. The southernmost newt pond is located in land parcel 47b and the three ponds to its north in land parcel 53 along its boundary with land parcel 54 (Figures 1 and 2).

Land parcel 47b consists of a clearing in an area of surrounding woodland (land parcel 47). Its boundaries with adjacent land parcel 53 and 59 consist of mature hedges. Land parcels 53 and 54 are open fields currently put down to pasture. The application site occupies an area of high ground overlooking Leighton Buzzard to the south. This land forms part of the Greensand Ridge that runs broadly NE-SW across Bedfordshire, creating a distinctive band of high ground which contrasts to the flatter lands to its north and south. The underlying solid geology consists of Gault Formation mudstone; no drift geology is recorded.



The newt ponds lie near the south-eastern base of Shenley Hill, which at 126m OD is the highest point on the site. From here the land falls further very gently towards Vandyke Road in the east. The newt ponds are situated on fairly level ground at 109.90–111.05m OD.



## 2. HERITAGE ASSET AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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### 2.1 Introduction

This heritage statement builds on an earlier desk-based assessment (Albion 2011) which was produced for Hives Planning in connection with the proposed Chamberlains Barn development. This superseded an earlier desk-based assessment (Albion Archaeology 2008a) and Historic Environment Management Plan (Albion Archaeology 2008b), which had been prepared for the envisaged Eastern Leighton Linslade Urban Expansion area.

Other investigations of relevance for the current assessment area a geophysical survey undertaken in 2008 across the lands of the Eastern Leighton Linslade Urban Expansion area (Stratascan 2008), and the trial trench evaluation of adjacent land parcels 54 and 55, carried out in March 2012 as part of the heritage assessment for the Chamberlains Barn proposed development area (Albion 2012). Both are shown on Figure 3.

### 2.2 Heritage Assets

The Central Bedfordshire Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) lists all heritage assets in the authority's area. For the proposed development area the only known heritage asset is an area of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks (HER 2589) on land parcel 47a. These earthworks are created as a result of the strip field arable system of the medieval period. Sub-surface linear features indicating the presence of ridge and furrow cultivation have also been identified by the geophysical survey over much of the surrounding area (Figure 3).

Ridge and furrow earthworks (also HER 2589) also survive in land parcel 52 to the west. To the south-west of the application site, within land parcel 59, a number of cropmarks are summarised in the HER as "square and circular cropmarks that are probably not archaeological in nature" (HER 14689). The geophysical survey further defined these cropmarks and also mapped a number of additional potential archaeological features in land parcels 53, 54 and 55 which are part of and adjacent to the application site.

An intrusive trial trench evaluation of parts of land parcels 54 and 55 demonstrated that the area was largely devoid of archaeological features, with the exception of a number of post-medieval and modern agricultural marks and boundary ditches. The trial trenches located closest to the proposed newt ponds did not reveal any significant archaeological features (Albion 2012).

A double-ditched ring ditch, situated in land parcel 55, lies *c.* 250m to the east of the proposed newt ponds. This was identified by the geophysical survey and confirmed through trial trenching. However, the trial trenching did not reveal any additional features associated with the ring ditch. The small number of artefact and ecofact material recovered during the evaluation also suggests that the area close to the ring ditch was not intensively occupied (Albion 2012).

An additional heritage asset, that is not listed in the HER but needs to be taken into consideration (DEFRA 2002), is the survival of a pre-1845 hedgerow along the



boundary between land parcels 47a and 53 (Albion 2011, fig. 13 — shown here on Figures 1 and 2).

A site visit was undertaken on 26 April 2012 to assess the quality and survival of the mapped ridge and furrow earthworks (HER 2589) on land parcel 47a. This found that the earthworks generally are of poor to moderate quality. They do not survive as prominent ridge and furrow earthworks but are fairly level with the ground surface and difficult to distinguish on site. Their survival is best in the north-western part of land parcel 47a (Figure 4). In the eastern part, the site of the proposed southernmost newt pond, they are not visible.

An overgrown, sub-circular feature exists in the approximate location of the proposed southernmost pond and is of a similar size (Figure 5). It is filled with soil and dumped rubbish and may represent an infilled earlier pond.

Land parcels 47a and 53 are currently part of an agricultural setting with a mixture of open fields of pasture, woodland and mature hedgerows (Figure 6).

### 2.3 **Impact Assessment**

The proposed development consists of the excavation of four newt ponds. The southernmost newt pond is located in land parcel 47b and the three ponds to its north in land parcel 53 along its boundary with land parcel 54. The ponds range from c. 15m x 12m to 28m x 16m in size and will be up to 1m deep. A low and wide bank will be created at the eastern side of each pond to make up for the change in slope towards Vandyke Road. A swale drain connects each pond and discharges into an existing drainage ditch in the north (Figure 2).

Ridge and furrow earthworks are a heritage asset of local significance. The research framework for Bedfordshire, *Bedfordshire Archaeology. Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* (Oake et al 2007), states that field systems have been identified as an important area of study, particularly with reference to Bedfordshire's unique location with connections to both the field systems of the midlands and the eastern region. The framework also states that few ridge and furrow earthworks survive within the region (Oake 2007, 14).

However, the quality of the ridge and furrow earthworks in land parcel 47b has been assessed as low to moderate and none survive in the area of the proposed southernmost pond. The area of better preserved earthworks in the north-western part of land parcel 47b will not be affected by the current proposals. According to current development plans the pre-1845 hedgerow will remain *in situ* with the narrow swale drain cutting across it. The impact upon the hedgerow is most likely to be low to negligible.

The trial trench evaluation of the adjacent land parcel 54 has indicated that there is a very low potential for surviving below-ground heritage assets (Albion 2012).

The overall impact of the proposed newt ponds on any known and potential heritage assets is therefore assessed as low to negligible.





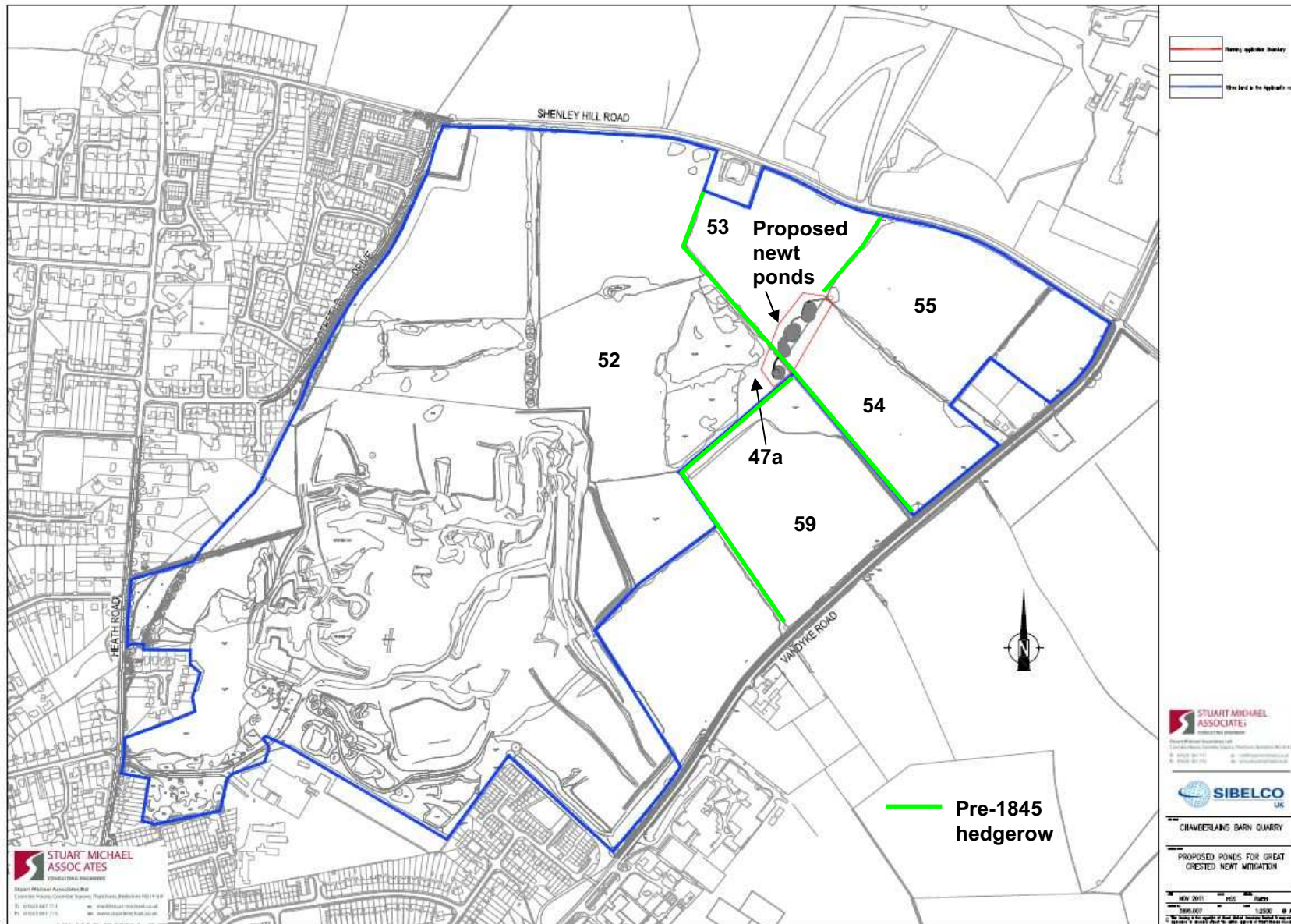
The proposed newt ponds will be largely below current ground level with the proposed banks around the ponds not protruding higher than 0.10–0.20m above ground. The impact of the ponds on the setting of any known heritage assets, in particular the surviving ridge and furrow earthworks in the north-western part of land parcel 47a, is considered to be low.



### 3. BIBLIOGRAPHY

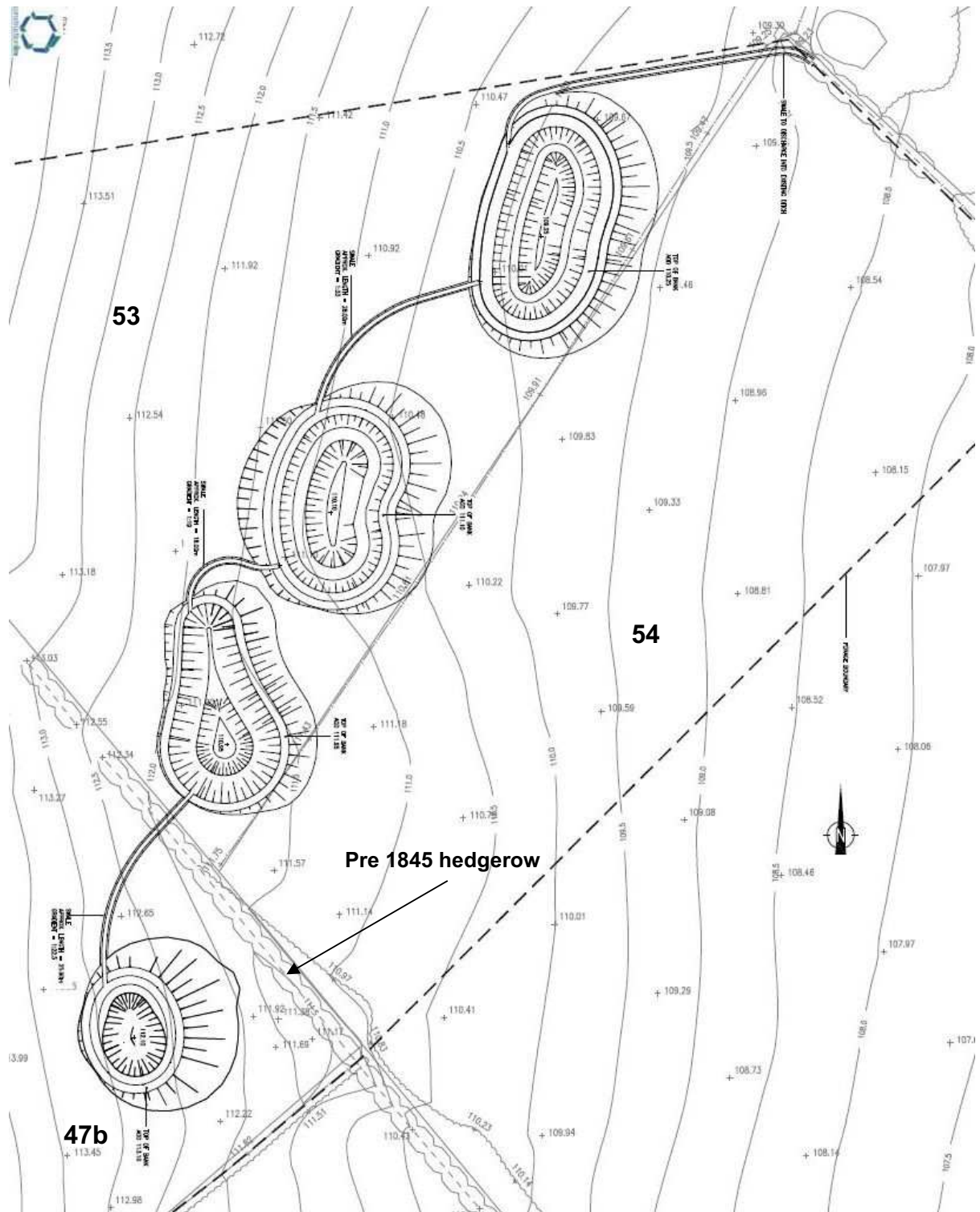
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**Figure 1:** Site location, showing land parcel numbers mentioned in text (Drawing provided by Sibelco UK)

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**Figure 2:** Location and construction of proposed newt ponds in detail  
(Drawing provided by Sibelco UK)

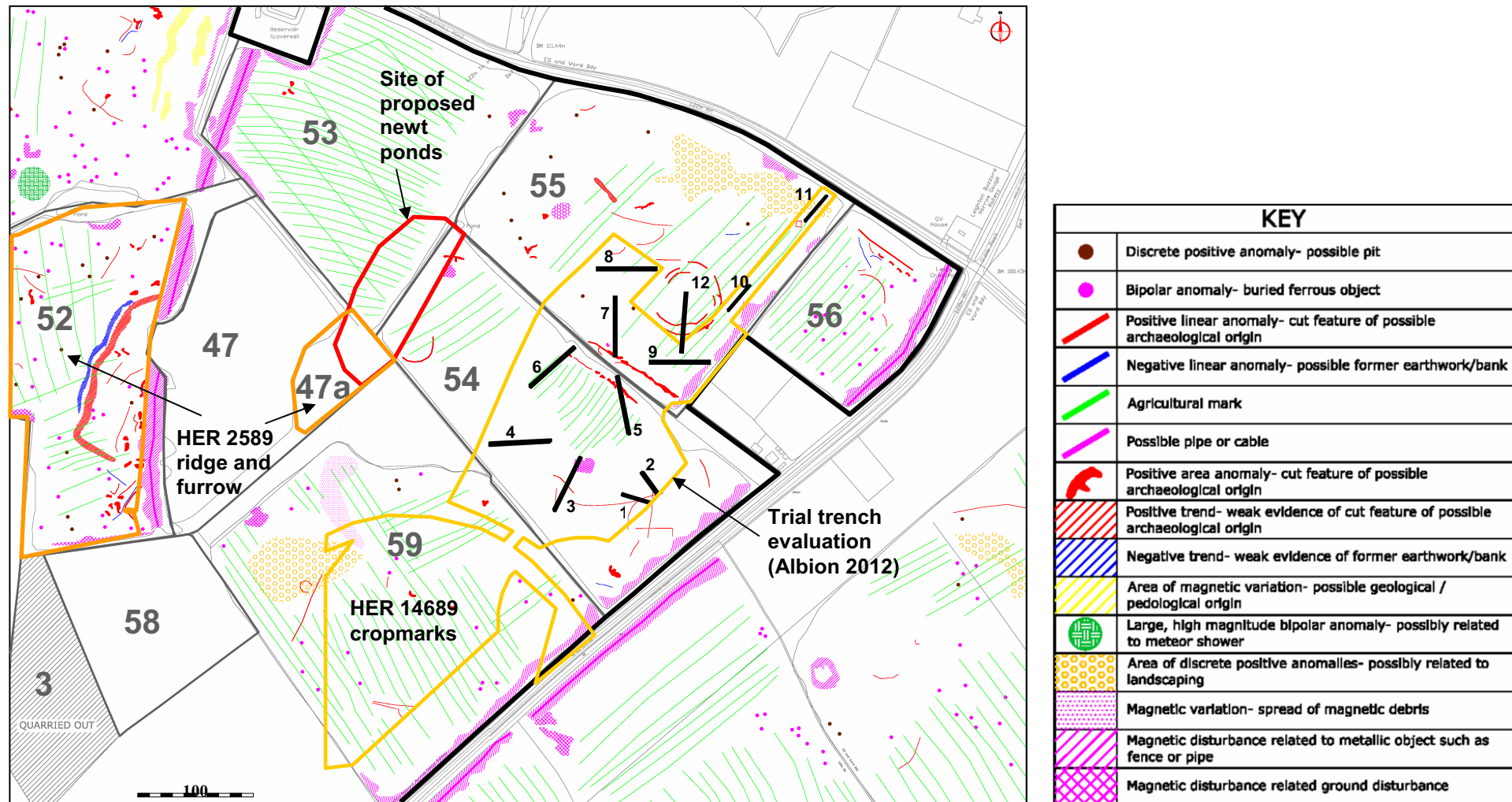


Figure 3: Geophysical survey land parcels 53-56, and 59 (Stratascan 2008), trial trench evaluation (Albion 2012) and HER numbers mentioned in text



**Figure 4:** Land parcel 47a looking north-west, ridge and furrow earthworks



**Figure 5:** Land parcel 47a looking north, infilled pond (?) feature and uneven ground in eastern part of land parcel



**Figure 6:** Setting of proposed ponds: land parcel 53, looking south towards land parcel 47a



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