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Land at Patshull Road
Albrighton
Shropshire

Geophysical Survey

Report no. 4218
December 2024

Client: Boningale Homes Ltd



Land at Patshull Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Geophysical Survey

Summary

A geophysical (magnetometer) survey was undertaken on approximately 47 hectares of land located to the east and west of Patshull Road, Albrighton, Shropshire. The majority of the anomalies recorded are agricultural including former field boundaries, modern ploughing and land drains. Geological responses seen within the dataset reflect either the topography of the site or discrete pockets of natural variations. Ferrous responses within the dataset correspond to former ponds and the foundations of a pylon. Magnetic disturbance along the limits of the survey areas is due to interference from metal fencing within the boundaries, adjacent roads and buildings. Based on the geophysical survey, the archaeological potential of this Site is deemed to be low.



Report Information

Client: Boningale Homes Ltd.
Report Type: Geophysical Survey
Location: Albrighton
County: Shropshire
Grid Reference: SJ 8081 0325
Period(s) of activity: Post-medieval
Report Number: 4218
Project Number: XP28
Site Code: ABR24
OASIS ID: archaeol11-530097
Date of fieldwork: November 2024
Date of report: December 2024
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Authorisation for
distribution: _____



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Document Issue Record

Ver	Author(s)	Reviewer	Approver	Date
1.0	JF/EB	DW	JR	Nov 2024
2.0	JF/EB	DW	JR	Dec 2024

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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services ASWYAS has been commissioned by Boningale Homes Limited to undertake a geophysical survey at land at Patshull Road, Albrighton, Shropshire. This was undertaken in line with current best practice (CIfA 2020; Schmidt *et al.* 2015). The survey was carried out between 19th and 21st November 2024 to provide additional information on the archaeological resource of the Site.

Site location, topography and land-use

The Site is located at SJ 8081 0325 (approximate centre), comprising c. 47ha over three parcels (Fields 1-8) situated to the south of Albrighton (see Fig. 1).

The Site is situated to the east and west of Patshull Road on land consisting of a young crop (see Plates 1-8). The westernmost parcel is bounded to the north and west by Cross Road, and to the east by Patshull Road. The central parcel is bounded to the north by agricultural fields, to the west by Patshull Road and to the east by Newhouse Lane. The easternmost parcel is bounded to the west by Newhouse Lane, to the south by Holyhead Road and to the east by agricultural fields. Fields at the site are divided by hedgerows. The above Ordnance Datum (aOD) for the site ranges from 97m in the northwest to 90m in the southeast.

Soils and geology

Most of the bedrock geology at the Site comprises Mercia mudstone group - mudstone and halite-stone, a sedimentary bedrock that formed between 252.2 and 201.3 million years ago during the Triassic period. Both the southwest and southeast areas are recorded as the Helsby sandstone formation - sandstone, pebbly (gravelly), a sedimentary bedrock that formed between 247.1 and 241.5 million years ago during the Triassic period. Superficial deposits have been recorded across some of the Site as Till, Devensian – diamicton, a sedimentary superficial deposit which formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period (BGS 2024).

Soils at the Site comprise slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (Soilscape 18) (CSAI 2024).

2 Archaeological Background

The following archaeological background has been taken from a heritage assessment provided by Pegasus Group (Millward and Harris 2024). Designated heritage assets are referenced using their seven-digit NHLE number, HER ‘event’ numbers have the prefix ‘ESA’ and HER ‘monument’ numbers have no prefix.

A Mesolithic scraper (00278) was recovered from Pepperhill c. 775m southeast of the Site and a stone macehead (01812), or weight, of Bronze Age date was recovered c. 705m northwest of the Site.

There are no archaeological assets or findspots of Romano-British date recorded within the Site or study area. The absence of Romano-British activity indicates there is a very low potential for evidence of this date to be identified within the Site.

The HER does not record any heritage assets of early medieval or medieval date within the Site or wider area, but an Anglo-Saxon presence is acknowledged given the inclusion of Albrighton in the Domesday Book. The Saxon foundation of the settlement is also noted in the placename, Albrighton being derived from the Saxon name Albric.

At the time of the survey for Domesday Book (1086) Albrighton was recorded as being held by Norman. There was land for four ploughs, 13 slaves, three villains and 3 bordars. Woodland within the manor was recorded as being suitable for fattening 100 pigs although this was being held by King William. Prior to the Conquest, Albrighton was held as two manors by Algar and Godgyth.

A parcel of ridge and furrow ploughing (33238) is recorded c. 45m north of the Site.

The likely area of the earliest medieval settlement at Albrighton (05389) lies close to the Church although there is limited extant evidence. The location of the medieval urban form of Albrighton (05385) equates largely to the existing core of the settlement complete with the major streets (05384) and marketplace (05383). Tenement plots (05373; 05377-05382; and 05390) have been identified and mapped within Albrighton.

The Shrewsbury Arms (13760) is an inn which was previously a house known as 'The Talbot'. The house dates to the 15th or early 16th century and is Grade II listed. The house is thought to have either been the Hall of the Talbots or their steward's house. The Shrewsbury Arms lies c. 695m north of the Site.

The Church of St Mary Magdalene (13758), its associated churchyard (05376), churchyard cross (01839) and a 12th-century altar tomb (05369), are located on Albrighton High Street, c. 710m north of the Site. The Church is Grade II* listed whilst the cross is both a Scheduled Monument and Grade II* listed.

The Church of St Chad (13792) in Boningale and the Church of St Cuthbert (13801) in Donington are both medieval buildings and are Grade II* listed. Medieval crosses (01841 and 01840) are present in both of the churchyards and are designated as Scheduled Monuments. The cross in Boningale is also Grade II listed whilst the cross in Donington is Grade II* listed. The churches are located c. 240m southeast and 965m north of the Site, respectively.

A possible moated site (04106) has been recorded at Bowling Green Farm and three other farmsteads with medieval origins have also been identified within the Study Area, namely,

Lea Hall Farm (22011); Church Farm (26191) and Old Farm House (26192). The farmsteads are located c. 925m northwest, 100m west, 225m south, and 205m south of the Site, respectively.

During the post-medieval period, the settlement pattern within the Study Area remained similar to that of the medieval period. Nucleated settlements at Albrighton, Boningale and Donington remained with an agricultural hinterland which included farms and gentry houses.

3 Aims, Methodology and Presentation

The aims and objectives of the programme of geophysical survey were to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, character and extent, of any archaeological remains within the specific area and to inform an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. To achieve this aim, a magnetometer survey covering all amenable parts of the Site was undertaken (see Fig. 2).

The general aims of the geophysical survey were:

- to provide information about the nature and possible interpretation of any magnetic anomalies identified;
- to therefore determine the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological features; and
- to prepare a report summarising the results of the survey.

Magnetometer survey

The cart-based survey was undertaken using an eight channel SenSYS MX V3 system containing eight FGM650 sensors. Readings are taken every 20MHz (between 0.05 and 0.1m). Data were recorded onto a device, using a Carlson GNSS Smart antenna, for centimetre accuracy. These readings were stored in the memory of the instrument and downloaded for processing and interpretation. DLMGPS and MAGNETO software, alongside bespoke in-house software was used to process and present the data. Further details are given in Appendix 1.

Reporting

A general site location plan, incorporating the 1:50000 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, is shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 displays processed magnetometer data at a scale of 1:5000 whilst Figure 3 shows an overview of the interpretation at the same scale. Processed and minimally processed data, together with interpretation of the survey results are presented in Figures 4 to 12 inclusive at a scale of 1:1500.

Technical information on the equipment used, data processing and survey methodologies are given in Appendix 1. Technical information on locating the survey area is provided in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 describes the composition and location of the archive. A copy of the completed OASIS form is included in Appendix 4.

The survey methodology, report and any recommendations comply with guidelines outlined by the European Archaeological Council (Schmidt *et al.* 2015) and by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020). All figures reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping are with the permission of the controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown copyright).

The figures in this report have been produced following analysis of the data in processed formats and over a range of different display levels. All figures are presented to most suitably display and interpret the data from this site based on the experience and knowledge of Archaeological Services staff.

4 Results and Discussion (see Figures 4 to 12)

Ferrous anomalies and magnetic disturbance

Ferrous anomalies, as individual 'spikes', or as large discrete areas are typically caused by ferrous (magnetic) material, either on the ground surface or in the plough-soil. Little importance is normally given to such anomalies, unless there is any supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, as modern ferrous debris or material is common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring or tipping/infilling. There is no obvious pattern or clustering to their distribution in this survey to suggest anything other than a random background scatter of ferrous debris in the plough-soil.

Ferrous responses **F1** and **F2** in Field 6 correspond to the locations of former ponds which are shown on old mapping published 1888 (NLS 2024). By the map published 1952, **F1** is no longer visible and by 1966, **F2** is also not visible.

Circular ferrous response **F3** in Field 6 corresponds to a former electricity pylon which is shown on historic mapping published 1966 (NLS 2024). The anomaly appears as a 'button' response which relates to the corners of the pillar, or the foundations remaining *in situ*.

Magnetic disturbance along the limits of the survey areas is due to interference from metal fencing within the boundaries, adjacent roads and buildings.

Geological anomalies

The survey has detected a handful of anomalies that have been interpreted as geological in origin. It is thought that the responses have been detected because of the variation in the composition and depth of the deposits of superficial material in which they derive.

To some degree, ploughing has also spread magnetic material across the site making it difficult to determine any coherent patterns. Fragmented, negative linear responses have also been interpreted as geological in origin. They likely represent desiccation cracks in the subsurface due to evaporated water that was once deposited in the soil.

Agricultural anomalies

Former field boundaries (**FB1 – FB7**) have been recorded within Fields 1-4 and 6. They all correspond to historic mapping dating from 1883. Boundaries **FB4** in Field 3 and **FB5** in Field 4 have been removed by the mapping published 1952 and **FB6** in Field 4 has been removed by 1960 (NLS 2024).

Field drains can be seen within Fields 2-5. They are of differing magnetic strength which is likely to be associated with the construction material of the drains. Those that are particularly strong such as in Field 3 are likely to be of a fired clay construction.

Parallel linear trends can be seen within all areas and are associated with modern ploughing. Only a selection of these have been highlighted on the interpretation diagrams to show the direction of the plough lines.

5 Conclusions

The geophysical survey has detected a number of magnetic anomalies associated mainly with an agricultural landscape including former field boundaries, modern ploughing and land drains.

Geological responses seen within the dataset reflect either the topography of the site or discrete pockets of natural variations. Ferrous responses within the dataset correspond to former ponds and the foundations of a pylon. Magnetic disturbance along the limits of the survey areas is due to interference from metal fencing within the boundaries, adjacent roads and buildings.

Based on the geophysical survey, the archaeological potential of this Site is deemed to be low.

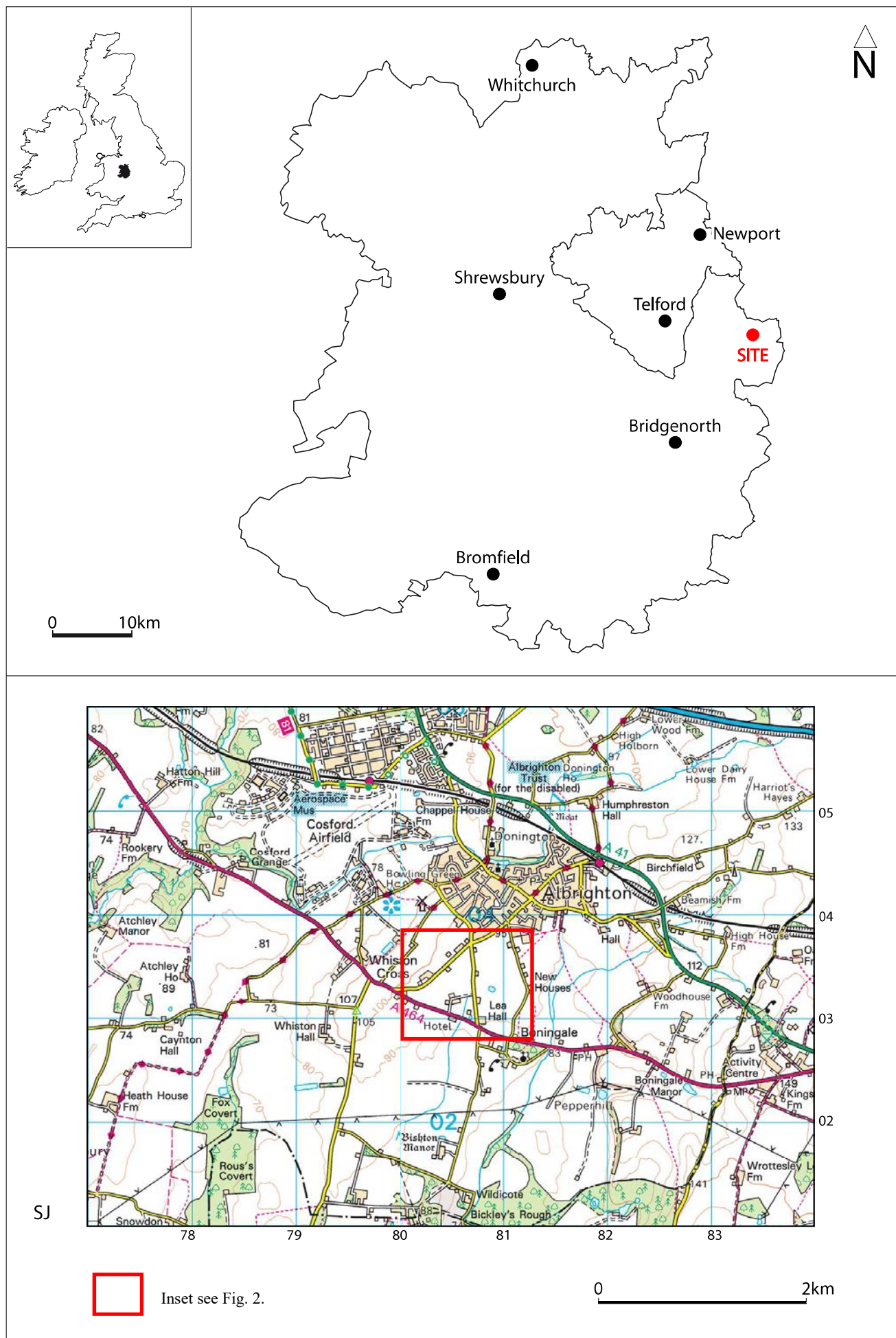
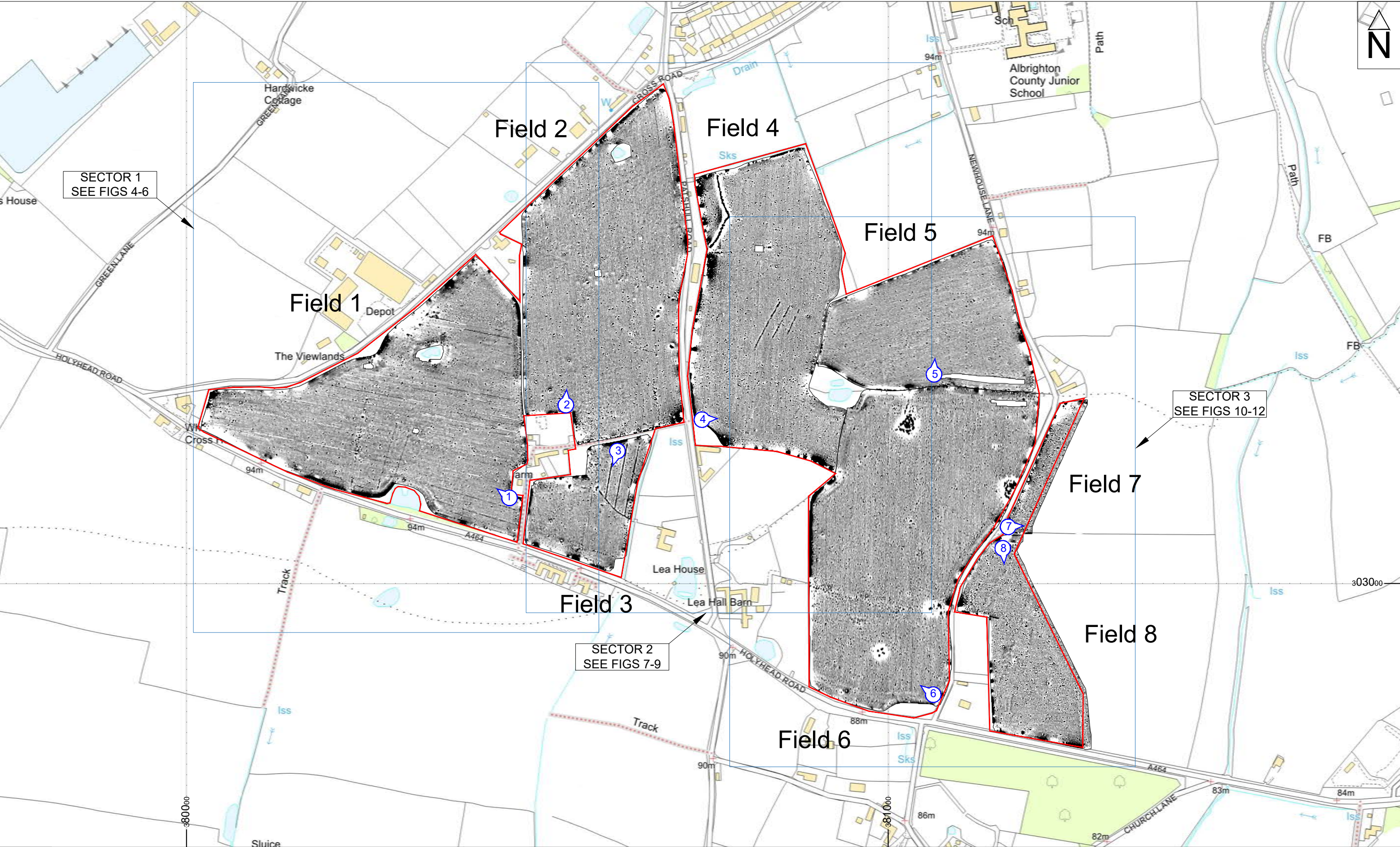


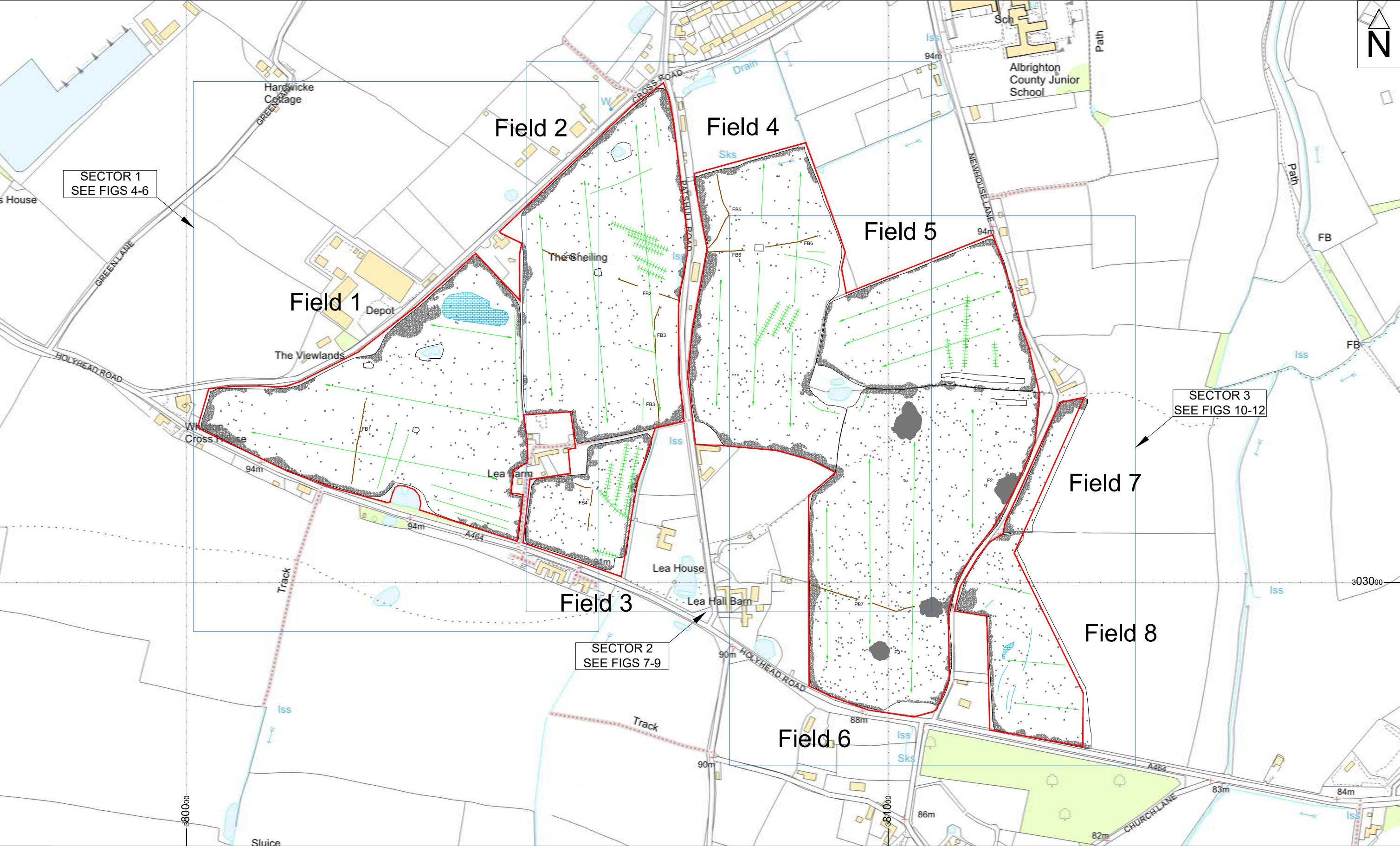
Fig. 1. Site location



Title	
	SURVEY AREA
	SECTOR BOUNDARY
	PHOTO LOCATIONS



Fig.2





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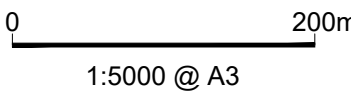
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Overall interpretation of processed magnetometer data

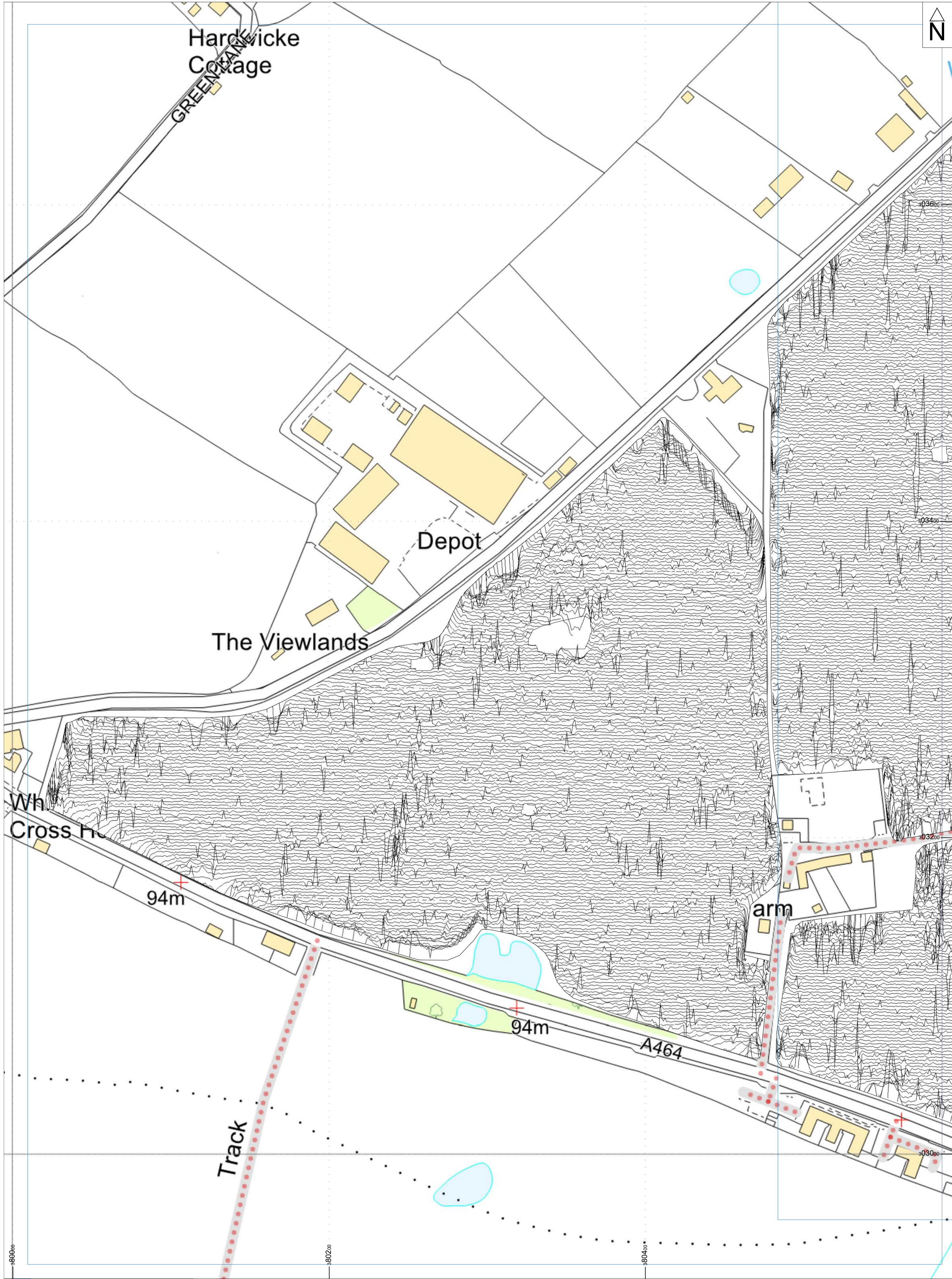
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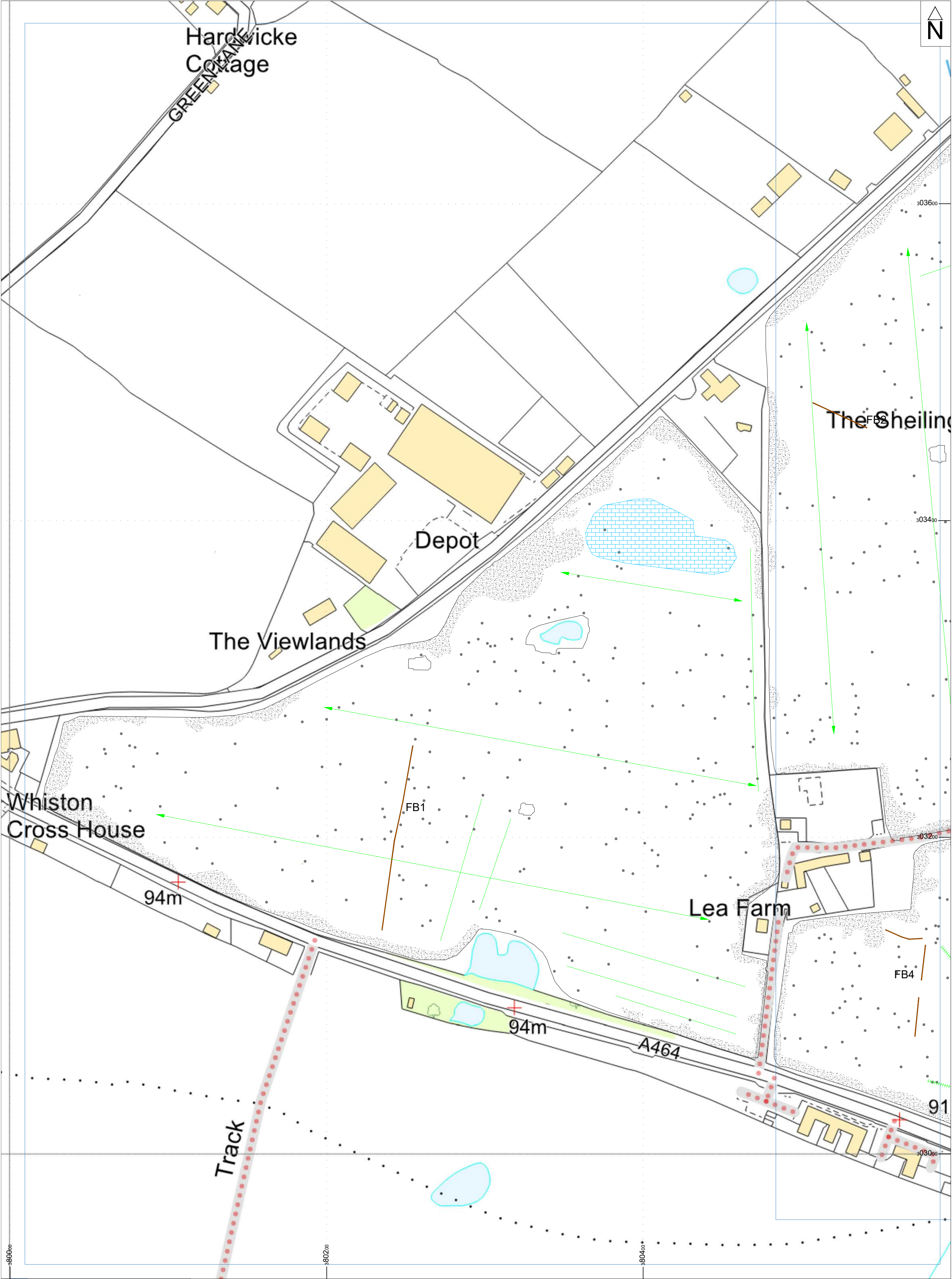
Fig.3

Title		Interpretation	
	SURVEY AREA		FERROUS
	SECTOR BOUNDARY		MAGNETIC DISTURBANCE
			FIELD DRAIN
			AGRICULTURAL
			FORMER FIELD BOUNDARY
			GEOLOGY









Title		Interpretation			
	SECTOR BOUNDARY		FERROUS		AGRICULTURAL
			MAGNETIC DISTURBANCE		FORMER FIELD BOUNDARY
			FIELD DRAIN		GEOLOGY

