

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex,

Author: Rebecca Davies Sumo

Approved: Peter Reeves RPS

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Survey Report 15868: Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex

Survey dates 2-3 September 2019

Field co-ordinator Andrew Bateman MSc

Field Team Oliver Thomas

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CAD Illustrations Rebecca Davies BSc

Report Author Rebecca Davies BSc

Project Manager Simon Haddrell BEng AMBCS PCIfA

Report approved Dr John Gater BSc DSc(Hon) MCIfA FSA

SUMO Geophysics Ltd

Cowburn Farm
Market Street
Thornton
Bradford
BD13 3HW

T: 01274 835016

SUMO Geophysics Ltd

Vineyard House
Upper Hook Road
Upton upon Severn
Worcestershire
WR8 0SA

T: 01684 592266

www.sumoservices.com
geophysics@sumoservices.com

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Detailed magnetic survey (magnetometry) was chosen as the most efficient and effective method of locating the type of archaeological anomalies which might be expected at this site.

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3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- 3.1 A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted over approximately 7.2 ha of land to the north of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Essex. No definite archaeological anomalies have been identified, though a few linear trends of uncertain origin have been mapped. A few old field boundaries have been detected, plus land drains, evidence for modern ploughing and areas of natural variation.

4 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 **SUMO Geophysics Ltd** were commissioned to undertake a geophysical survey of an area outlined for residential development. This survey forms part of an archaeological investigation being undertaken by **RPS Group** on behalf of **Bloor Homes Eastern**.

4.2 Site details

NGR / Postcode	TL 974 292 / CO6 4AX
Location	The site is located immediately north of Coach Road, to the west of Horkesley Heath and south of Great Horkesley, Essex. Gala Close bounds the site to the east, with Coach Road to the south-west and agricultural land to the north-west.
HER	Colchester Borough
District	Colchester
Parish	Great Horkesley
Topography	Mostly level, very slightly sloping down towards the south-east.
Current Land Use	Arable - harvested crop
Geology (BGS 2019)	Bedrock: London Clay Formation - clay, silt and sand. Superficial: Cover Sand - clay, silt and sand.
Soils (CU 2019)	Soilscape 8: slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.
Archaeology (RPS 2019)	A single known non-designate heritage asset, the former extents of Horkesley Heath, is recorded within the southern part of the site, though the site has subsequently been used for arable farming, and briefly as an orchard, thereby removing any traces of the former heathland. The 20 th century use of the site as an orchard would have resulted in severe localised truncation of deposits where trees were planted and subsequently grubbed out.
Survey Methods	Magnetometer survey (fluxgate gradiometer)
Study Area	7.2 ha

4.3 Aims and Objectives

To locate and characterise any anomalies of possible archaeological interest within the study area.

5 RESULTS

The survey has been divided into two survey areas (Areas 1-2) and specific anomalies have been given numerical labels [1] [2] which appear in the text below, as well as on the Interpretation Figure(s).

5.1 **Probable / Possible Archaeology**

- 5.1.1 No magnetic responses have been recorded that could be interpreted as being of archaeological interest.

5.2 **Uncertain**

- 5.2.1 A few weak linear trends have been identified in the eastern half of the site and are of uncertain origin. The responses are unlikely to have an archaeological provenance and are thought more likely to be associated with the series of land drains visible in the site or have other agricultural origins.

5.3 **Former Field Boundary**

- 5.3.1 Three positive linear anomalies [1-3] have been mapped in the data, across both parcels within the site. The responses are commensurate with the locations of old field boundaries, visible on historic OS maps of the site dating from c. 1888 (Fig. 04).

5.4 **Agricultural – Ploughing / Land Drains**

- 5.4.1 A series of positive linear anomalies have been identified across the site, predominantly in the east with in a 'herringbone' arrangement. The responses are characteristic of land drains, and the north-south aligned response [4] in Area 2 corresponds with a drain marked on the c. 1888 OS map (Fig. 04). It is possible that some of the other drains are associated with the former orchards recorded on the site.
- 5.4.2 Magnetically weak, closely spaced, parallel linear anomalies have been mapped across both areas on a north-south alignment and are a result of modern agricultural activity, such as ploughing.

5.5 **Natural / Geological / Pedological / Topographic**

- 5.5.1 A number of sinuous and amorphous areas of enhanced magnetic response have been detected, largely in the east of the site. These are likely to be of natural origin, i.e. relating to localised variations in the underlying geology or superficial deposits.

5.6 **Ferrous / Magnetic Disturbance**

- 5.6.1 Ferrous responses close to boundaries are due to adjacent fences and gates. Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ("iron spikes") are present throughout the data and are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris (or brick / tile) in the topsoil; they are commonly assigned a modern origin. Only the most prominent of these are highlighted on the interpretation diagram.

6 DATA APPRAISAL & CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

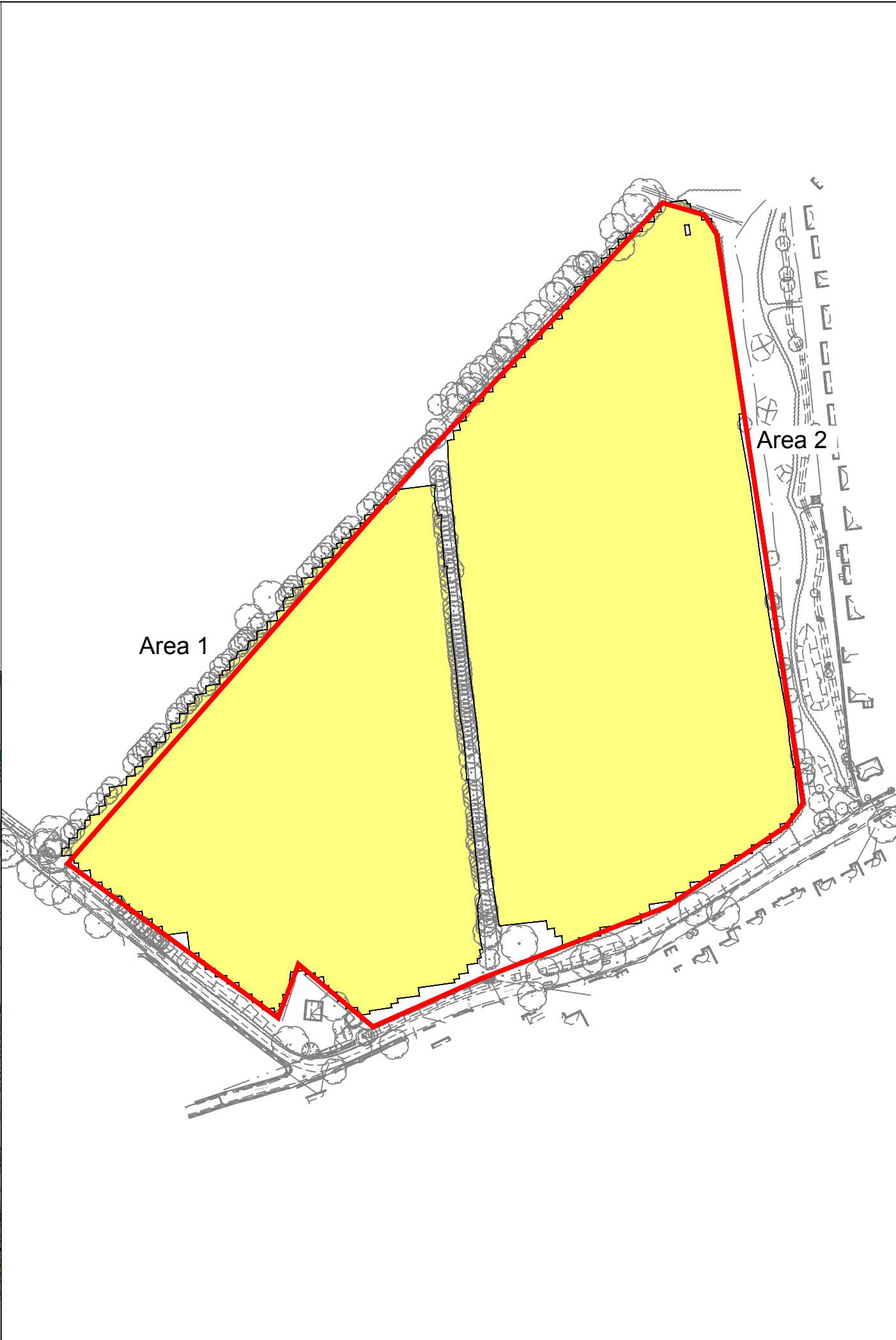
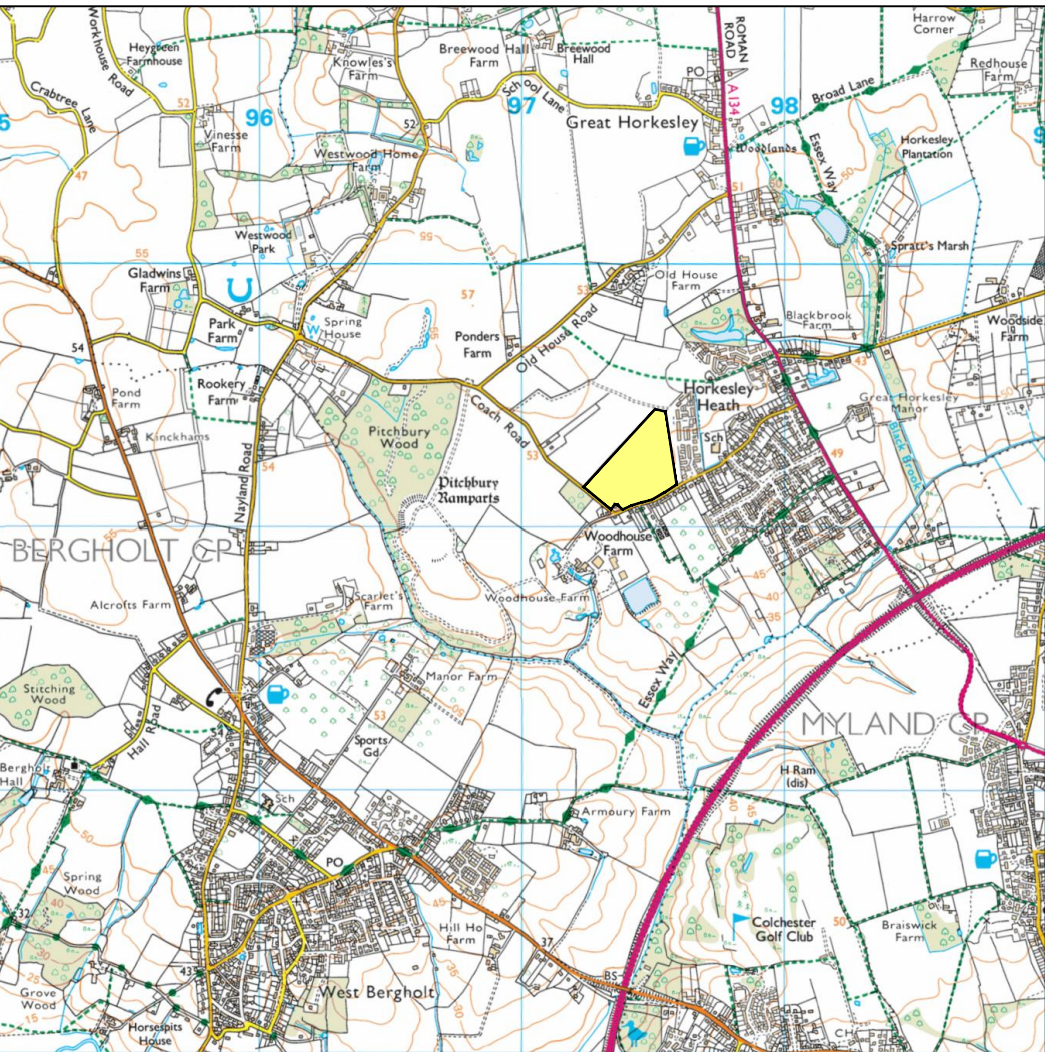
- 6.1 Historic England guidelines (EH 2008) Table 4 states that the typical magnetic response on the local soils / geology is often poor but can produce variable results. The results from this survey indicate the presence of former field boundaries plus land drains, and there is no *a priori* reason to suggest that archaeological anomalies would not have been identified, if present.

7 CONCLUSION



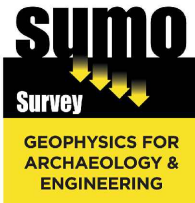
- 7.1 The survey on land off Coach Road, Great Horkesley, has not identified any anomalies of archaeological interest. A few weak linear trends of uncertain origin have been identified, though they are likely to be agricultural or modern. A number of old field boundaries have been mapped, along with a series of land drains, modern ploughing effects and areas of natural magnetic variation.

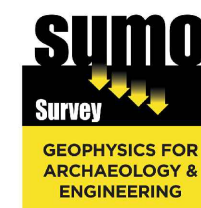
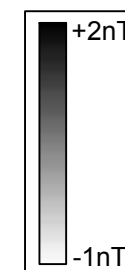
8 REFERENCES

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- RPS 2019 *Land off Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex - Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. RPS Group; unpublished report.



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	Survey Areas	
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Client: RPS Group		
Project: 15868 - Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex		
Scale: NOT TO SCALE		Fig No: 01



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Magnetometer Survey - Greyscale Plots

Client:
RPS Group

Project:
15868 - Land North of Coach Road, Great
Horkesley, Colchester, Essex

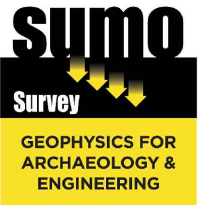
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1:1500 @ A3

Fig No:
02

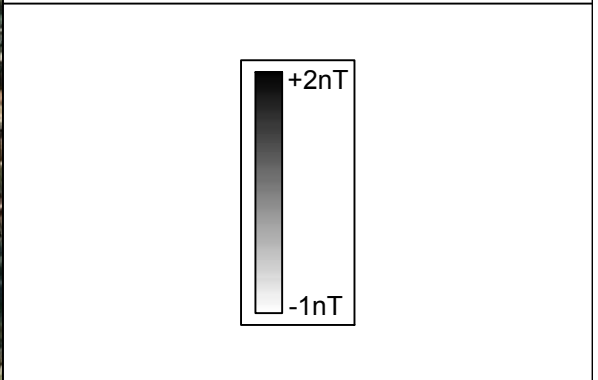
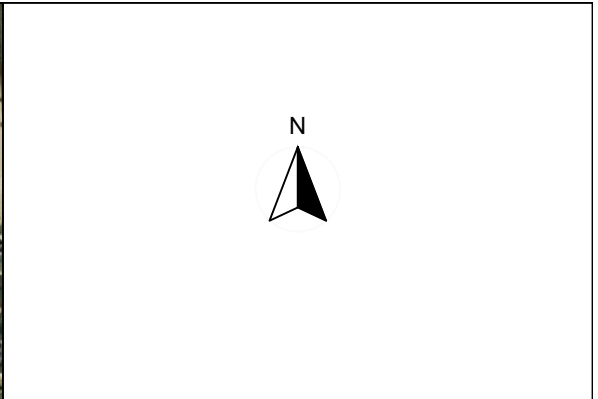


KEY

	Uncertain Origin (trend)
	Former field boundary (corroborated)
	Agriculture (plough)
	Land drain
	Natural (e.g. geological / pedological)
	Magnetic disturbance
	Ferrous

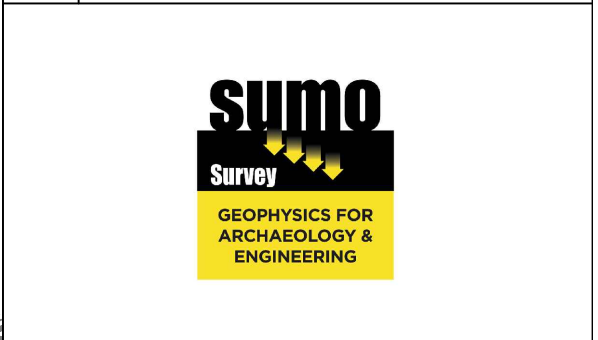


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Client:	RPS Group	
Project:	15868 - Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex	
Scale:		Fig No: 03



KEY

	Uncertain Origin (trend)
	Former field boundary (corroborated)
	Agriculture (plough)
	Land drain
	Natural (e.g. geological / pedological)
	Magnetic disturbance
	Ferrous



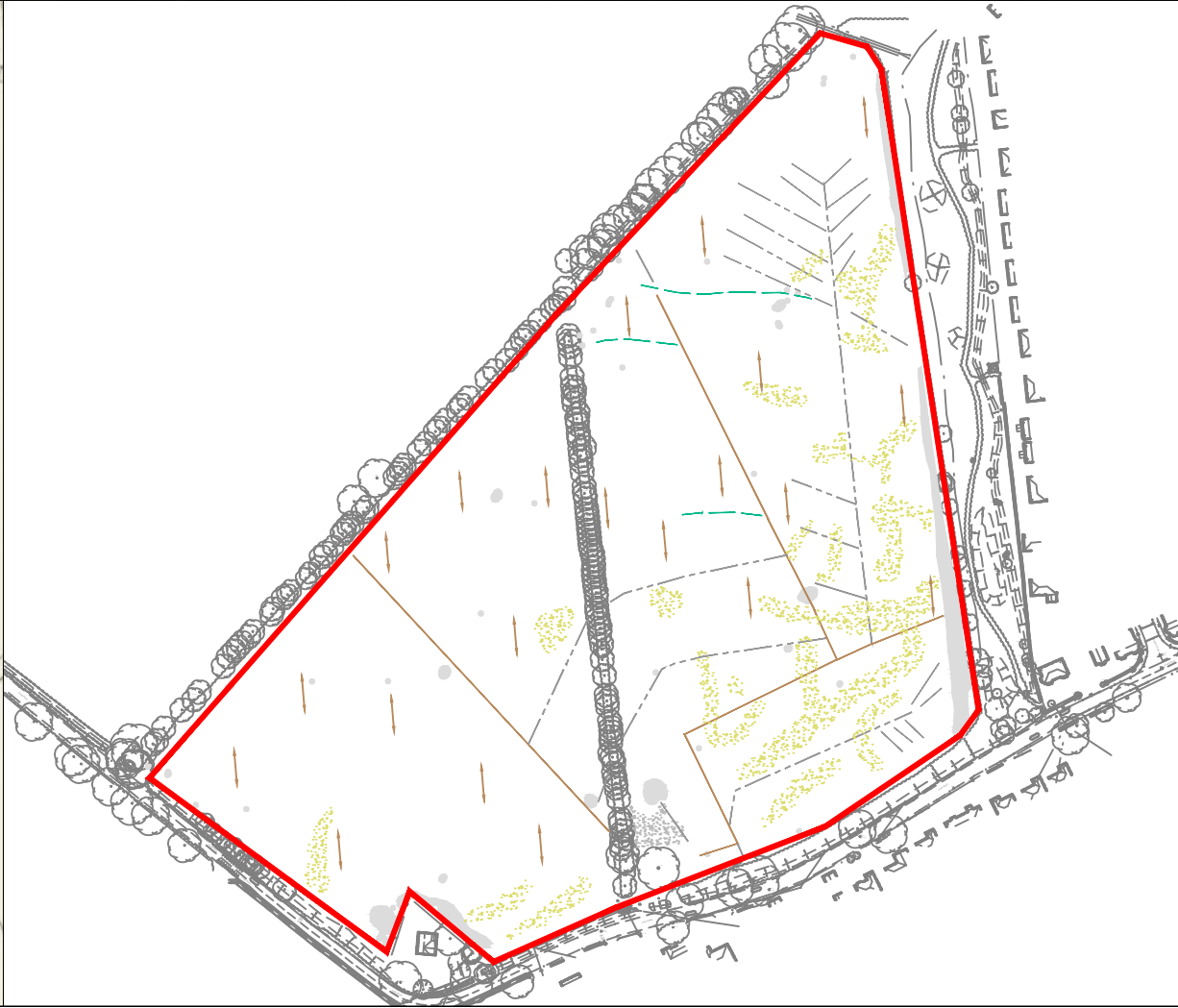
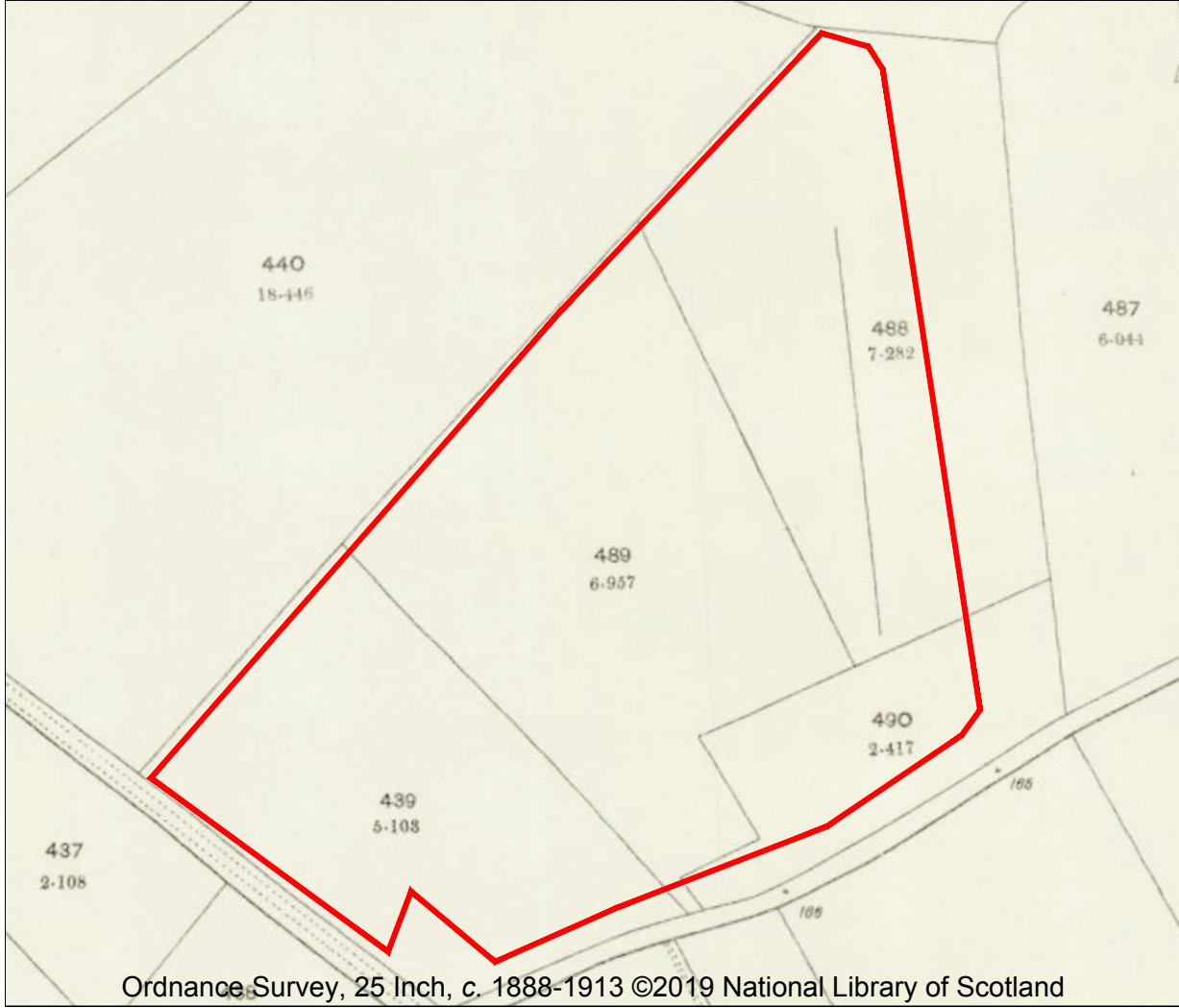
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Client: RPS Group

Project: 15868 - Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex

Scale: 0 metres 150
1:3000 @ A3

Fig No: 04



Standards & Guidance

This report and all fieldwork have been conducted in accordance with the latest guidance documents issued by Historic England (EH 2008) (then English Heritage), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014) and the European Archaeological Council (EAC 2016).

Grid Positioning

For hand held gradiometers the location of the survey grids has been plotted together with the referencing information. Grids were set out using a Trimble R8 Real Time Kinematic (RTK) VRS Now GNSS GPS system.

An RTK GPS (Real-time Kinematic Global Positioning System) can locate a point on the ground to a far greater accuracy than a standard GPS unit. A standard GPS suffers from errors created by satellite orbit errors, clock errors and atmospheric interference, resulting in an accuracy of 5m-10m. An RTK system uses a single base station receiver and a number of mobile units. The base station re-broadcasts the phase of the carrier it measured, and the mobile units compare their own phase measurements with those they received from the base station. This results in an accuracy of around 0.01m.

Technique	Instrument	Traverse Interval	Sample Interval
Magnetometer	Bartington Grad 601-2	1m	0.25m

Instrumentation: **Bartington Grad 601-2**

Bartington instruments operate in a gradiometer configuration which comprises fluxgate sensors mounted vertically, set 1.0m apart. The fluxgate gradiometer suppresses any diurnal or regional effects. The instruments are carried, or cart mounted, with the bottom sensor approximately 0.1-0.3m from the ground surface. At each survey station, the difference in the magnetic field between the two fluxgates is measured in nanoTesla (nT). The sensitivity of the instrument can be adjusted; for most archaeological surveys the most sensitive range (0.1nT) is used. Generally, features up to 1m deep may be detected by this method, though strongly magnetic objects may be visible at greater depths. The Bartington instrument can collect two lines of data per traverse with gradiometer units mounted laterally with a separation of 1.0m. The readings are logged consecutively into the data logger which in turn is daily down-loaded into a portable computer whilst on site. At the end of each site survey, data is transferred to the office for processing and presentation.

Data Processing

Zero Mean	This process sets the background mean of each traverse within each grid to zero.
Traverse	The operation removes striping effects and edge discontinuities over the whole of the data set.
Step Correction (De-stagger)	When gradiometer data are collected in 'zig-zag' fashion, stepping errors can sometimes arise. These occur because of a slight difference in the speed of walking on the forward and reverse traverses. The result is a staggered effect in the data, which is particularly noticeable on linear anomalies. This process corrects these errors.

Display

Greyscale/ Colourscale Plot	This format divides a given range of readings into a set number of classes. Each class is represented by a specific shade of grey, the intensity increasing with value. All values above the given range are allocated the same shade (maximum intensity); similarly, all values below the given range are represented by the minimum intensity shade. Similar plots can be produced in colour, either using a wide range of colours or by selecting two or three colours to represent positive and negative values. The assigned range (plotting levels) can be adjusted to emphasise different anomalies in the data-set.
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Presentation of results and interpretation

The presentation of the results includes a 'minimally processed data' and a 'processed data' greyscale plot. Magnetic anomalies are identified, interpreted and plotted onto the 'Interpretation' drawings.

When interpreting the results, several factors are taken into consideration, including the nature of archaeological features being investigated and the local conditions at the site (geology, pedology, topography etc.). Anomalies are categorised by their potential origin. Where responses can be related to other existing evidence, the anomalies will be given specific categories, such as: Abbey Wall or Roman Road. Where the interpretation is based largely on the geophysical data, levels of confidence are implied, for example: Probable, or Possible Archaeology. The former is used for a confident interpretation, based on anomaly definition and/or other corroborative data such as cropmarks. Poor anomaly definition, a lack of clear patterns to the responses and an absence of other supporting data reduces confidence, hence the classification Possible.

Interpretation Categories

In certain circumstances (usually when there is corroborative evidence from desk-based or excavation data) very specific interpretations can be assigned to magnetic anomalies (for example, *Roman Road, Wall*, etc.) and where appropriate, such interpretations will be applied. The list below outlines the generic categories commonly used in the interpretation of the results.

<i>Archaeology / Probable Archaeology</i>	This term is used when the form, nature and pattern of the responses are clearly or very probably archaeological and /or if corroborative evidence is available. These anomalies, whilst considered anthropogenic, could be of any age.
<i>Possible Archaeology</i>	These anomalies exhibit either weak signal strength and / or poor definition, or form incomplete archaeological patterns, thereby reducing the level of confidence in the interpretation. Although the archaeological interpretation is favoured, they may be the result of variable soil depth, plough damage or even aliasing as a result of data collection orientation.
<i>Industrial / Burnt-Fired</i>	Strong magnetic anomalies that, due to their shape and form or the context in which they are found, suggest the presence of kilns, ovens, corn dryers, metal-working areas or hearths. It should be noted that in many instances modern ferrous material can produce similar magnetic anomalies.
<i>Former Field Boundary (probable & possible)</i>	Anomalies that correspond to former boundaries indicated on historic mapping, or which are clearly a continuation of existing land divisions. Possible denotes less confidence where the anomaly may not be shown on historic mapping but nevertheless the anomaly displays all the characteristics of a field boundary.
<i>Ridge & Furrow</i>	Parallel linear anomalies whose broad spacing suggests ridge and furrow cultivation. In some cases, the response may be the result of more recent agricultural activity.
<i>Agriculture (ploughing)</i>	Parallel linear anomalies or trends with a narrower spacing, sometimes aligned with existing boundaries, indicating more recent cultivation regimes.
<i>Land Drain</i>	Weakly magnetic linear anomalies, quite often appearing in series forming parallel and herringbone patterns. Smaller drains may lead and empty into larger diameter pipes, which in turn usually lead to local streams and ponds. These are indicative of clay fired land drains.
<i>Natural</i>	These responses form clear patterns in geographical zones where natural variations are known to produce significant magnetic distortions.
<i>Magnetic Disturbance</i>	Broad zones of strong dipolar anomalies, commonly found in places where modern ferrous or fired materials (e.g. brick rubble) are present.
<i>Service</i>	Magnetically strong anomalies, usually forming linear features are indicative of ferrous pipes/cables. Sometimes other materials (e.g. pvc) or the fill of the trench can cause weaker magnetic responses which can be identified from their uniform linearity.
<i>Ferrous</i>	This type of response is associated with ferrous material and may result from small items in the topsoil, larger buried objects such as pipes, or above ground features such as fence lines or pylons. Ferrous responses are usually regarded as modern. Individual burnt stones, fired bricks or igneous rocks can produce responses similar to ferrous material.
<i>Uncertain Origin</i>	Anomalies which stand out from the background magnetic variation, yet whose form and lack of patterning gives little clue as to their origin. Often the characteristics and distribution of the responses straddle the categories of <i>Possible Archaeology / Natural</i> or (in the case of linear responses) <i>Possible Archaeology / Agriculture</i> ; occasionally they are simply of an unusual form.

Where appropriate some anomalies will be further classified according to their form (positive or negative) and relative strength and coherence (trend: weak and poorly defined).

Appendix B - Technical Information: Magnetic Theory

Detailed magnetic survey can be used to effectively define areas of past human activity by mapping spatial variation and contrast in the magnetic properties of soil, subsoil and bedrock. Although the changes in the magnetic field resulting from differing features in the soil are usually weak, changes as small as 0.1 nanoTeslas (nT) in an overall field strength of 48,000 (nT), can be accurately detected.

Weakly magnetic iron minerals are always present within the soil and areas of enhancement relate to increases in *magnetic susceptibility* and permanently magnetised *thermoremanent* material.

Magnetic susceptibility relates to the induced magnetism of a material when in the presence of a magnetic field. This magnetism can be considered as effectively permanent as it exists within the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic susceptibility can become enhanced due to burning and complex biological or fermentation processes.

Thermoremanence is a permanent magnetism acquired by iron minerals that, after heating to a specific temperature known as the Curie Point, are effectively demagnetised followed by re-magnetisation by the Earth's magnetic field on cooling. Thermoremanent archaeological features can include hearths and kilns; material such as brick and tile may be magnetised through the same process.

Silting and deliberate infilling of ditches and pits with magnetically enhanced soil creates a relative contrast against the much lower levels of magnetism within the subsoil into which the feature is cut. Systematic mapping of magnetic anomalies will produce linear and discrete areas of enhancement allowing assessment and characterisation of subsurface features. Material such as subsoil and non-magnetic bedrock used to create former earthworks and walls may be mapped as areas of lower enhancement compared to surrounding soils.

Magnetic survey is carried out using a fluxgate gradiometer which is a passive instrument consisting of two sensors mounted vertically 1m apart. The instrument is carried about 30cm above the ground surface and the top sensor measures the Earth's magnetic field whilst the lower sensor measures the same field but is also more affected by any localised buried feature. The difference between the two sensors will relate to the strength of a magnetic field created by this feature, if no field is present the difference will be close to zero as the magnetic field measured by both sensors will be the same.

Factors affecting the magnetic survey may include soil type, local geology, previous human activity and disturbance from modern services.



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