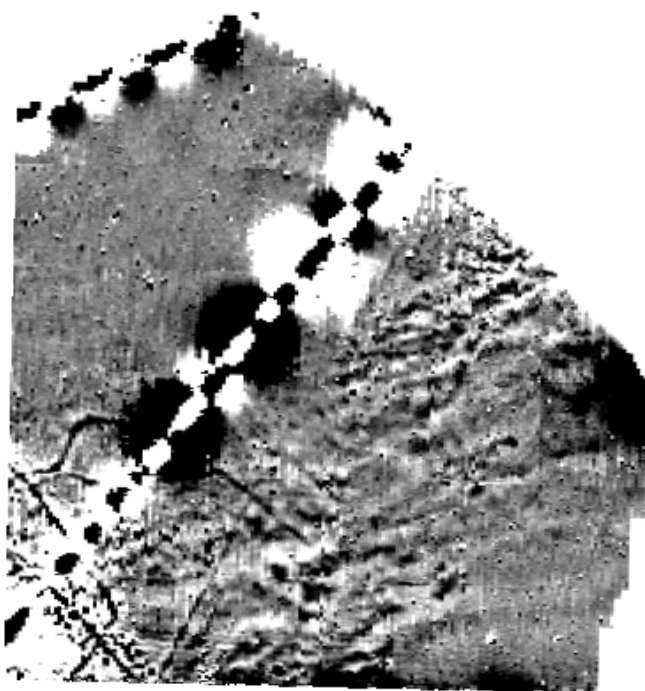




Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Geophysical Survey on land at Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire



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Report 10/144

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QUALITY CONTROL

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Approved by	<i>Andy Chapman</i>	<i>AC</i>	6/09/2010

HIGHAM FERRERS, STATION ROAD

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological Geophysical Survey on land at Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a magnetometer survey on 3.1ha of land adjacent to Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. The survey detected a set of ditched enclosures of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date in the south-western corner of the site. These features are disturbed by a gas pipe which bisects the survey area	
Project type	Geophysical survey	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Chance discovery (1967), Fieldwalking (NAU 1991)	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work	Trial trenching	
Monument type/ period	Iron Age or Romano-British enclosures	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Station Road, Higham Ferrers	
Study area	3.1ha	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 960 697	
Height OD	45m – 55m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher	
Project Manager	Adrian Butler	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	2 September 2010	
End date	7 September 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	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	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 Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Reports 10/144	
Author(s)	Ian Fisher and John Walford	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ON LAND AT
STATION ROAD, HIGHAM FERRERS, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2010**

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a magnetometer survey on 3.1ha of land adjacent to Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire. The survey detected a set of ditched enclosures of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date occupying the south-western corner of the site. These features are partially disturbed by a gas pipe which bisects the survey area.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of the Duchy of Lancaster, to carry out an archaeological geophysical survey on 3.1ha of land adjacent to Station Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 960 697; Fig 1). The fieldwork comprised a detailed magnetometer survey of the site.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The survey investigated a 3.1ha arable field of roughly triangular form lying on the northern side of Higham Ferrers. This field is bounded to the north-east by the A6 bypass, to the west by the A5028 Station Road and to the south by a recent housing development.

The field lies on the southern flank of the valley of the River Nene, and slopes down from a maximum elevation of c 55m along its southern edge to a minimum of c 45m AOD in the north. Upper Lias deposits underlie the northern part of the field, a band of Northamptonshire Sand and Ironstone occurs across its centre and Upper Estuarine and Great Oolite Limestones are present in its south-eastern corner.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Much archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken at the northern end of Higham Ferrers over the last two decades, in response to extensive housing development. This research has revealed a wealth of settlement remains of Iron Age and Roman date (Lawrence and Smith 2009) and an early to middle Saxon estate centre of national importance (Hardy *et al* 2007). Excavations have also been undertaken to the south of Wharfe Road (Morris 2003) and on the route of the A6 bypass (Mudd 2004), in each case revealing agricultural and settlement remains of Iron Age to Romano-British date. Slightly further afield, there are Roman villas known at Redlands Farm (Keevill 1990) and Stanwick (Neal 1989) (Fig 1).

The survey area itself is known to contain Iron Age and Romano-British features which were observed during the laying of a gas pipe in 1967 (NAU 1991). Fieldwalking on the same area in 1989-90 found 17 Romano-British pot sherds and rather more substantial background scatters of prehistoric flint and medieval pottery (NAU 1991).

Immediately to the west of the survey area, on the opposite side of Station Road, a complex of ditched enclosures were identified from cropmarks. Subsequent excavation has shown them to be of Iron Age date (NAU 1991; Hardy *et al* 2007, fig 2.1).

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 survey area was divided into a grid of 30m x 30m squares which were established by means of a tape measure and optical square. The locations of key points within this grid were subsequently recorded with a Leica System 1200 dGPS.

The gradiometers were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid square, 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 methods complied with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute for Archaeologists (EH 2008; Gaffney, Gater and Ovendon 2002).

The survey data was processed using Geoplot 3.00u software. Striping, caused by slight mismatches in sensor balance, was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function and destaggering of the data was performed as necessary.

The processed data is presented in this report in the form of greyscale plots (+/- 4nT black/white). These have been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). Interpretative overlays have been produced and are shown in Figure 3.

5 SURVEY RESULTS

The magnetometer survey detected various linear and curvilinear anomalies which appear to define a complex of intercutting ditched enclosures in the south-western corner of the field. These enclosures are of broadly rectilinear form and aligned on an approximately north-east to south west axis. They are likely to be of Iron Age or Romano-British date.

Several small but strongly magnetic anomalies (20-50nT) occur in the vicinity of the enclosures. These anomalies do not appear to be of ferrous origin, and are more likely to indicate features such as hearths, ovens or kilns.

To the east of the enclosure complex a band of magnetically disturbed data extends northwards. This broadly coincides with the mapped extent of the Northamptonshire Ironstone outcrop, and probably arises from structural or mineralogical variations within that deposit. It is possible that a few anomalies within this disturbed area are of archaeological origin, but none are clear or diagnostic enough to be confidently interpreted as such.

Two large pipelines have been detected in the data. One passes north-eastwards across the survey area, cutting through the archaeological remains. The other runs along the north-eastern field boundary. In the eastern corner of the field the data is disturbed by a large magnetic halo arising from the adjacent footbridge across the A6.

6 CONCLUSION

The survey has detected part of a complex of ditched enclosures, perhaps with associated hearths or kilns, located in the south-western corner of the proposed development area. These remains appear to represent an extension of the known site on the far side of Station Road and presumably equate with the Iron Age and Romano-British features observed during the laying of a gas pipe across the area in 1967.

No other archaeological remains were detected by this survey. The reader should bear in mind, however, that certain types of feature (eg inhumations, post-built structures, etc) rarely produce clear magnetic anomalies. Thus the results presented here do not necessarily provide a comprehensive overview of the archaeology of the proposed development area.

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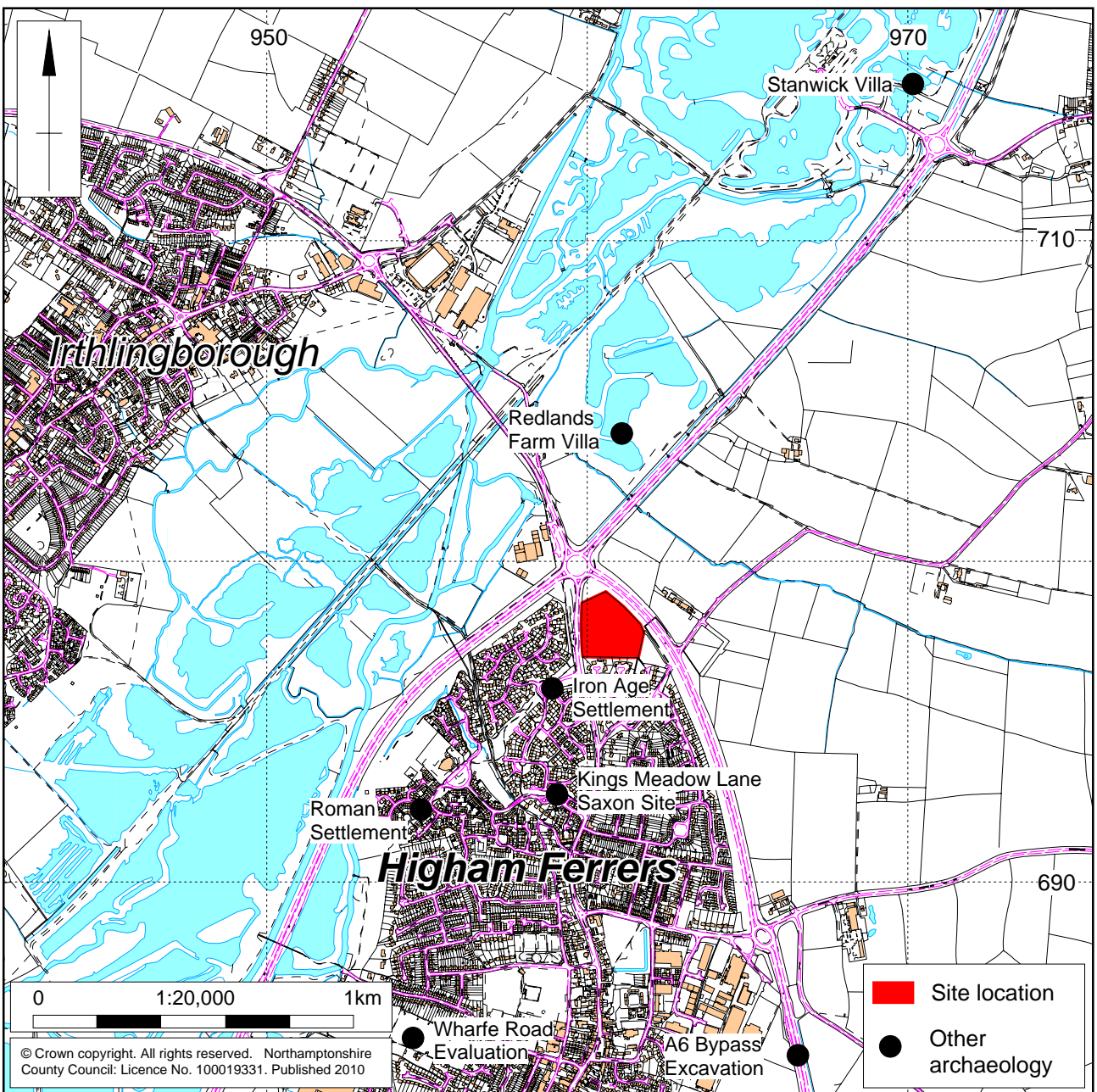
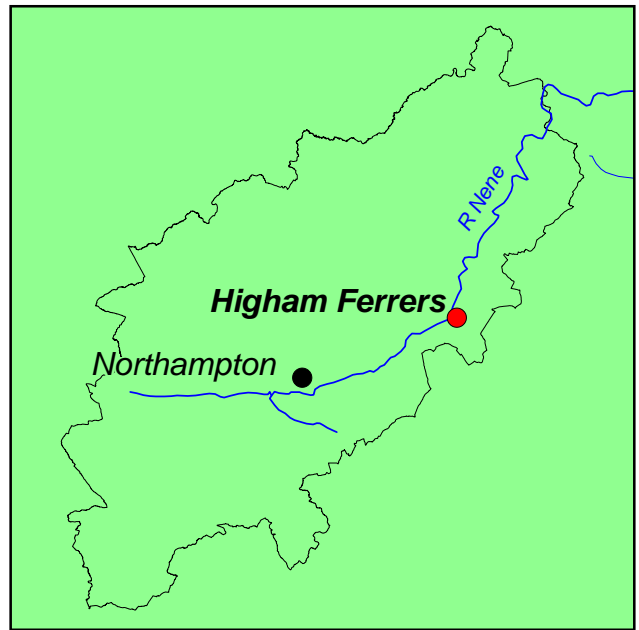
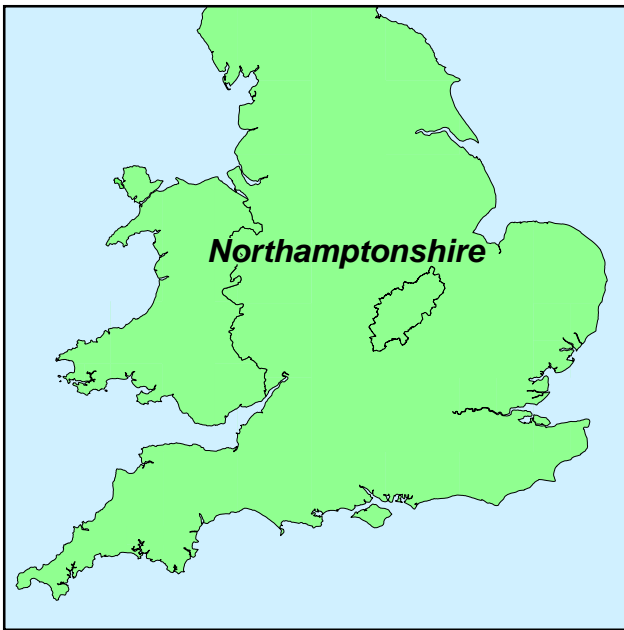
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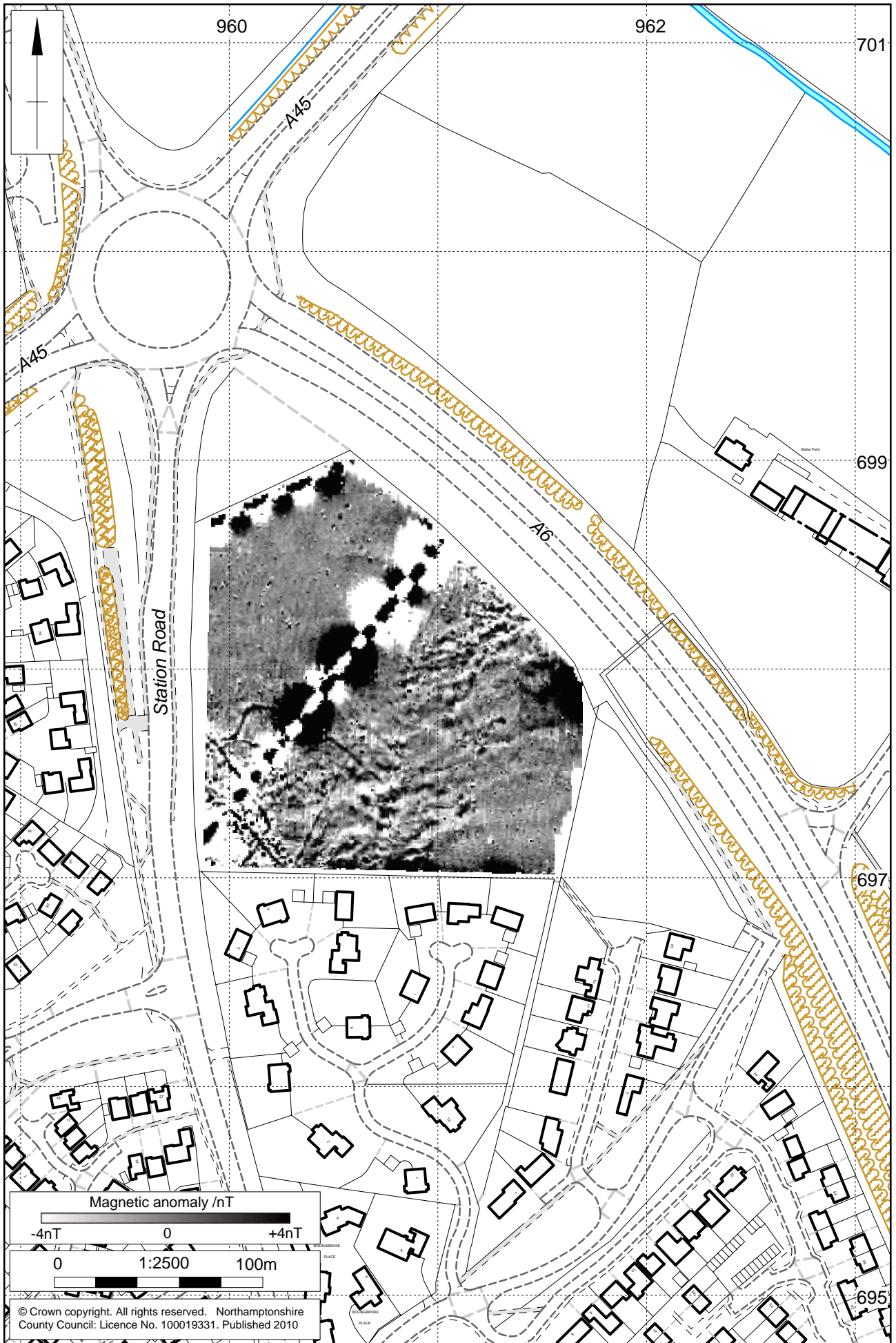
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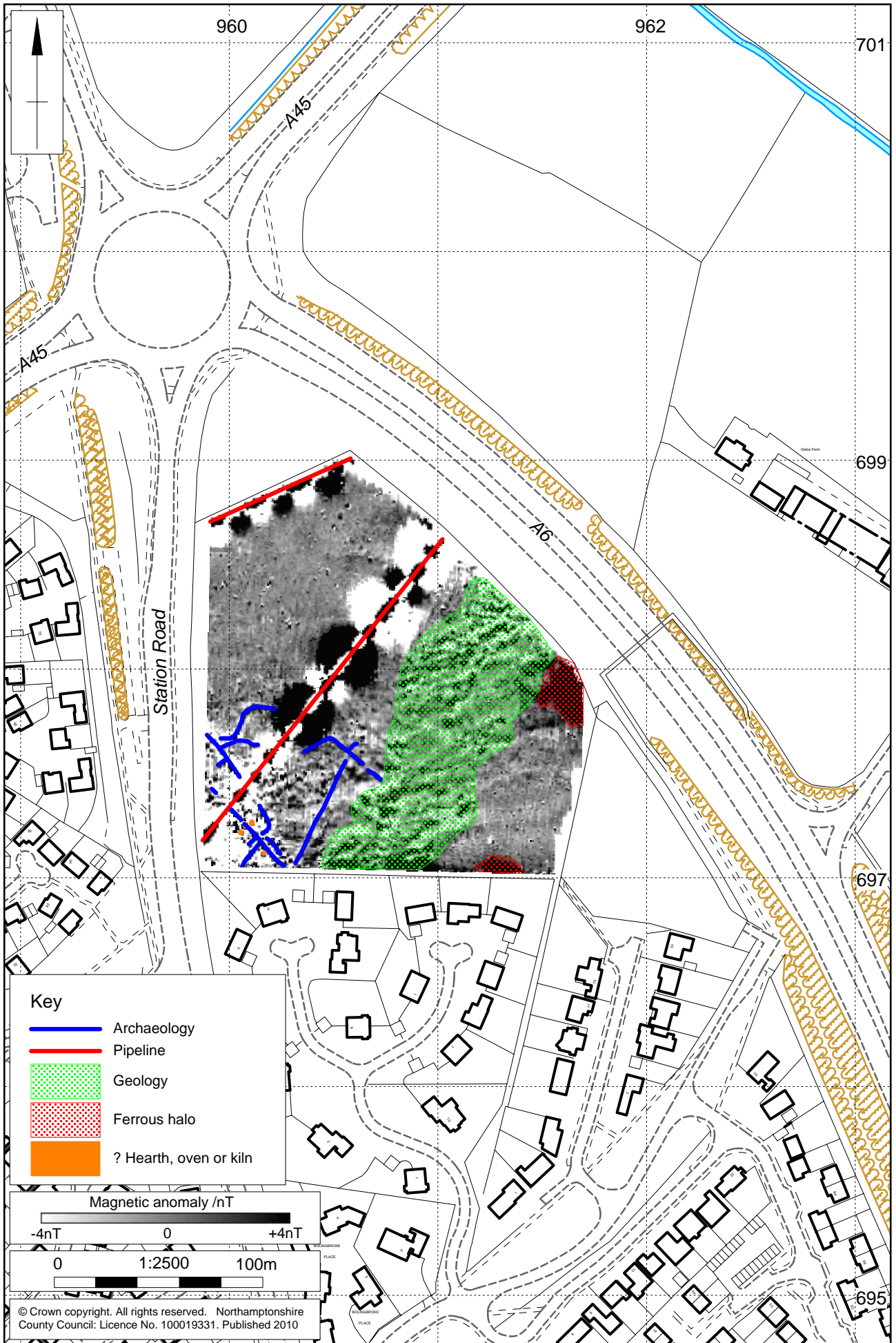
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Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1







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