LAND OFF SHIREMOOR HILL
MERRIOTT
SOMERSET

Results of a Desk Based Assessment
& Archaeological Gradiometer Survey

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Land off Shiremoor Hill, Merriott, Somerset

Results of a Desk Based Assessment and Archaeological Gradiometer Survey

For

Catherine Knee

of

WYG

On behalf of

Mr A. Osborne

By

SWARCH project reference: MLS15
National Grid Reference: ST 4450 1261
Planning Application Ref: Pre-planning
Project Director: Dr. Bryn Morris
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Summary

This report presents the results of a desk-based assessment, walkover survey and geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land off Shiremoor Hill, Merriott in Somerset, as part of the pre-planning requirements for a proposed residential development.

The desk-based assessment, walkover survey and geophysical survey all compliment one another's evidence regarding the presence of historic and relict field boundaries on the site. The surveys indicate there are features of archaeological origin present within the area of the proposed development associated with a mid 19th century field system. A number of linear anomalies in the geophysical survey are not accounted for in the cartographic evidence though their alignment is contiguous with that of the surrounding field system and suggests that they may be attributable to an earlier field system based on medieval strip fields associated with the development of Merriott.

Any development is likely to disturb these archaeological deposits or remains alluded to by the geophysical survey. These deposits and features appear however to be of low significance, and it is not believed that further archaeological investigated is warranted.

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Acknowledgements

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Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer at Somerset County Council

1.0 Introduction

Location: Land off Shiremoor Hill
Parish: Merriott
County: Somerset
NGR: ST 4450 1261
Type of survey: Gradiometer
Date of survey: 13.11.2015
Area surveyed: 1.44ha

1.1 Project Background

This report presents the results of a desk based assessment, walkover survey and geophysical survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land off Shiremoor Hill, Merriott in Somerset (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Catherine Knee of WYG (the Agent) on behalf of Mr A. Osborne (the Client) in order to identify any archaeological sites or features that might be affected by any future residential development.

1.2 Topographical and Geological Background

The proposed development is located on the south-east facing slope of a low hill overlooking the River Parrett, at a height of between approximately 40-57m AOD, in the centre of Merriott. The site comprises three fields within an irregularly shaped area approximately 100m south of the parish church on pasture within the centre of the village (see Figure 1).

The site is situated on the boundary between the shallow, well-drained brashy calcareous fine loamy soils of Elmton 3; the slowly permeable calcareous clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils of Evesham 3; the fine loamy clayey and clayey soils of Oxpasture; and slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils of Denchworth Associations (SSEW 1983). These overlie the sedimentary sandstone of the Bridport Sand Formation and limestone of the Inferior Oolite Group (BGS 2015).

1.3 Historical Background

The parish of Merriott lies c.2.8km north of Crewkerne and is traditionally known as Little Ireland. The name Merriott is derived from 'Maergeat', which means 'boundary gate'. A pre-Domesday manor, ownership of the estates of Merriott passed variously through the de Meriet, Bonville, Bowes, Hooper, Wykes, Pitt, Rodbard and Whitley families.

The village of Merriott is close to the centre of the south-western parish boundary and appears to be at the crossing of two old routes. These, along with Broadway, form a triangle of land (approximately 30 acres), including the proposal site, which were a former Open Field called Hitchen or Landshare. Records suggest that arable farming was common in the surrounding landscape, with enclosure by the early 16th century, though other industries, mostly associated with cloth, were also present alongside up to four water-mills. Development of Merriott appears to have occurred continuously, expanding small farms with later traditional dwellings. By the 19th century large numbers of cottages were built, filling in the spaces between the older streets, some to replace the 24 destroyed in a village fire in 1811.

1.4 Archaeological Background

The site is located on land characterised as *settlement post c.1840 tithe map.* The land surrounding the site, however, is characterised as a mix of a*nciently enclosed land pre 17th century, anciently enclosed land modified 17th-19th centuries, recently enclosed land 17th-18th century* and *recently enclosed land 18th-21st century* (Somerset HLC). This, combined with the un-developed nature of the land surrounding the proposal area, suggest that the site itself previously formed *anciently enclosed land,* which has subsequently undergone post-medieval re-organisation.

There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity within Merriott, and whilst Roman activity is similarly poorly represented at present, the presence of the Fosse Way and associated Roman villas and findspots only one mile to the north suggest there is potential for Roman remains in the area. The limited archaeological investigations which have taken place within the immediate area of the proposal site has resulted in the identification of 14th century structures associated with the church, itself dating to the 13th century, alongside the possible site of the medieval manor and associated fish-pond. The majority of the known heritage assets in the vicinity are Grade II Listed buildings dating to between the 16th and 19th centuries (see Appendix 2).

1.5 Methodology

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

The desk-based assessment follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (CIfA 2014b) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012).

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

'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.' (CIFA 2014a, 4).

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.

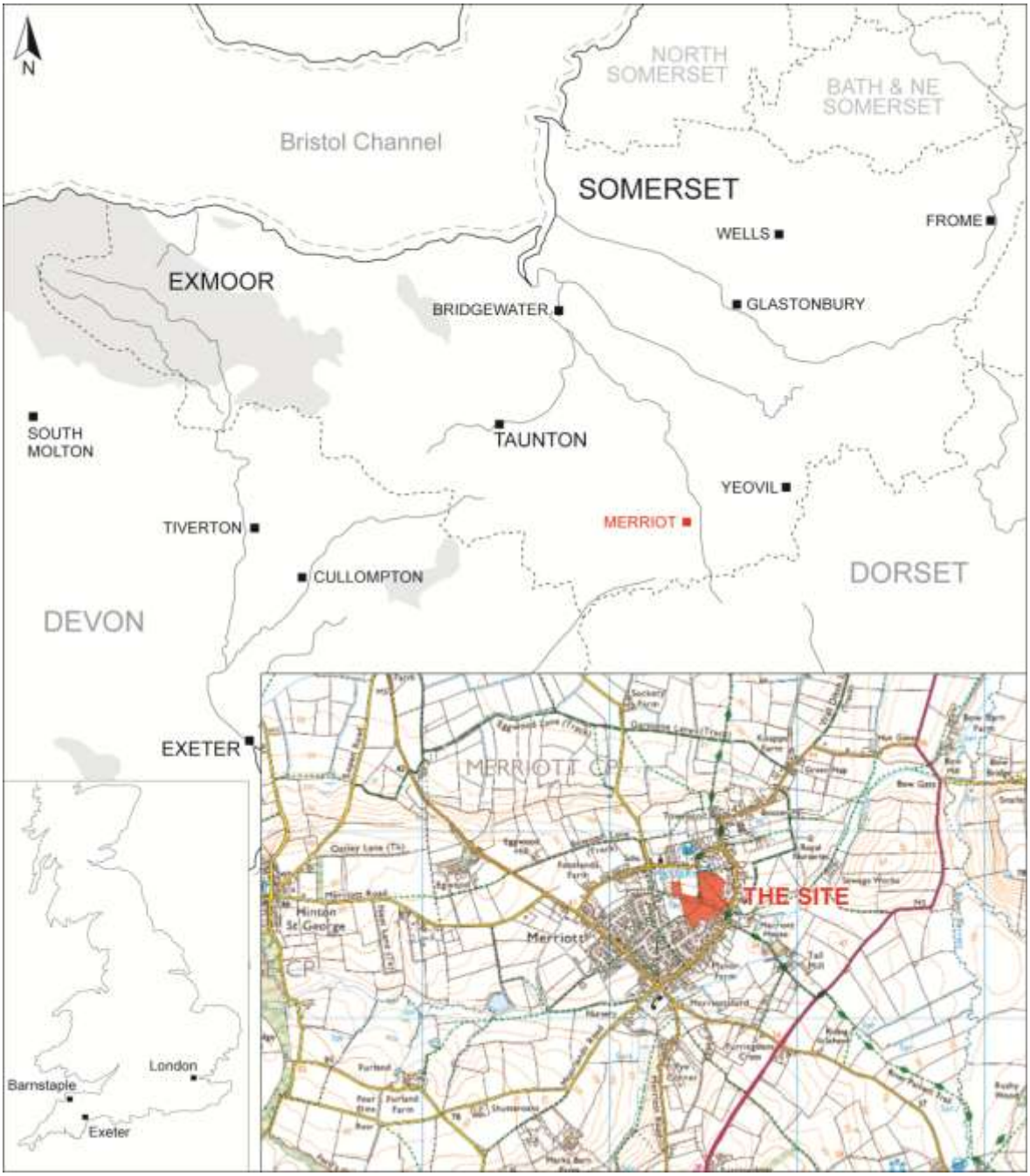

Figure 1: Site location (the location of the proposed development is indicated).

2.0 Desk-Based Assessment

2.1 Historical Background

The place-name 'Merriott' has two possible derivations: 'mare gate' derived from the West Saxon *miere* and *geat* or alternatively it may pertain to the Old English *mere* meaning 'pool' or (*ge)mære* meaning 'a boundary'. It may be associated with the entrance/route way to a marshy area associated with wild grazing. It has subsequently been associated with the Middle English *meri* meaning 'Merry'.

The parish of Merriott is located in the Hundred of Crewkerne and the village of Merriott is located *c.*2.8km north of Crewkerne and *c.*3.8km south of the A303. The parish has traditionally been known as Little Ireland and local folklore, although unsubstantiated, associates it with a possible Irish colonization. The northern boundary of the parish follows Lopen Brook, while its south-east boundary is defined by the River Parrett or its tributaries. In 1901 the parish was *c.*1,750 acres in extent; by 1934 it had absorbed some of the parish of Crewkerne and was *c.*2,711 acres.

The village is at an important crossing of two routes: one from West Chinnock to Hinton St. George; the other from Chiselborough to Crewkerne, the development site falling upon the latter, and joined by the principal route through the parish along Broadway. These three routes formed a triangle of land (approximately 30 acres), including the proposal site, which were a former Open Field called Hitchen or Landshare. It is suggested that a fair was held in the south-west corner of this triangular area as early as 1243-4.

Merriott was a Domesday manor (Meriet) formed by two estate holdings. One was held by Leofwine and Beorhtweard prior to the Norman conquest and was worth £4. In 1086 it was held by Dodman from the Count of Mortain and was worth £7 and it had three mills working on the estate. The other was formerly held by Godwine and was worth 100 Shillings prior to the conquest and was held by Hearding in 1086. In 1086 it had a single mill working on the estate and was worth £4. The manor held by Robert, Count of Mortain passed to his son, William in 1090 though the lands were forfeited to the crown in 1106. The other estate was held under the honour of Gloucester until at least 1285, after which the crown acted as overlord of the whole estate. The lands passed through the de Meriet family line during the 13th and 14th centuries until a dispute between Elizabeth and Margaret d'Aumale, granddaughters of George de Meriet, led to it being given by petition to Sir William Bonville, husband of Margaret, in 1397. Thereafter it passed through his descent until 1554 when it was again seized by the crown. The manor was granted to William Rice and his wife Barbara the same year, though leased to Sir Jerome Bowes between 1575-1577 and subsequently to Ralph Bowes in 1580. In 1587 the manor was sold to James Hooper and passed to his nephew, Henry, who enfranchised it and granted three conveyances to Robert Gough between 1605 and 1608, and the remainder to John Wyke in 1609 and 1611. John Gough succeeded Robert by 1614, and in 1623 bought John Wyke's share from his daughters. In 1669 the Goughs sold the estate to John Pitt, who conveyed it to Thomas Rodbard in 1686, after which the lands passed through his descent until 1906 when lordship passed to the Whitleys.

The rectory, previously part of the manorial estate, was sold by Sir John de Meriet to the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1377, who gave it for the maintenance of vicars and other ministers of Wells cathedral. In 1385 the lands were given to Muchelney abbey, which held them until the dissolution in 1538 when they were granted to Edward Seymour, early of Hertford, who in 1542 exchanged them for other lands, and the rectory was granted to the chapter of Bristol.

Fieldnames such as Stoneridge and Longmoor may indicate at the poor arable potential of the land, whilst the extraction of limestone to the south, and clay to the north, suggest an industrial rather than agricultural aspect to life in Merriott. However, with records showing woodland clearance and arable farming from 1285, the land appears more fertile than suggested. This agricultural landscape developed from Open Fields to enclosure by the 15th or early 16th century, with further intensification from the mid 19th century, when market gardens became a common family business in the area. Many other occupations, including fulling, dying and weaving are recorded from the late 16th century onwards, alongside hemp growing and tobacco-pipe making. Milling was another common industry at Merriott, with four mills recorded in Domesday, including Bow Mill, which by 1400 was part of a substantial complex worked as water powered corn mills. By 1726 there were three mills in Merriott.

The town appears to have developed continuously, though only on a small scale, expanding the original collection of small farmsteads with later traditional dwellings. By the 19th century large numbers of cottages were built, filling in the spaces between the older streets, some of which replaced 24 buildings destroyed in a fire in 1811 (after Dunning 1978).

2.2 Early cartographic sources

The earliest map depicting the site is the Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft of 1807 (Figure 2) which shows the settlement pattern of Merriott at this time, and outlines the surrounding field systems and local topography. It shows the village as predominantly stretching along Lower Street and Shiremoor Hill with arms extending along Bakehouse Corner, onto Church Street and Broadway. These surround an area of enclosed fields. Whilst it shows the outline field system as containing gently curving boundaries indicative of being derived from medieval strip field systems, it does not provide detail of the individual fields themselves. The proposal site appears to have been bisected by a road/track at this time, leading from Manor Farm (to the south-east) into the fields near the Old Vicarage (to the north-west.

Figure 2: Extract from the 1807 Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Draft map; the approximate outline of the site is indicated.

2.3 Merriott Tithe Map

The first detailed cartographic source available to this assessment is the Merriott Tithe map *c.*1840 (Figure 3). It supports the accuracy of the 1807 surveyor's draft of the prominent boundaries denoting probable *anciently enclosed land*, route ways and buildings. Also the location of the former road which was depicted bisecting the proposal site in 1807 is clearly visible on the tithe map.

The field system on the tithe map reflects large curving medieval or earlier enclosed fields that have been modified through the post-medieval periods. A number of straight sided rectangular post-medieval enclosures and strips of probable medieval property tenement boundaries are visible. The extent of building development on the tithe map is contiguous with the surveyor's draft. The tithe map also depicts two bridges or fording points across the water course that divides the site, to the east of the former road.

The land constituting the site was mostly open at this time; with the exception of orchards to the rear of properties along Lower Street. That these fields have been left relatively open reflects their ascribed use as meadow or pasture (see Table 1). A Catherine Mitchell was tenant of the four larger plots of meadow and pasture.

Field No.	Owner	Tennant	Field Name	Field Use
108	**Elizabeth Murley**	**Catherine Mitchell**	House and garden	Garden
466			Orchard	Orchard
477			**Pasture Field**	**Meadow**
478			**Meadow**	**Meadow**
123	**William Rodbard Esq.**		Garden	Garden
470			**Clapperhayes Orchard**	**Pasture**
471			**Meadow**	**Pasture**
472			Popplehay	Pasture
167		Isaac Osborne	House Barton, garden & court	Garden
168			Orchard	Orchard
500			Home Close	Arable
464		Thomas Bidgood	The Close	Pasture
133	Robert Marks	Robert Rowsell Junior	House, orchard and smiths shop	Orchard
454	John Templeman	Samuel Osborne	Landshare	Arable
473	Susannah Whitley	Isaac Mitchell	Cupboard Plot	Arable
161	John Webber	John Webber	Shute(?) Close Nursery	Nursery
475			Hill Close Nursery	Nursery
476			Hill Close Nursery	Nursery & Garden
480	Rev. Joseph Cross	Rev. Joseph Cross	Orchard	Orchard
152	The vicar for the time being of Merriott	The vicar for the time being of Merriott	Churchyard	-
479	Peter Dourding (Rectorial Glebe)	John Miller	The Piece	Arable
481			Orchard	Orchard
107	Rev. John(?) William Hulet(?)	Job Osborne	Orchard	Orchard
465			Shidleys	Arable & Orchard

Table 1: Extract from the Merriott tithe apportionment *c.*1840 (the site is transcribed in red).

Figure 3: extract of Merriott tithe map *c.*1840 (the approximate location of the site is outlined in red).

2.4 Ordnance Survey mapping

The Ordnance Survey mapping depicts a similarly enclosed landscape to that of the Tithe Awards. By the end of the 19th century (Figure 4) these fields appear to have been the subject of rationalisation, a process similar to that experienced elsewhere in Britain, with elements of small-scale formal enclosure patterns common of the post-medieval period. The back-plots of the majority of the buildings within Merriott appear to have orchards/nurseries reflecting the importance of market gardening to the town by this time. However, the area of the site itself remains open fields, though some have been sub-divided. The orchards in the south-east of the site (tithe plots 468 and 469) have been amalgamated into a single orchard and the dividing boundary removed.

The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 5) shows very little alteration from the previous OS survey, with the most noticeable change being the infilling of the courtyard area of Tail Mill, probably reflecting the expansion of its works into the 20th century. Other changes appear to be the occasional loss or addition of field boundaries in the fieldscape surrounding Merriott, though this is very limited. No changes appear to have occurred within the survey area. By 1930 (Figure 6) there had again only been limited development, a small number of new buildings constructed within the town and occasional field boundary alteration, though again none within the survey area. The most significant development of Merriott has occurred in the last 75 years with substantial residential development encroaching upon the proposed development area.

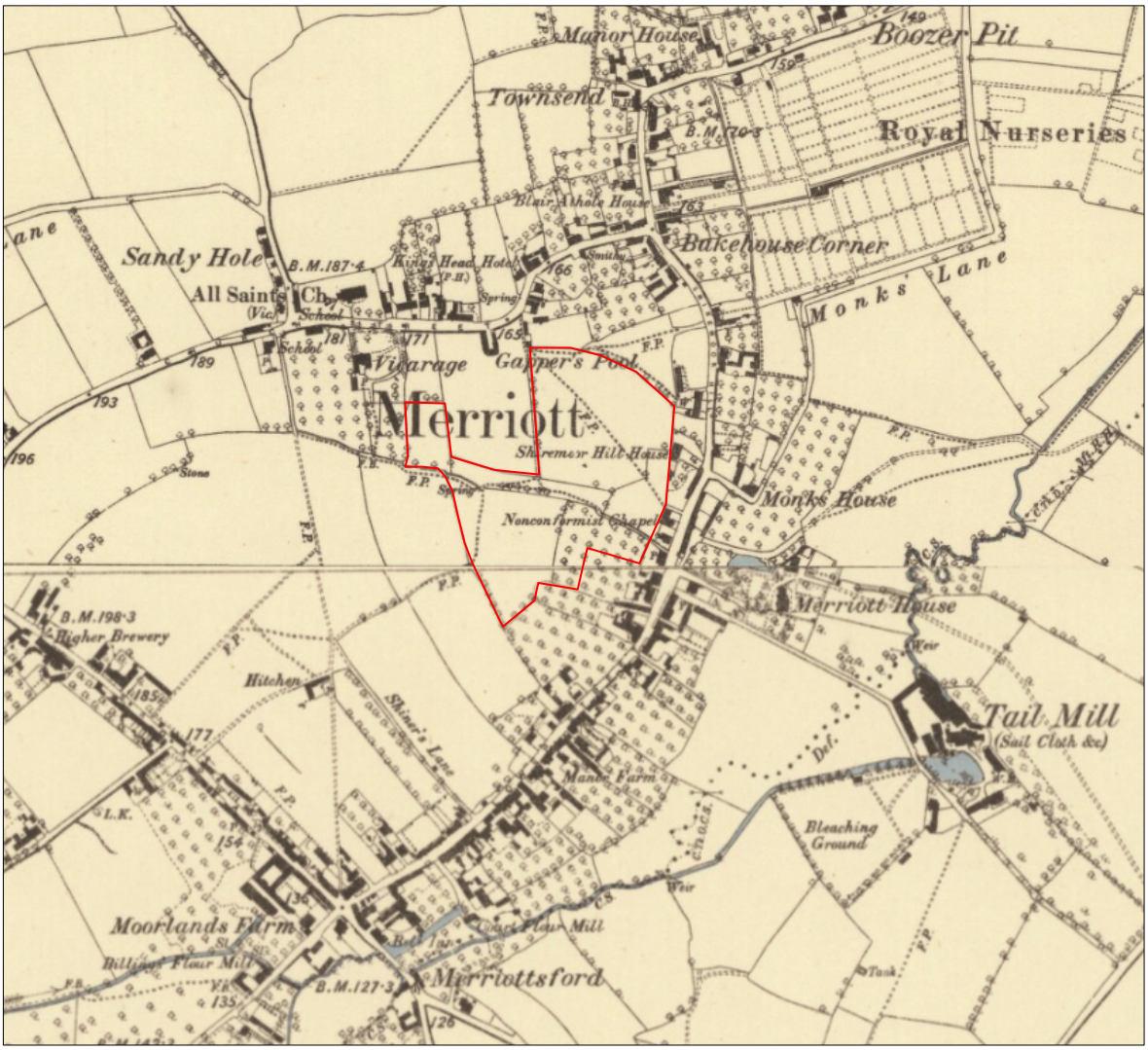

Figure 4: Composite extract from the 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6" map of Somerset sheet LXXXIX; the approximate outline of the site is indicated.

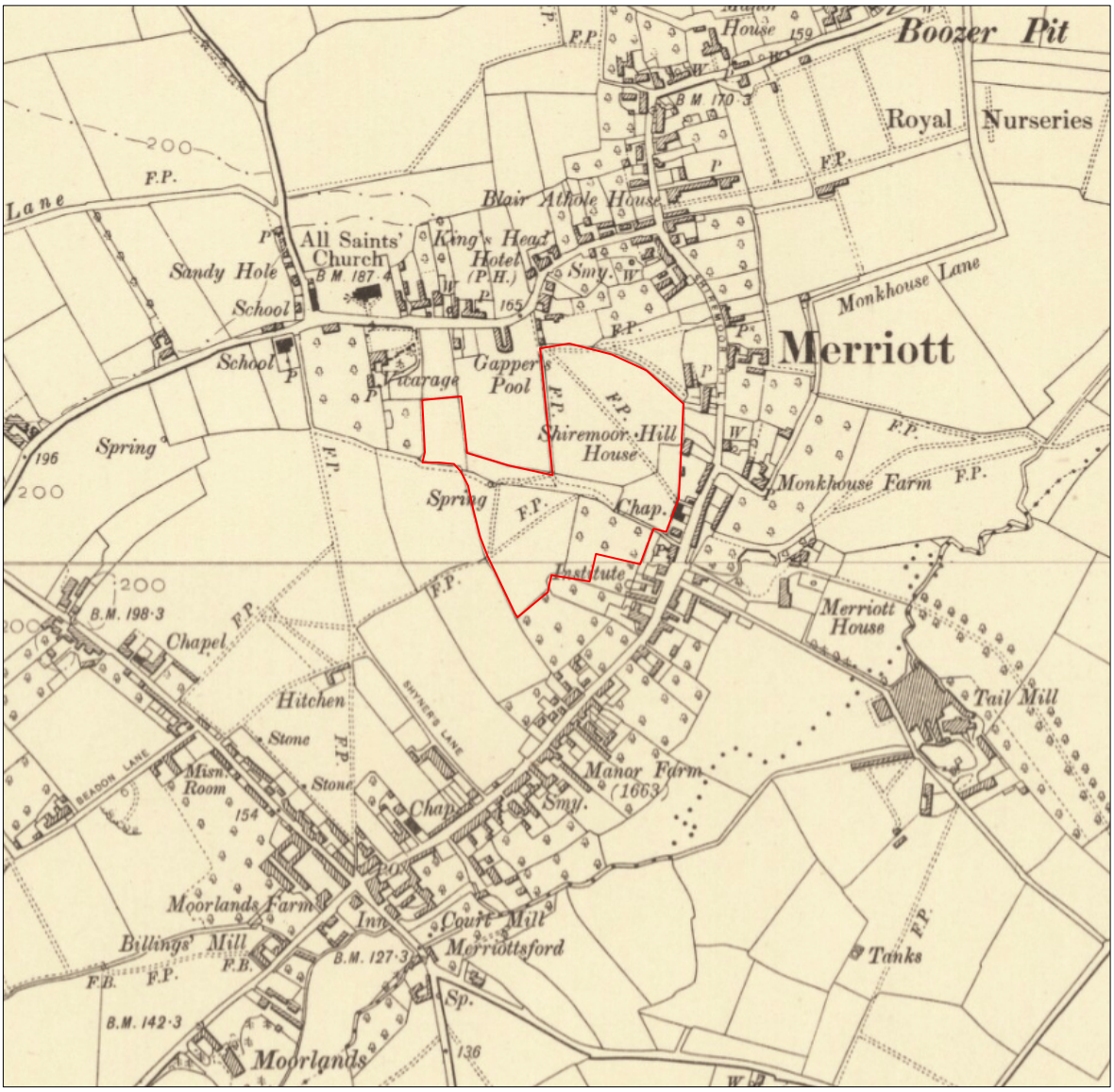

Figure 5: Composite extract from the 1904 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 6" map of Somerset sheet LXXXIX; the approximate outline of the site is indicated.

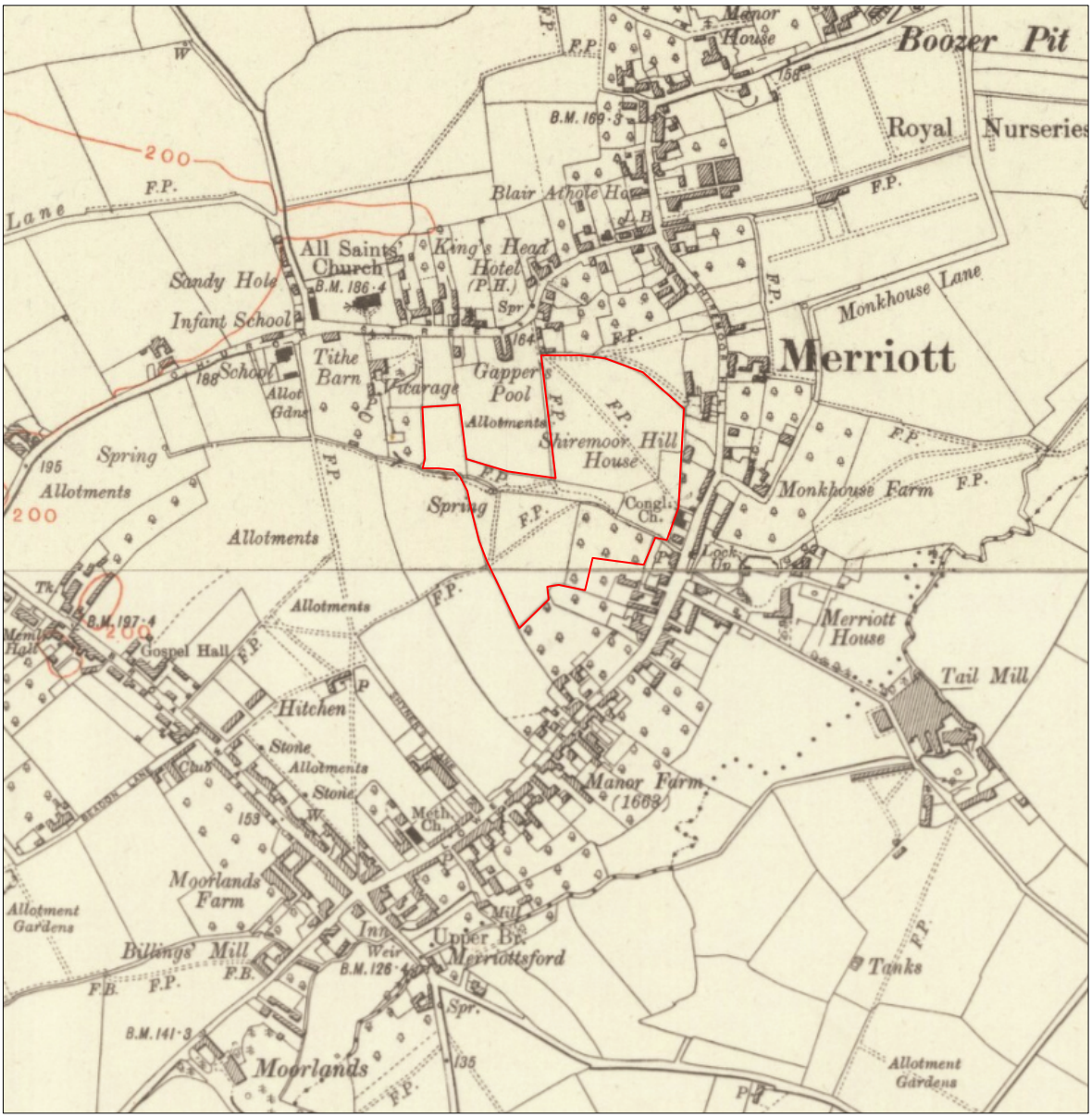

Figure 6: Composite extract from the 1930 Ordnance Survey 6" map of Somerset sheet LXXXIX; the approximate outline of the site is indicated.

3.0 Walkover Survey

A walkover survey was conducted across the site on the 13th of November 2015. The site was spread across three fields: one to the south of a transecting watercourse and two to the north (see Figure 7). The north fields are connected by a thin strip of land and the larger north field is divided diagonally in half with a barbed wire fence that follows a public right of way. This survey focuses on the areas subject to potential development: part of the larger north field and the south field. A complete compliment of supporting photographs can be seen in Appendix 4.

The north field had short grass for grazing. Its boundaries were comprised of hedgerows and post and wire fences. Subtle ridges were noted across the site aligned north-south, parallel to the slope and may reflect traces of ridge and furrow. However, these were sparse and very slight and across most of the field there were no visible earthworks. These slight undulations may therefore have been coincidental or allude to drainage. Some ground disturbance was noted reflecting vehicles around the edge of the field and across it towards the bridge between the north and south field. Fresh tracks were visible at the south-east entrance to this field. In the south-east corner of the field there was a concrete plinth that may indicate a drain and linear depressions representing historic and relict ditches and/or field boundaries were formerly present. One ran north from the short north-south boundary in the middle of the southern boundary to the field; the other ran north-east from approximately the same point. In this definable segment of the field were slight curving undulations that may reflect some further ground disturbance, i.e. drainage or plough scarring.

The south field also had a short grass crop for grazing and had hedgerow and post and wire fences with more substantial scrub, fencing or block walling along its southern sub-urban boundary. The field contained a frequent amount of slight ridges and undulations, particularly in its northern half and lower areas that may reflect medieval ploughing, flooding/drainage or naturally occurring rough ground. At the western end of the site was a ridge/terrace aligned and becoming steeper/more substantial south-north. It starts from just north of the western public access of the field to a fording point in the watercourse. At the southern end of this ridge a slight linear depression runs perpendicular to it to the east. South of- and approximately parallel to this linear depression is a more clearly definable irregular curving linear depression. This feature starts near the western public access to the field and runs east-south-east to define the south-west corner of the field. The south field is divided approximately in half by a slight undulation of a bank and depression aligned north-south and the eastern half is further divided in half by a low north-south bank. Between these two earthworks, located at the southern end of the eastern example was an east-west aligned shallow linear depression and south of- and parallel to that a substantial bank, *c.*18m in length, *c*.5m to 6m wide and up to 1m high. These earthworks in the eastern half of the site appear to define a possible rectilinear enclosure. The size of the substantial bank and survival of the eastern bank, which may once have also been substantial may indicate a secondary role as flood defences in the lower part of the site, east of the earlier mentioned terrace/ridge. The far eastern end of the south field had no visible earthworks or undulations. This area and indeed the substantial bank may have been the result of landscaping during construction of the 20th century housing development to the south.

4.0 Gradiometer Survey

4.1 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 any identified anomalies. The survey took place on the 13th of November 2015 by SWARCH personnel in wet and showery conditions. The field contained short grass for cattle pasture. The survey area was located to investigate the proposed development areas (Figure 7).

The survey identified six groups of anomalies; Groups 1, 2 and 3 are of probable archaeological origin; Groups 4 and 5 are of possible archaeological origin; Group 6 is a natural feature. Anomaly Group 1 equates to two historic field boundaries. Group 2 equates to a series of ditch features, which have bank earthworks in the southern half of the site that are visible on the ground. Group 3 is of a similar response to Group 1 and probably represents a removed field boundary. Group 4 may represent a terminus of a field boundary, although it aligned with a gully visible in the ground and may be a modern utilisation of an old ditch for drainage relating to the properties to the south-east. Group 5 appears to be the ridge of a gully/ditch that was visible on the surface. Group 6 indicates the slope of a ridge or terrace on the site. The entire site is scattered with weak dipolar responses of magnetic debris that indicates general ground disturbance with no clear cause. However, a series of subtle ridges and furrows, perhaps indicative of drainage rather than actual ridge and furrow were present on the site and these may be indicated by the magnetic debris. Areas of magnetic disturbance caused metallic objects also occurred. The subtle furrows may be natural features caused by flooding or drainage and the earthwork banks visible across the site may reflect substantial former boundaries as flood defences.

4.2 Methodology

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

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 (all grids); Interpolate X and Y, double resolution.

Details: 1.44ha surveyed; Max. 102.94nT, Min. -132.35nT; Standard Deviation 11.10nT, mean -0.26nT, median 0nT.

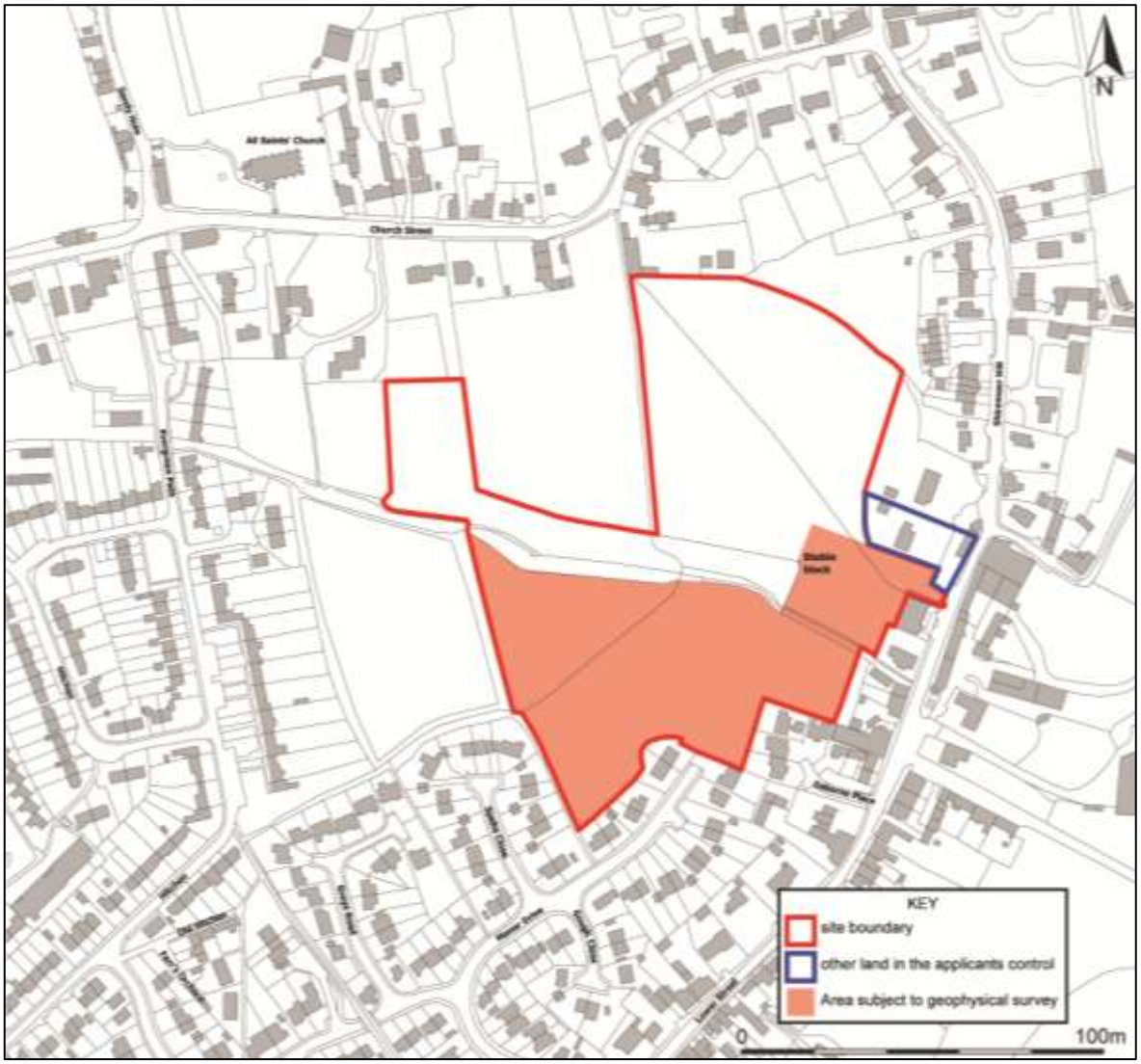

Figure 7: Site boundary and geophysical survey area in areas subject to potential development (base map supplied by WYG; Ref.: A085035-1drg01 revision A).

4.3 Results

Figures 8 and 9 with the accompanying Table 2 show the analyses and interpretation of the geophysical survey data. Additional graphic images of the survey data can be seen in Appendix 3.

Anomaly group	Class and Certainty	Form	Archaeological characterisation	Comments
1	Strong mixed response, probable	Linear	Field Boundary. Removed after 1930	Field boundary present on 1886 Ordnance Survey 1st edition and removed after 1930.
2	Weak positive, probable	Linear	Pre-1886 boundaries and ditches	The examples in the northern field could be seen as earthwork ditches on the ground: the examples in the southern field were visible as slight ditches with slight banks; the eastern-most of which was very clear. Part of a kinked east-west boundary on tithe map.
3	Strong mixed response, probable	Linear	Relict field boundary	Visible on the ground as a large earthwork bank (*c.*7m×13m+) over 1m high with slight flanking ditches. Its response is very similar to that of Group 1 and is most likely part of a boundary removed before 1886. Possibly designed with flood defence in mind. Length parallel to Group 3 part of a kinked east-west boundary on tithe map.
4	Strong mixed response, possible	Linear	Possible boundary terminus or drainage ditch	Similar in response to Groups 1 and 3, however on the ground it aligned with a cut feature and a slight ridge to the north-west (Group 5) and may contain debris associated with drainage for the modern buildings to the south-east.
5	Weak negative, possible	Linear	Bank/ridge	This is associated with a ditch feature visible on the ground and similar to those represented by Group 2.
6	Weak magnetic variation, possible	Linear	Extant ridge/ slope	A natural or modified terrace is located in this part of the site and leads to a modified fording point of the watercourse, which was once the route of a footpath on the Ordnance Survey mapping 1886-1904.

Table 2: Interpretation of the gradiometer survey data.

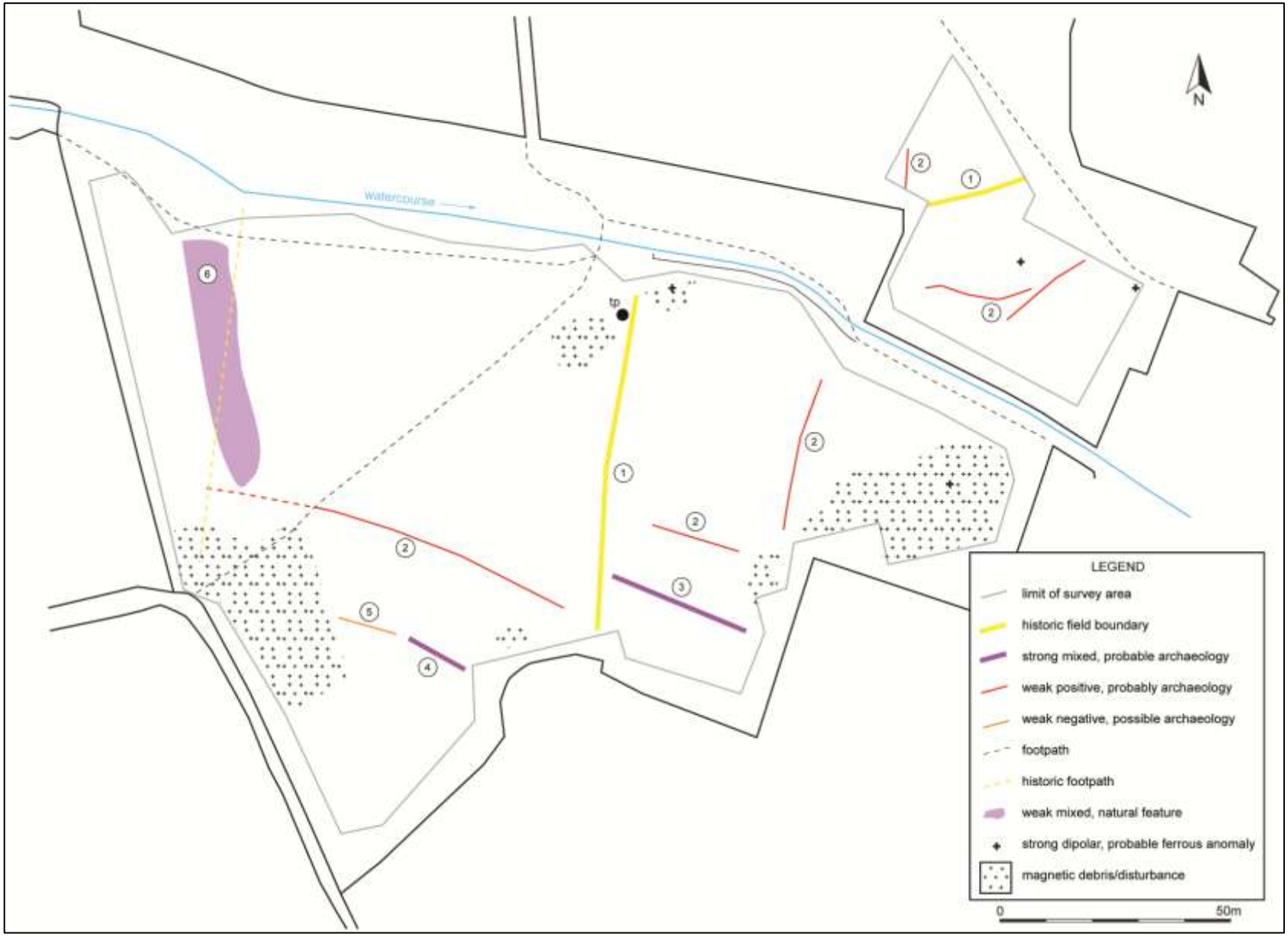

Figure 8: Interpretation of gradiometer survey data.

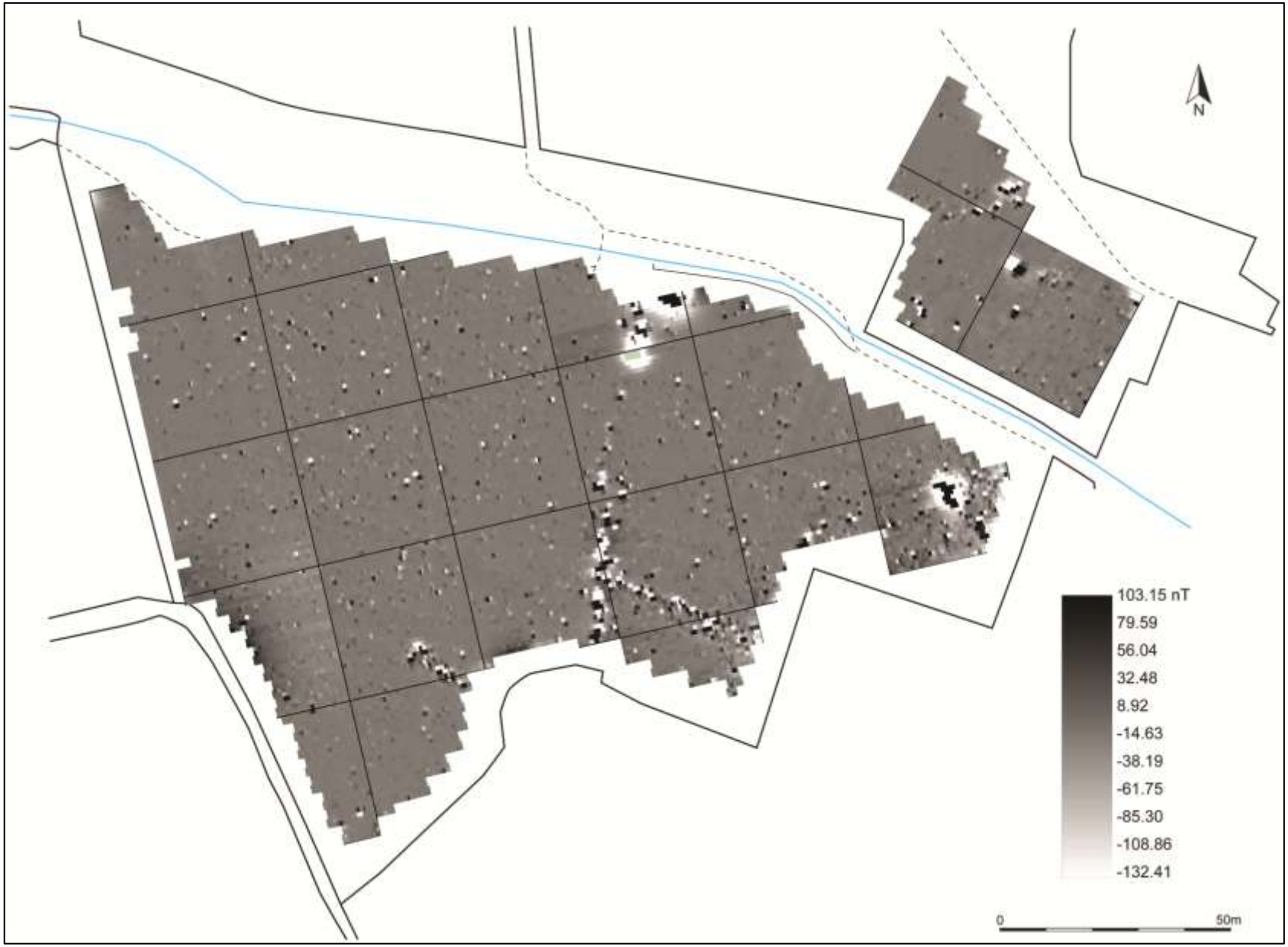

Figure 9: Shade plot of gradiometer survey results (minimal processing).

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The survey identified six groups of anomalies; Groups 1, 2 and 3 are of probable archaeological origin; Groups 4 and 5 are of possible archaeological origin; Group 6 is a natural feature.

Anomaly Group 1 equates to two historic field boundaries which are present on the 1886 OS map and still present on the 1930 OS map. These boundaries are visible on the ground as slight linear depression in the north field and a slight ridge in the south field. In the southern field the eastern half of the site as defined by one of these boundaries is depicted as an orchard on the OS mapping between 1886 and 1930.

Group 2 equates to a series of ditch features, which in the southern half of the site have bank earthworks that are visible on the ground. The alignment of these southern features coincides with those of the historic field boundaries on the 1886 OS map, and it may be that they represent banks and shallow ditches defining the edges of individual strips of land relating to the medieval strip-field system identified on the HLC and OS mapping. In the northern survey area, the north-south alignment of the westernmost feature of the group suggests that it may form a continuation of a relict field boundary. Despite the converging nature of the other two features in this area, these may also form part of the field system at a point where strips within an irregularly shaped field meet. In the southern field the two eastern linear anomalies associated with Group 2 can be extrapolated to approximately meet and follow existing boundaries, particularly the approximately aligned north-south boundary already described and associated with Group 2 in the north field. Furthermore, the waterlogged nature of the land may indicate an alternative function of the banked features, perhaps as a means of flood management, restricting how much of the fields floods at any one time. The example that runs parallel to Group 3 may be associated with it and be part of a kinked, modified east-west boundary between the orchards in the south-east of the site depicted on the tithe map. The western example of this anomaly group follows a trajectory between the boundary at its east end and the western entrance to the field and probably represents a removed field boundary associated with an earlier strip field system that is absent from the cartographic record.

Group 3 is of a similar response to Group 1 that may be part of a kinked, modified east-west boundary between the orchards in the south-east of the site depicted on the tithe map. It probably represents a removed field boundary associated with an earlier strip field system.

Group 4 may represent a terminus of a field boundary, although it is aligned with a gully visible in the ground and may be a modern utilisation of an old ditch for drainage relating to the properties to the south-east.

Group 5 appears to be the ridge of a gully/ditch that was visible on the surface, its position and alignment indicating that it may be associated with the Group 4 boundary terminus.

Group 6 indicates the slope of a ridge or terrace on the site that is probably of a natural origin as the survey response is indicative of weak geological variation.

The entire site is scattered with the weak dipolar responses of magnetic debris that indicates general ground disturbance with no clear cause. However, a series of subtle ridges and furrows, perhaps indicative of drainage rather than actual ridge and furrow were present on the site and these may be subtly indicated by the magnetic debris. Areas of magnetic disturbance caused by

metallic objects and existing boundaries also occurred. The subtle furrows may be natural features caused by flooding or drainage and the earthwork banks visible across the site may reflect substantial former boundaries that doubled-up as flood defences.

5.2 Conclusion

The desk-based assessment, walkover survey and geophysical survey all compliment one another's evidence regarding the presence of historic and relict field boundaries in the area subject to potential development on the site.

The geophysical survey indicates there are features of archaeological origin present within the area of the proposed development associated with a mid 19th century field system. A number of linear anomalies occur within the development area that are not accounted for in the cartographic evidence though their alignment is contiguous with that of the surrounding field system and suggests that they may be attributable to an earlier medieval strip field system associated with the medieval settlement of Merriott.

Any development is likely to disturb these archaeological deposits or remains alluded to by the geophysical survey. These deposits and features appear however to be of low significance, and it is not believed that further archaeological investigated is warranted.

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