

LAND at WICKHAM FARM WICKHAMFORD WORCESTERSHIRE

Results of a Geophysical Survey



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Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire

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Results of a Geophysical Survey

For

Ben Lawrenson

of

Cleanearth Energy Ltd.

By



SWARCH project reference: WEF15
National Grid Reference: SP 06462 41677
Planning Application Ref: Pre-planning
OASIS Number: Southwes1-223588
Project Director: Dr Bryn Morris
Fieldwork Managers: Dr Bryn Morris
Project Officer: Joe Bampton
Desk-Based Assessment: Dr. Bryn Morris
Fieldwork: Joe Bampton
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Report: Joe Bampton; Dr Bryn Morris
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September 2015

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Summary

This report presents the results of a geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford in Worcestershire, in advance of a proposed solar PV array. This is a landscape of very high archaeological potential, as previous fieldwork has identified a Romano-British settlement, including a villa-type structure(s) in the field immediately to the south. This survey, however, identified the clear signature of medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation (surviving as earthworks on one part of the site) but only a small number of other features. These include a curving linear anomaly, a probable ditch, and three discrete features representing a possible pit, a possible natural feature and a possible burning event/pit. A modern service trench was identified along the route of the proposed cable trench.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks for assistance are due to:

Ben Lawrenson of Cleanearth Energy

Mr and Mrs Poulter (the Landowners)

The staff of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Service

1.0 Introduction

Location: Land at Wickham Farm
Parish: Wickhamford
County: Worcestershire
NGR: SP 06462 41677
Type of survey: Gradiometer
Date of survey: 12th September 2015
Area surveyed: 1.65ha

1.1 Project Background

This report presents the results of a geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford in Worcestershire (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Ben Lawrenson of Cleanearth Energy (the Agent) in order to identify any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by the installation of a proposed solar PV array.

1.2 Topographical and Geological Background

The site is located c.3.4km south-east of the centre of Evesham, c.300m north-west of the modern village of Wickhamford and c.700m south-west of the parish church. Wickhamford lies within the gently-undulating lowlands of the Vale of Evesham. The fields surveyed lie on the western side of Badsey Brook, on a gently east and north-east facing slope at an altitude of c.35m AOD.

The soils of this area are the slowly-permeable calcareous clayey soils of the Evesham 2 Association, bordering on the well-drained calcareous fine loamy soils of the Badsey 1 Association that flank the Badsey Brook (SSEW 1983). These overlie the calcareous mudstones of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated), with alluvium in the valley bottom (BGS 2015).

1.3 Historical Background

Wickhamford is a small nucleated settlement within a civil and ecclesiastical parish of the same name, in the hundred of Blakenhurst. The estate of Wickhamford formed part of the ecclesiastical holdings of Evesham Abbey, with pre-Conquest charters (S80; S1599) with boundary clauses (Hooke 1990). The Evesham Abbey Chronicle records that Bishop Randolph (d.1229) built a grange at Wickhamford; this would presumably have been built near or close to the manorial complex adjacent to the present church. At the Dissolution the manor was retained by the crown, until it was sold to Thomas Throckmorton in 1562. It came to Samuel Sandys in 1594 and remained in that family until 1860, when it was sold to John Pickup Lord. The manor was subsequently broken up and sold in the 1930s. This is a former Open Field landscape, but from the late 19th century through to the mid 20th century it was characterised by market gardening (Locke & Harman 2013).

Wickham Farm was parcel of the Manor of Wickhamford, but was known as Pitchers Hill Farm.

The place-name *Wickham* is frequently interpreted as 'homestead associated with a Roman or Romano-British settlement' (OE *wīc-hām*) (Gelling 1978, 67-74), but in this instance is interpreted

as 'Wigwenne ford' from a personal name (*wigorne* (S1250) or *wicwona* (S80)); the people of Wicwonna (*Wycweoniga*) are mentioned in a charter of AD c.860 (S226) (Watts 2010, 677-8).

1.4 Archaeological Background

The fields to the south of the proposed site contain the remains of a dispersed Romano-British settlement (WSM02736; WSM29880). This was first identified in the early 20th century ('Roman Remains' marked on the 1938 6" OS map but not the 1924 map), with pottery, roof and flue tiles and wall plaster recovered. Roman remains including walls were also reported in 1947-8 during the realignment of the A44 near the Sandys Arms. This area has been the subject of several archaeological interventions since, including area survey (GSB 2000) and trial trenching and excavation (Reynolds 1971; Lockett 2000a, 2000b). The results of this fieldwork indicate the presence of a dispersed Romano-British settlement that may flank a suspected Roman road between Tewkesbury and Honeybourne.

The area is also noted for its surviving areas of medieval ridge-and-furrow.

1.5 Methodology

This document follows the methodology outlined in the Project Design (Appendix 1).

The geophysical survey is comprised of a magnetic gradiometer/magnetometer survey. The gradiometer survey was conducted according to a Project Design (Appendix 1) and follows the guidance outlined in *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage 2008b) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (ClfA 2014).

'Archaeological geophysical survey uses non-intrusive and non-destructive techniques to determine the presence or absence of anomalies likely to be caused by archaeological features, structures or deposits, as far as reasonably possible, within a specified area or site on land, in the inter-tidal zone or underwater. Geophysical survey determines the presence of anomalies of archaeological potential through measurement of one or more physical properties of the subsurface' (ClfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey 2014).

The results of the survey will, as far as possible, inform on the presence or absence, character, extent and, in some cases, apparent relative phasing of buried archaeology leading to the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource.

Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire



Figure 1: Site location (the site is indicated) (Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2015).

2.0 Gradiometer Survey

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this survey was to identify and record magnetic anomalies. While the anomalies may relate to archaeological deposits and structures, the dimensions of recorded anomalies may not directly correspond with any associated archaeological features. The following discussion attempts to clarify and characterise identified anomalies. The survey was undertaken on the 12th of September 2015 by J. Bampton under weather conditions of sunshine with heavy showers.

2.2 Site Inspection

The survey was carried out within parts of three fields, all of which were under pasture (see Appendix 4). The hedgerows appear to be clipped low-species hawthorn with occasional trees with trace banks and ditches. The western field had clearly been ploughed flat, but the eastern field contained the pronounced earthworks of medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation. In both fields the ground was very firm. In the southern field, a raised linear earthwork was noted, up to 10m wide, orientated approximately east-west, though perhaps turning to the north at its eastern end. This feature *may* relate to the posited Roman road across this area; if so, the road does not appear on the geophysical survey, and it may be geological in origin.

2.3 Methodology

The gradiometer survey follows the general guidance as outlined in: *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (ClfA 2014).

The survey was carried out using a twin-sensor fluxgate gradiometer (Bartington Grad601). These machines are sensitive to depths of up to 1.50m. The survey parameters were: sample intervals of 0.25m, traverse intervals of 1m, a zigzag traverse pattern, traverse orientation was circumstantial, grid squares of 30×30m. The gradiometer was adjusted ('zeroed') every 0.5-1ha. The survey grid was tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The data was downloaded onto *Grad601 Version 3.16* and processed using *TerraSurveyor Version 3.0.25.0*. The primary data plots and analytical tools used in this analysis were *Shade* and *Metadata*. The details of the data processing are as follows:

Processes: Clip +/- 3SD; DeStripe all traverses, median; DeStagger, offset in- and outbound by -2 intervals (grids 1-12, 17-26), -3 intervals (grids 13, 14), -4 intervals (grids 15, 16).

Details: 1.6903ha surveyed; Max. 3040.10nT, Min. -3087.30nT; Standard Deviation 221.69nT, mean 1.43nT, median 0.00nT.

2.4 Results

Figure 2 with the accompanying Table 2 show the analyses and interpretation of the geophysical survey data. Additional graphic images of the survey data and numbered grid locations can be found in Appendix 3.

Anomaly group	Class and Certainty	Form	Archaeological Characterisation	Comments
1	Weak positive, probable	Linear	20 th century and earlier boundary/drainage ditches	Indicative of land sub-divisions associated with 20 th century market gardens. Parallel to those shown on the 1938 OS mapping. The northernmost denotes the current property boundary/landholding of Wickham Farm in this field.
2	Strong positive, probable	Curving linear	Boundary ditch	Possibly remnant of an earlier field system predating the medieval/late ridge and furrow. Not represented on the historic mapping.
3	Dipolar, possible	Oval	Possible burnt material/burning event/ferrous material	Dipolar response of c.<95nT may reflect a spread of burnt material or it may be an obscured bipolar response that would indicate an event of burning <i>in situ</i> . Furthermore it may reflect a small ferrous anomaly possibly associated with the reading to its south.
4	Strong positive, possible	Oval	Possible pit	The dominant positive reading of c.<22nT is indicative of a cut feature, that may be of archaeological or natural origin.
5	Weak positive, possible	Sub-oval	Possibly a natural depression or archaeological sunken feature	Located within the floodplain of the brook, and with a weak response of c.<3.5nT; it is most likely a natural feature.
6	Negative and positive, probable	Linear	Representative of ploughing activity	Ridge and furrow. It survives faintly across the western half of the site, where the land has been levelled. In the eastern half of the site the ridge and furrow is visible on the ground.
7	Strong bipolar, Probable	Linear	Metallic service	A large metal service pipe is known to run across this field in this location. The proposed cable trench would follow this route.

Table 1: Interpretation of gradiometer survey data.

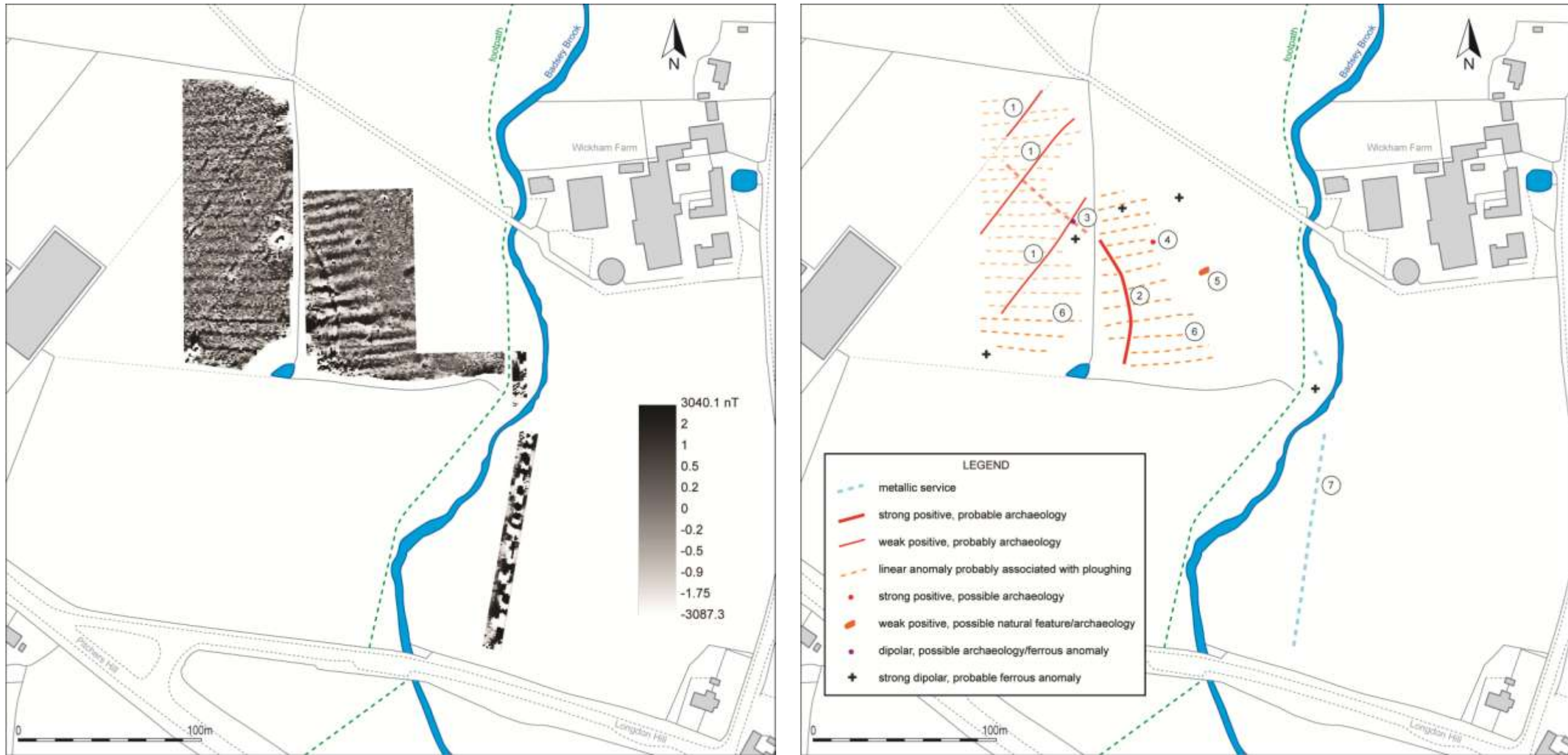


Figure 2: (left) Greyscale shade plot of gradiometer survey data (minimal processing); (right) Interpretation of gradiometer survey data.

2.5 Discussion

The survey identified seven groups of geophysical anomalies: Groups 1, 2 and 6 are of probable archaeological origin, representing ditches/boundaries – some of which are present on historic maps – and ridge-and-furrow ploughing activity that is visible on the ground and on aerial photographs. Group 3 represents a possible area where burning took place or burnt material was deposited, although it may be a small ferrous deposit associated with adjacent magnetic debris. Groups 4 and 5 represent possible discrete cut features such as pits or tree-throws; Group 5 is most likely of natural origin, while Group 4 is of possible archaeological origin. Group 7 represents a known metallic service pipe. A number of ferrous anomalies were also identified across the survey area (Figure 2).

Group 1 are three parallel weak positive anomalies that represent linear ditches, aligned north-east by south-west. In the 19th and 20th centuries the western field was sub-divided into strips and farmed as market gardens. Some of these boundaries are present on the 1938 Ordnance Survey mapping (see Figure 3). The westernmost of these anomalies is the current western boundary of Wickham Farm.

Group 2 is a strong positive anomaly indicative of a curving linear (ditch). It is probably pre-dates the ridge-and-furrow ploughing activity, just as the existing fieldscape post-dates the ridge-and-furrow, which was established in the medieval period. It also appears as though the ploughing activity breaks the linear response, although geophysics is not a reliable way to identify relative phasing. It is possible therefore that this linear can be associated with the known Roman-British activity in the area. There is an ephemeral mixed response running north-west from the point where the Group 2 linear anomaly meets the extant north-south boundary; this is shown as a faded dashed line in Figure 2.

Group 3 is a dipolar anomaly which may reflect ferrous anomalies/magnetic debris. The strength of the response ($c.<95\text{nT}$) may, however, indicate the presence of burnt material. Its proximity to a large ferrous anomaly to its south, and the fact that it lies within an area of magnetic disturbance (Groups 1 and 2, may intersect here), may obscure the response. It therefore may represent the bipolar response of an *in situ* burning event or simply a weaker ferrous anomaly.

Group 4 is a strong positive anomaly indicative of a cut feature such as a pit or natural feature such as a tree-throw. Its response strength ($c.<22\text{nT}$) is indicative of a cut feature.

Group 5 is a weak positive anomaly indicative of a natural feature or depression. Its location within the floodplain of the brook and its weak response implies that it is of natural origin. However, it may be a very shallow cut feature or obscured by its fill, lacking a definitive differentiation with the surrounding geology.

Group 6 are parallel negative and positive linear anomalies indicative of ploughing activity; specifically ridge-and-furrow in this case. The ridge-and-furrow was visible on the ground in the east field and extended as far as a floodplain of the adjacent brook. The ridges in the west field had been levelled. The weaker responses are identified with a faded dash lines in Figure 2.

Group 7 is a known modern metallic service. The proposal is that the cable trench will follow this route across the field. The strength of the response obfuscates any other responses along the area surveyed.

A small amount of weak magnetic debris and instances of occasional ferrous objects occurred across the site. Substantial ploughing activity, including the ridge-and-furrow and the levelling and farming of land across the former market gardens in the west of the site will have affected the

Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire

survival of buried archaeological deposits. These market gardens are known to have contained trees, shrubs, fruit and vegetables and potentially to have had structures, fences, compost heaps and bonfires etc.

3.0 Conclusions

Fieldwork in the area makes clear this is a landscape of very high archaeological potential. Survey work and excavation immediately to the south, around the A44 and Longdon Hill road, has explored and partly defined what appears to be civilian Romano-British settlement. It is poorly dated, but stratified and unstratified finds indicate it was occupied during the 3rd and 4th century AD, and included a high-status masonry structure(s). The geophysical survey in the field between the proposed PV array and Longdon Hill road identified a series of enclosures with a probable sub-rectangular structure(s). This location, being the lower terrace on the western side of the Badsey Brook, appears to have been favoured for settlement in this period, with another potential settlement site reported c.600m to the north-north-east in a similar topographical location.

In contrast, the geophysical survey carried out as part of this programme of works only identified a small number of geophysical anomalies likely to correspond to contemporary archaeological features. The most obvious anomalies are associated with medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation, the earthworks of which survive in the eastern field. Linear anomalies in the western field can be equated to the boundaries of 19th and 20th century market garden divisions, which still denote the existing property boundary and can be observed on 20th century Ordnance Survey mapping.

A single curving linear anomaly in the east field probably represents a boundary that predates the medieval ridge-and-furrow. It possibly survives running north-west across the west field, although its response would suggest that it has been more truncated in the west field. Three other discrete anomalies have been identified that represent a probable natural depression, a probable pit and a possible heat-affected area/pit and cannot confidently be associated with contemporary archaeological features. It is likely that these undated features are either contemporaries of the medieval to modern archaeological environment, or else the known Romano-British activity in the wider area and the field immediately to the south.

4.0 Bibliography & References

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Appendix 1

PROJECT DESIGN FOR DESK-BASED APPRAISAL AND A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ON LAND AT WICKHAM FARM, WICKHAMFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE

Location: Land at Wickham Farm
Parish: Wickhamford
County: Worcestershire
NGR: SP 06462 41677
Proposal: Proposed PV array
Date: 28-08-2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document forms a Project Design (PD) which has been produced by South West Archaeology (SWARCH) at the request of Ben Lawrenson of Cleaneath Energy Ltd. (the Agent). It sets out the methodology for a geophysical survey to be undertaken in advance of the application for planning for the above development and for related off site analysis and reporting. The PD and the schedule of work it proposes were drawn up in consultation with Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Service.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies on the western side of Badsey Brook, south-west of the historic core of Wickhamford and west of the modern village. Wickhamford was a possession of Evesham Abbey, and a *grangia* is recorded here in the 13th century. At the Dissolution the manor was held by the Throckmortons and then the Sandys family. Road re-alignment work in the late 1940s uncovered Romano-British remains just to the south, and this site has been the subject of several interventions, including an excavation in the late 1960s (Reynold 1971) and geophysical survey and trenching in the early 21st century (Lockett 2000a, 2000b; GSB 2000). These works revealed a straggling Romano-British settlement flanking the western side of the Badsey Brook. The proposed PV array would be located north of this site.

3.0 AIMS

3.1 The principal objectives of the work will be to:

- 3.1.1 To observe and identify archaeological features through geophysical survey.
- 3.1.2 To analyse and report on the results of the project as appropriate.

4.0 METHOD

4.1 Geophysical Survey:

The programme of work shall include a magnetometer survey of c.2 hectares, covering the field in which the proposed development would be located. The results of this survey will inform whether an archaeological evaluation or further archaeological recording of any potential buried remains or other mitigation is required.

4.2 The Client will provide SWARCH with details of the location of existing services and of proposed groundworks within the site area, and of the proposed construction programme.

4.3 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by any archaeological staff working on site, particularly when working with machinery. As a minimum: high-visibility jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be worn.

- 4.3.1 Appropriate PPE will be employed at all times.
- 4.3.2 The site archaeologist will undertake any site safety induction course provided by the Client.

5.0 REPORTING

5.1 The type of report produced will be agreed with the WCCHES in view of the results. If a full report is produced it will include the following elements:

- 5.1.1 A report number, date and the OASIS record number;
- 5.1.2 A copy of this PD;
- 5.1.3 A summary of the project's background;
- 5.1.4 A description and illustration of the site location;
- 5.1.5 A methodology of the works undertaken, and an evaluation of that methodology;
- 5.1.6 A summary of the project's results;
- 5.1.7 An interpretation of the results in the appropriate context;
- 5.1.8 A summary of the contents of the project archive and its location;
- 5.1.9 A location plan and overall site plan including the location of areas subject to archaeological survey;
- 5.1.10 A consideration of the evidence within its wider context;

5.2 WCCHES will receive the report within three months of completion of fieldwork.

5.7 A copy of the report detailing the results of these investigations will be submitted to the OASIS (*Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations*) database under reference Southwes1-223588 within 3 months of completion of fieldwork.

6.0 FURTHER WORK

Should the results of this Assessment indicate a need for further archaeological works to be undertaken this may need to be completed before validation of the Planning Application in order to enable the Local Planning Authority to make an informed and reasonable decision on the application, in accordance with the guidelines contained within paragraph

Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire

141 of paragraph 128 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012). This work would be subject to a separate Project Design.

7.0 ARCHIVE

7.1 On completion of the project an ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared in accordance with the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/morphe-project-managers-guide/>).

The digital element of the archive will be transferred to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) for long-term curation.

7.2 SWARCH will notify the WCCHES upon the completion of an OASIS record.

8.0 CONFLICT WITH OTHER CONDITIONS AND STATUTORY PROTECTED SPECIES

Even where groundworks are being undertaken under the direct control and supervision of SWARCH personnel, it remains the responsibility of the Client - in consultation with SWARCH, the applicant or agent - to ensure that the required archaeological works do not conflict with any other conditions that have been imposed upon the consent granted and should also consider any biodiversity issues as covered by the NERC Act 2006. In particular, such conflicts may arise where archaeological investigations/excavations have the potential to have an impact upon protected species and/or natural habitats e.g. SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, County Wildlife Sites etc.

9.0 PERSONNEL & MONITORING

9.1 The project will be managed by Dr. Bryn Morris; the geophysical survey will be undertaken by Joseph Bampton.

Bryn Morris

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Appendix 2
Map Resources

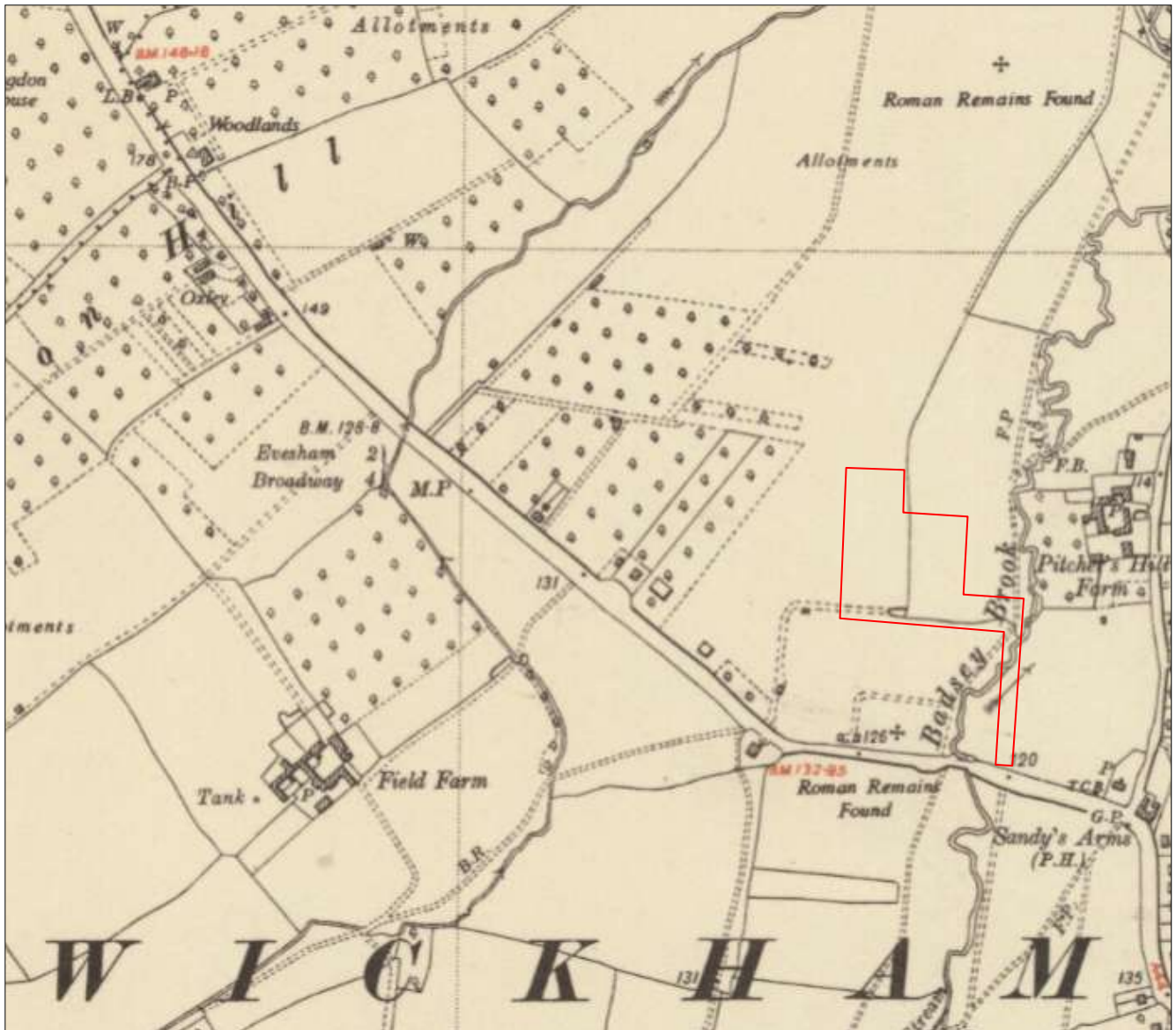


Figure 3: Extract from the 1938 (published c.1950) 6" scale (1:63,320) OS map of the area (Worcestershire sheet XLIX.NE). The approximate area of the survey is shown. Note the prevailing orientation of the market-garden plots to the west of the site.



Figure 4: Greyshade plot of the geophysical survey undertaken by GSB in 2000, showing the straggling Romano-British settlement flanking the western side of the Badsey Brook, overlapped with medieval ridge-and-furrow (GSB 2000, figure 2). The approximate area of the current survey is shown.

Appendix 3:
Additional Graphic Images associated with the Gradiometer Survey

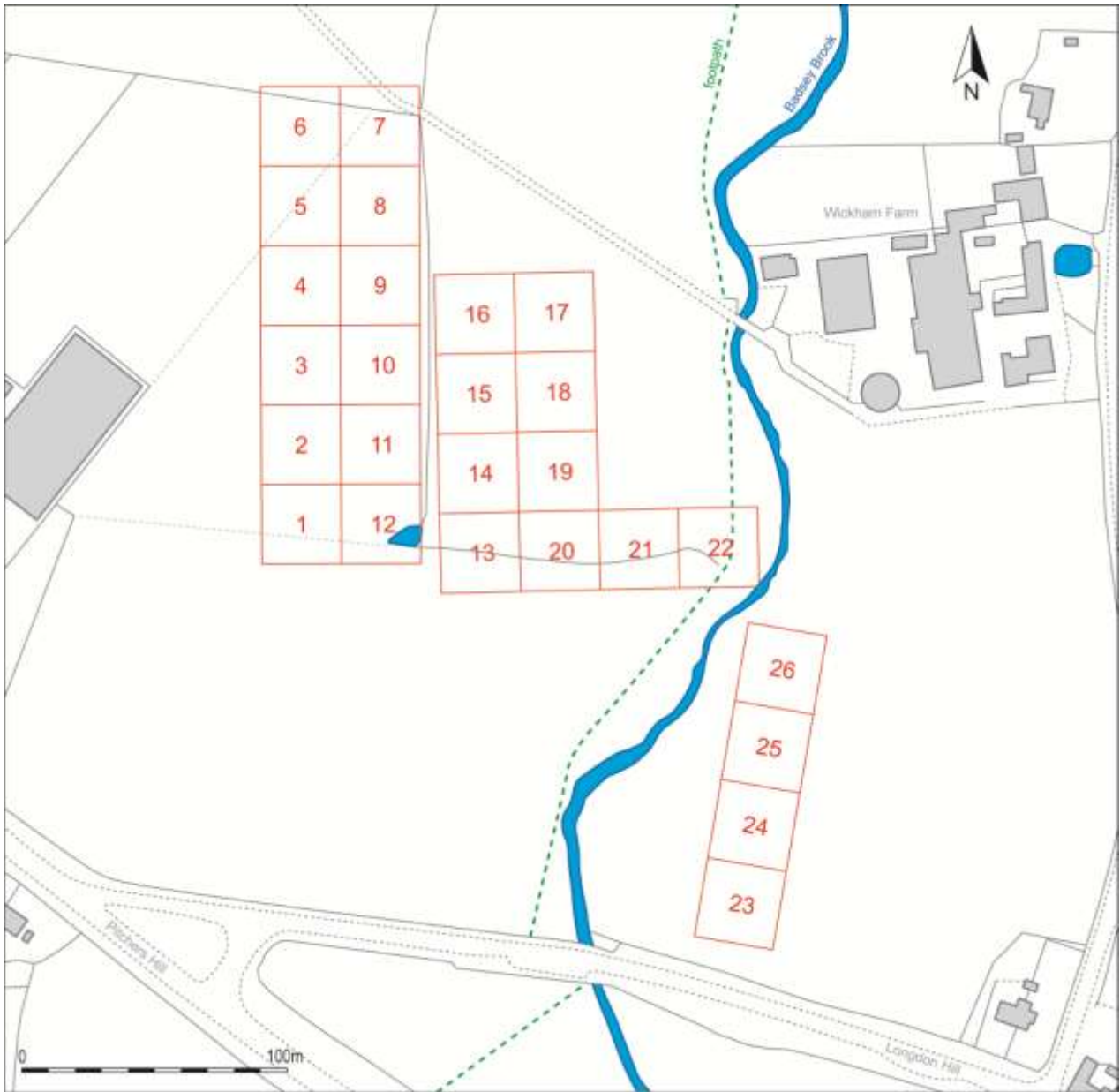


Figure 5: Location of gradiometer survey grids and grid numbers.

Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire

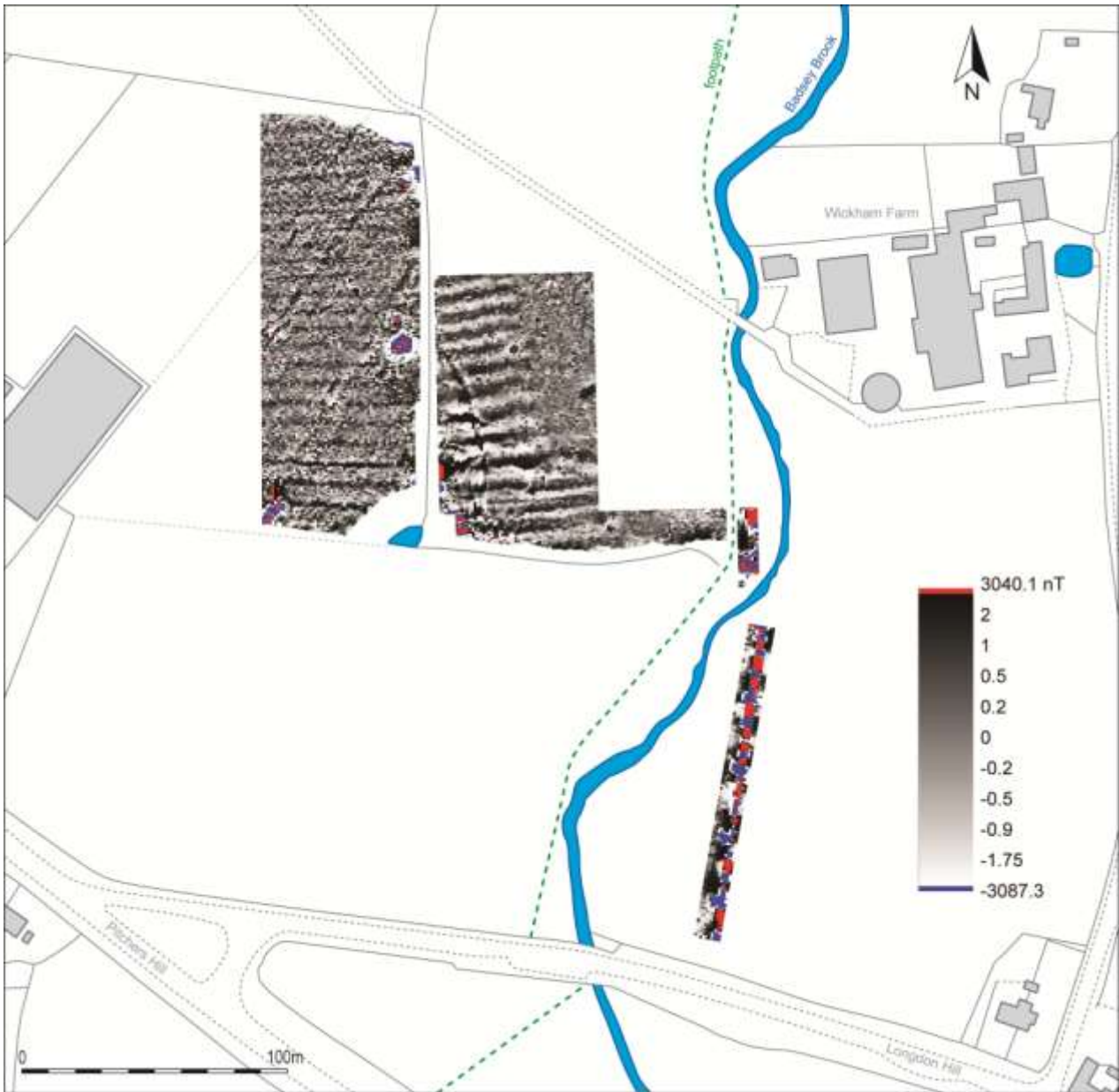


Figure 6: Red-greyscale-blue shade plot of gradiometer survey data; band weight equalised.

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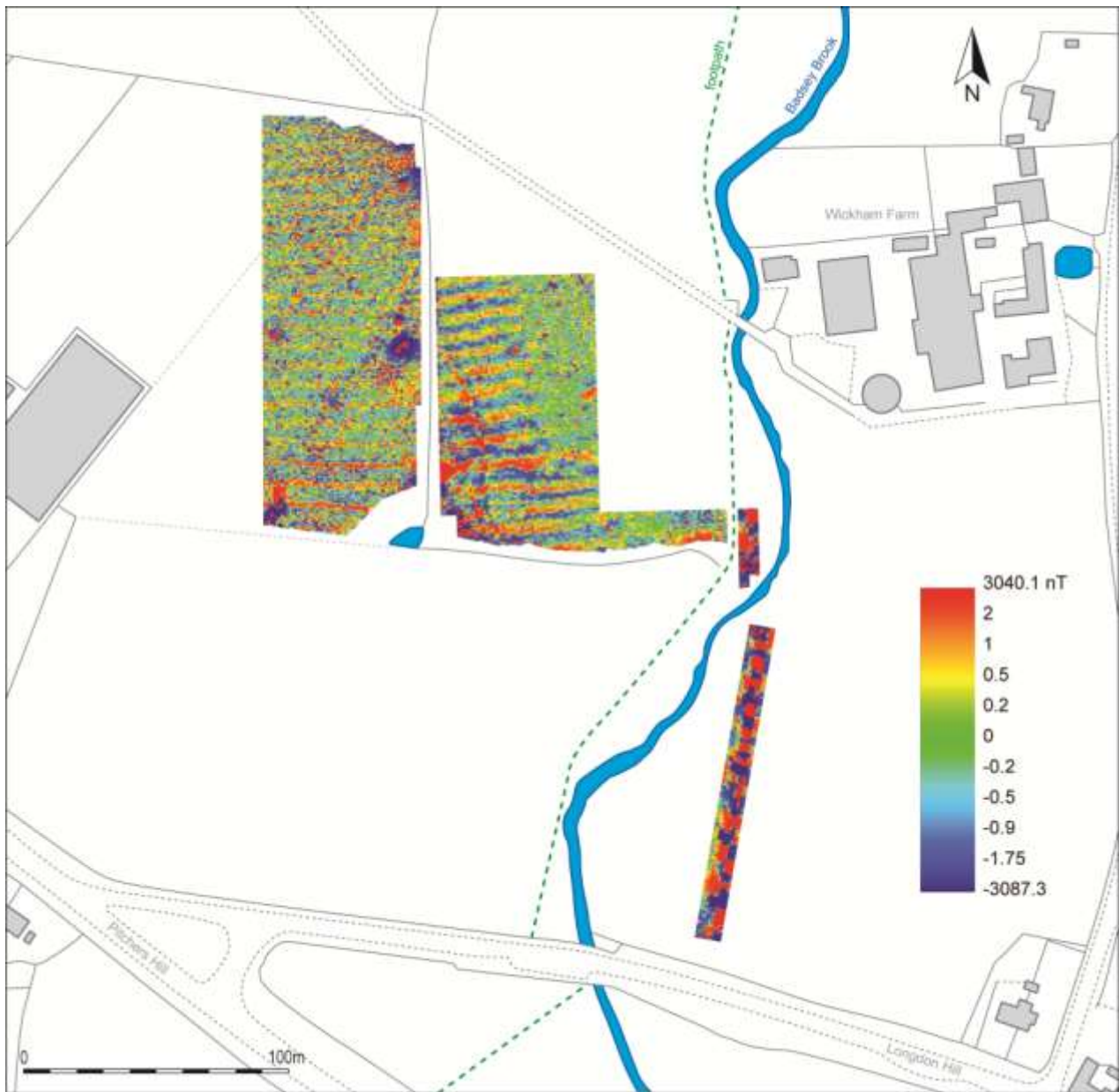


Figure 7: Red-blue-green 2 shade plot of gradiometer survey data; band weight equalised.

Appendix 4
Supporting Photographs



View down the western field, from the gateway in the north-east corner; viewed from the north, looking south.



View down the eastern field, from the gateway in the north-west corner; viewed from the north, looking south-south-east.

Land at Wickham Farm, Wickhamford, Worcestershire



View across the eastern field, viewed from the bridge across the Badsey Brook; viewed from the north-east, looking south-west.



View across the eastern field, viewed from the bridge across the Badsey Brook; viewed from the south-east, looking north-west along the track.



View across the eastern field, showing the pronounced ridging (visible against the dark hedgerow shrubs); viewed from the east, looking west.



View across the Badsey Brook from the east, looking into the eastern field along its southern boundary; viewed from the east, looking west.

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View down the southern (pipe trench) field; viewed from the north, looking south.



View across the southern field, looking east towards the modern settlement of Wickhamford; viewed from the west, looking east.



View across the Badsey Brook to the glasshouses west of the site. The field between Brook and the glasshouses contains the northern part of the Romano-British settlement that appears in the GSB (2000) survey. Viewed from the east, looking west.



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