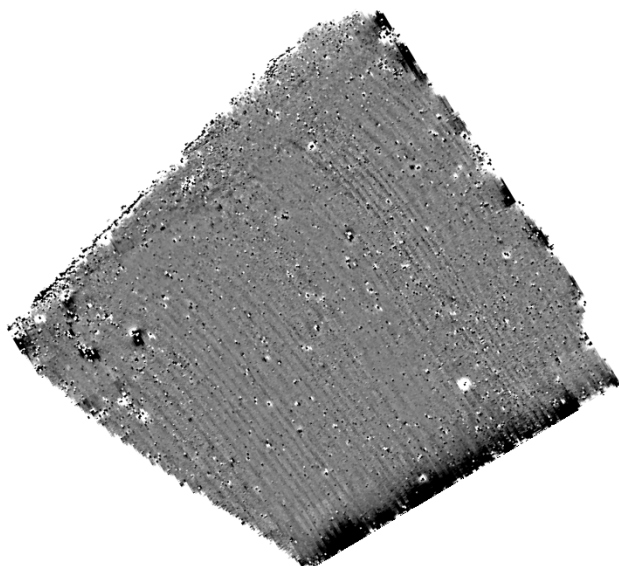




Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological geophysical survey on land at
Harborough Road, Desborough
Northamptonshire



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council

Charlotte Walker

Report 10/78

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STAFF

Project Manager Adrian Butler BSc MA AlfA
Fieldwork John Walford MSc, Karl Hanson BA,
 Heather Smith BSc MA
Text and illustrations Charlotte Walker BSc AlfA
 Adrian Butler

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signature	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman	<i>PC</i>	12/05/10
Verified by	Adrian Butler	<i>AB</i>	12/05/10
Approved by	Bill Boismier	<i>WAB</i>	12/05/10

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological Geophysical Survey on land off Harborough Road, Desborough	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Connolly Homes to conduct archaeological geophysical survey on land at Harborough Road, Desborough, Northamptonshire. Magnetometry of a 6.4ha area revealed remnant furrows of the medieval open field system of agriculture.	
Project type	Geophysical survey	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (NA 2009)	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Medieval Ridge-and-Furrow	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Harborough Road, Desborough	
Study area	6.4ha	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 797840	
Height OD	c 135-141m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	John Walford	
Project Manager	Adrian Butler	
Sponsor or funding body	Connolly Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	7 April 2010	
End date	8 April 2010	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	N/A	
Paper	NA	Site survey records
Digital	NA	Geophysical survey & GIS data
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	
Title	Archaeological Geophysical Survey on land at Harborough Road, Desborough, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Reports 10/78	
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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	2
4	METHODOLOGY	2
5	SURVEY RESULTS	3
6	CONCLUSION	4
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	4

Figures

- Cover Harborough Road Gradiometer Survey in Monochrome
Fig 1 Site Location, 1:20,000
Fig 2 Magnetometer Survey Results, 1:2500
Fig 3 Magnetometer Survey Interpretation, 1:2500

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ON LAND AT
HARBOROUGH ROAD, DESBOROUGH
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
MAY 2010**

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Connolly Homes to conduct archaeological geophysical survey on land at Harborough Road, Desborough, Northamptonshire. Magnetometry of a 6.4ha area revealed remnant furrows of the medieval open field system of agriculture.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Connolly Homes to carry out an archaeological geophysical survey on land adjacent to the B576 Harborough Road, Desborough, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 797 840, Fig 1). The County Archaeological Advisor has identified the area as being potentially archaeologically sensitive and consequently a staged programme of archaeological fieldwork has been requested (NCC 2009). The geophysical survey was therefore undertaken as the first stage of this programme in order to provide information regarding the archaeological potential of the area prior to determination of the planning application (KET/2009/0785).

The objectives of the geophysical survey were to identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed 6.4 hectare development area. The fieldwork consisted of an area magnetic gradiometer survey in a single field of 6.4ha (Fig 2).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site is located on the north-west edge of Desborough, north of the River Ise which forms the southern boundary of the parish. The study area itself is bounded to the north-east by the present Harborough Road onto which it fronts directly, whilst to the south-west it is bounded by the Midland Railway and housing. The site is in agricultural use and is currently under pasture.

The site lies at a height of 147.7m aOD on ground sloping down to the south-west. The underlying geology comprises Northampton Sand and Upper Lias Clay.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies on the north-western edge of the Desborough conurbation. A number of prehistoric finds have been made in the vicinity of the site. These include Bronze Age burials and Iron Age and Romano-British settlement (Leigh 2008). The most notable finds are the Desborough Mirror, which is of Iron Age date and is decorated in the *La Tene III* style, a style of Celtic Art first identified at a site on the northern side of Lake

Neuchâtel in Switzerland and dates from the 5th to the 1st centuries BC, and a gold necklace of Anglo-Saxon date which was discovered in a grave off Paddock Lane. Both of these artefacts are now on display in the British Museum. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery is thought to have been located somewhere in the vicinity of the site, but its exact whereabouts is unknown.

Desborough is first mentioned in the *Domesday Book* of 1086 where it is referred to as *Dereburg* meaning place of judgement. In the post-medieval period, after 1750AD, Desborough developed a thriving textile trade with a particular emphasis on weaving. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries Desborough has been subject to extensive quarrying, all of which has been to the south and east of the study area.

4 METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted with Bartington Grad 601-2, twin sensor array, vertical component fluxgate gradiometers (Bartington and Chapman 2003). These are standard instruments for archaeological survey and can resolve magnetic variations as slight as 0.1 nanotesla (nT).

The area was divided into a network of contiguous, whole and partial, 30m x 30m grid squares. These were set out manually by tape measure and optical square. The instruments were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid, collecting data along 1m spaced traverse lines. Measurements were automatically triggered every 0.25m along the traverses, giving a total of 3600 measurements per grid.

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute for Archaeology (EH 2008; Gaffney, Gater and Ovendon 2002).

The data was processed using Geoplot 3.00u software. Striping, occasionally caused by slight mismatches in sensor balance, was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function (ZMT) and destaggering of the data was performed as necessary. The processed data is presented in this report in the form of a greyscale plot (scale +4nT to -4nT black ~ white). This has been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). An interpretative plot has been produced and is shown overlain onto the data in Figure 3.

5 SURVEY RESULTS

The major detected magnetic anomalies were alternate linear positive and negative bands representing remnant furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. They were aligned north-west to south-east, curving more to the west at the north of the field, resulting in an elongated reverse 'S' shape, which is thought to be the result of drawing out to the left when performing a turning circle to the right.

Dipolar (paired positive and negative) anomalies scattered throughout the field are likely to be ferrous debris in the topsoil.

6 CONCLUSION

The magnetometer survey at land at Harborough Road, Desborough has produced evidence of medieval ridge-and-furrow field cultivation. This confirms that it has been in

agricultural use since at least the medieval period and was part of Desborough's open field system. This was in use until at least the late 18th century (RCHME 1979).

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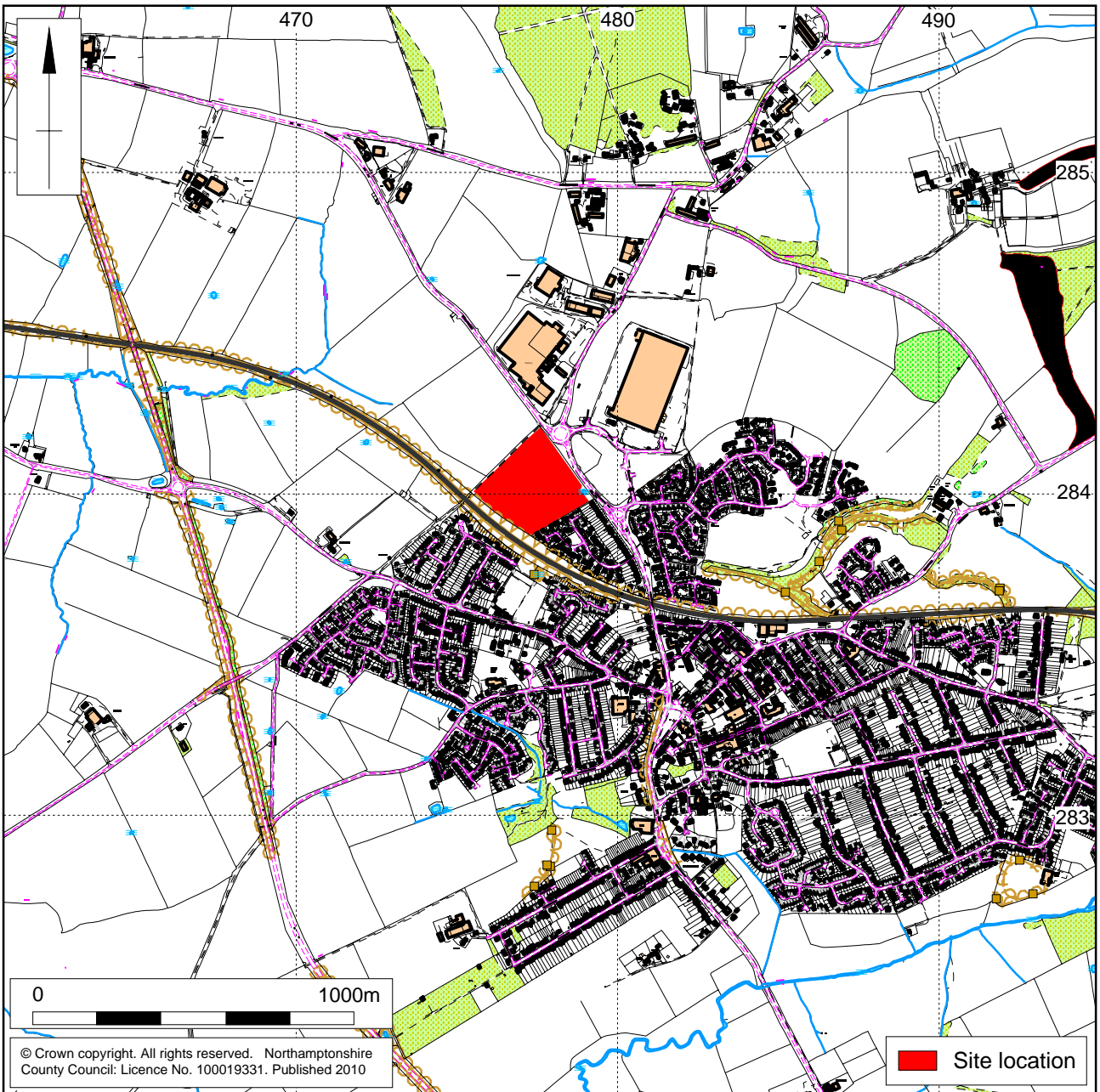
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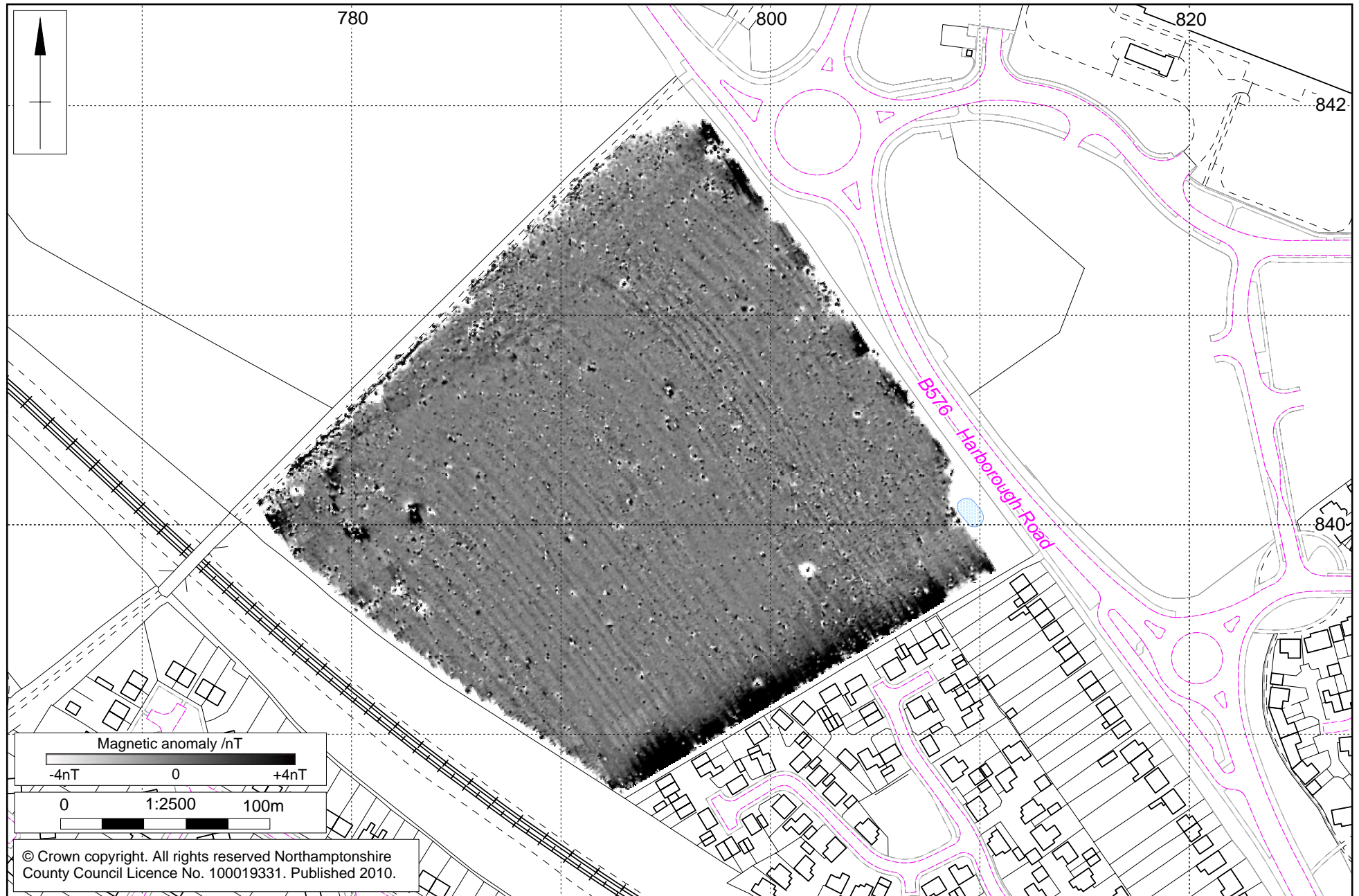
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<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex> Accessed 11/12/2010



Scale 1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:2500

Magnetometer Survey Results Fig 2



Scale 1:2500

Magnetometer Survey Interpretation Fig 3



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