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Wigginton Cottage
Wigginton
York

Archaeological Watching Brief

September 2011

Report No. 2246

CLIENT

Greenpark Energy Ltd

Wigginton Cottage
Wigginton
York

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on an area of land to the south of Wigginton Cottage, York, during the ground works and preparation for the instillation of an exploratory gas drilling rig. Although parts of the site were systematically stripped down to the natural levels no archaeological features or finds were identified.

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Report Information

Client:	Greenpark Energy Ltd.
Address:	First-Floor, Norham House, 15 Walkergate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1DS
Report Type:	Archaeological watching brief
Location:	Wigginton Cottage
County:	York
Grid Reference:	SE 594 562
Period(s) of activity represented:	-
Report Number:	2246
Project Number:	3772
Site Code:	WCY 11
Planning Application No.:	09/00095/FUL
Museum Accession No.:	Not yet assigned
Date of fieldwork:	25th-27th July 2011
Date of report:	September 2011
Project Management:	Ian Roberts BSc FSA MIfA
Fieldwork supervisor:	David Williams BA PIfA
Report:	David Williams
Illustrations:	David Williams
Photography:	-
Research:	-
Specialists:	-

Authorisation for distribution: ----------

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Contents

List of Figures

List of Plates

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by Euan Brown of Greenpark Energy Limited, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the site preparation for exploratory investigations for coal bed methane on land immediately to the south of Wigginton Cottage on the northern outskirts of York. The watching brief was undertaken on the 25th – 26th July 2011.

Site location and topography

The site, centred at SE 59478 56188, is located on the northern edge of York with Haxby to the north and New Earswick to the east. The main site is approximately 200m west of Wigginton Road (B1363) and 200m north-west of the A1237/B1363 roundabout. Wigginton Cottage is to the north and Moor Plantation immediately to the north-west (Fig. 2). Hedged field boundaries delimit the site to the south and west with open fields under permanent pasture to all sides. The site is relatively flat at 16m above Ordnance Datum.

Soils, geology and land-use

The solid geology comprises Bunter and Kueper Sandstone overlain with drift deposits of warp and lacustrine clay with sands and gravels (BGS 1983). The soils are classified in the Foggathorpe 2 soil association and are derived from glaciolacustrine clays. These soils are characterised as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged stoneless clays and fine loams over clays (SSEW 1980)

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is located between two archaeological sites that have produced significant archaeological features and deposits dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

At Rawcliffe Moor, approximately 300m to the north-west, an Iron Age settlement site comprising hut circles enclosed by ditches was recorded whilst Iron Age/Romano-British settlement activity was also encountered during the construction of the roundabout at the A1237/B1363 junction (Pearson 1997).

Excavations to the north of the site during the construction of a new water pipe line also encountered areas of substantial Iron Age settlement (Brinklow 1996).

A geophysical survey undertaken by ASWYAS (Webb 2010) did not identify any anomalies of obvious archaeological potential. It did, however, identity several 'spikes' that could be ferrous material.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the archaeological watching brief were:

- to assess the potential for archaeological remains to survive in the area of the proposed investigations;
- to determine the date, nature, depth and stratigraphy of any archaeological features and deposits encountered.

4 Methodology

An archaeologist was present during the mechanical excavation and ground clearing preparation works for the installation of a gas drilling rig. An archaeologist monitored the machine excavations and inspected all upcast material. Appropriate written, drawn and photographic records were made in accordance with recognised professional standards (e.g. Institute for Archaeologists 2008) and ASWYAS watching brief guidelines and site recording manual (ASWYAS 2003; 2006). The contents of the primary archive are listed in Appendix 1, a concordance of contexts is contained in Appendix 2 and a copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation is presented in Appendix 3.

5 Results

A rectangular area measuring 50m by 70m and covering an area of 3500m^2 was monitored. The groundwork consisted of removing the topsoil, followed by the levelling of the site, the western half of the site being reduced by approximately 0.1m and the eastern side being raised by 0.1m.

The topsoil (100) was 0.25-0.30m thick and consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy clay, this overlay the natural clay deposits. The natural clay was formed by a yellow sandy clay with localised patches of grey clay. The natural showed clear indication of having been affected by modern agricultural practices with plough scars, cuts for fields drains visible and wheel ruts.

The north-western corner of the stripped area had revealed a series of spikes in the geophysical data but no archaeological features were encountered. Instead, this appears to corresponded with an area of sandy natural and the anomalies appear to be the product of modern disturbance.

No archaeological features were observed on the site, although 11 sherds of modern glazed pottery, two clay pipe stem fragments and two glass marbles were recovered from deposit 100.

6 Artefact Record

Pottery

A total of 11 sherds of modern pottery weighting a total of 137g were recovered from the topsoil. All the sherds appear to be 19th century or later in date.

Other modern finds

Clay Pipe

Two clay pipe stem fragments were recovered from the topsoil. One was 40mm in length with a 2mm bore hole and was a brownish colour. The other fragments was 30mm in length and had a 2mm bore hole and made of a white fabric.

Glass

Two glass marbles were recovered from the topsoil one was 17mm in diameter and the other was 16mm in diameter. Both were made from clear light blue glass.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

Although located between two areas of known prehistoric activity no archaeological features were visible within the principal area of investigation. The site was excavated down to the top of the natural clays which appeared to have been heavily disturbed by modern agricultural practices including plough scars, fields drains and wheel ruts from tractors. In archaeological terms the watching brief confirmed the negative geophysical survey results.

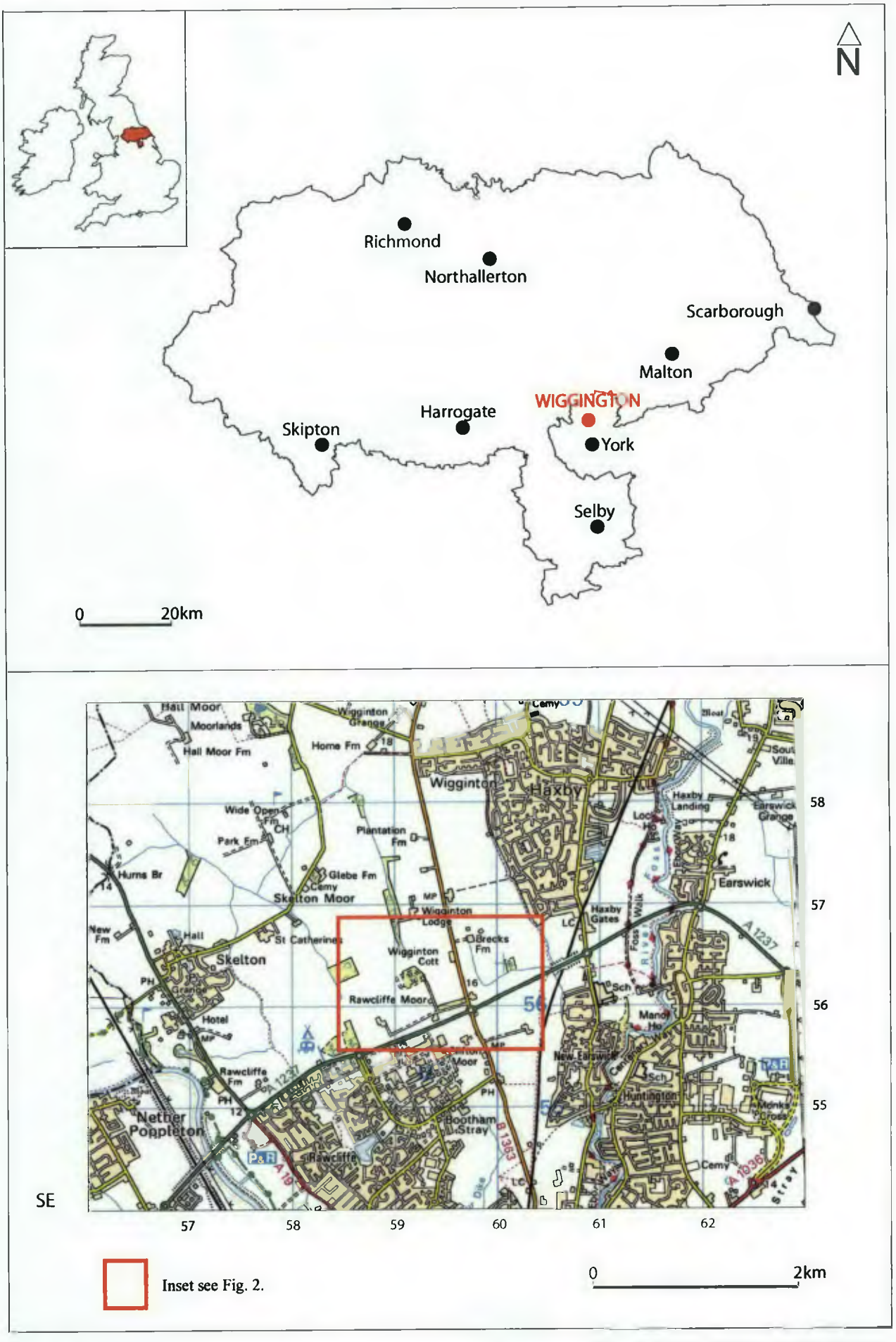

Fig. 1. Site location

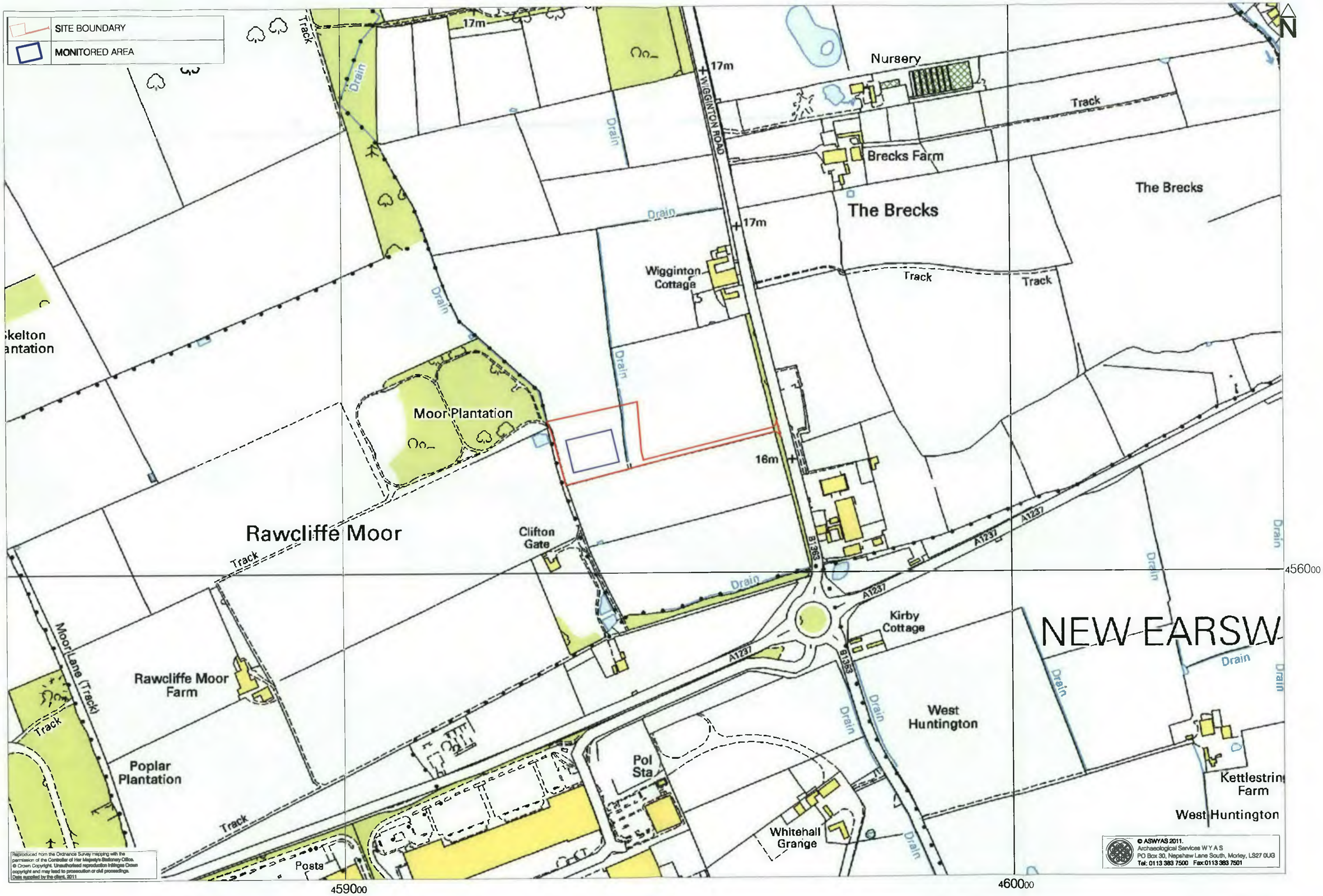

Fig. 2. Site location showing monitored area (1:5000 @ A3)

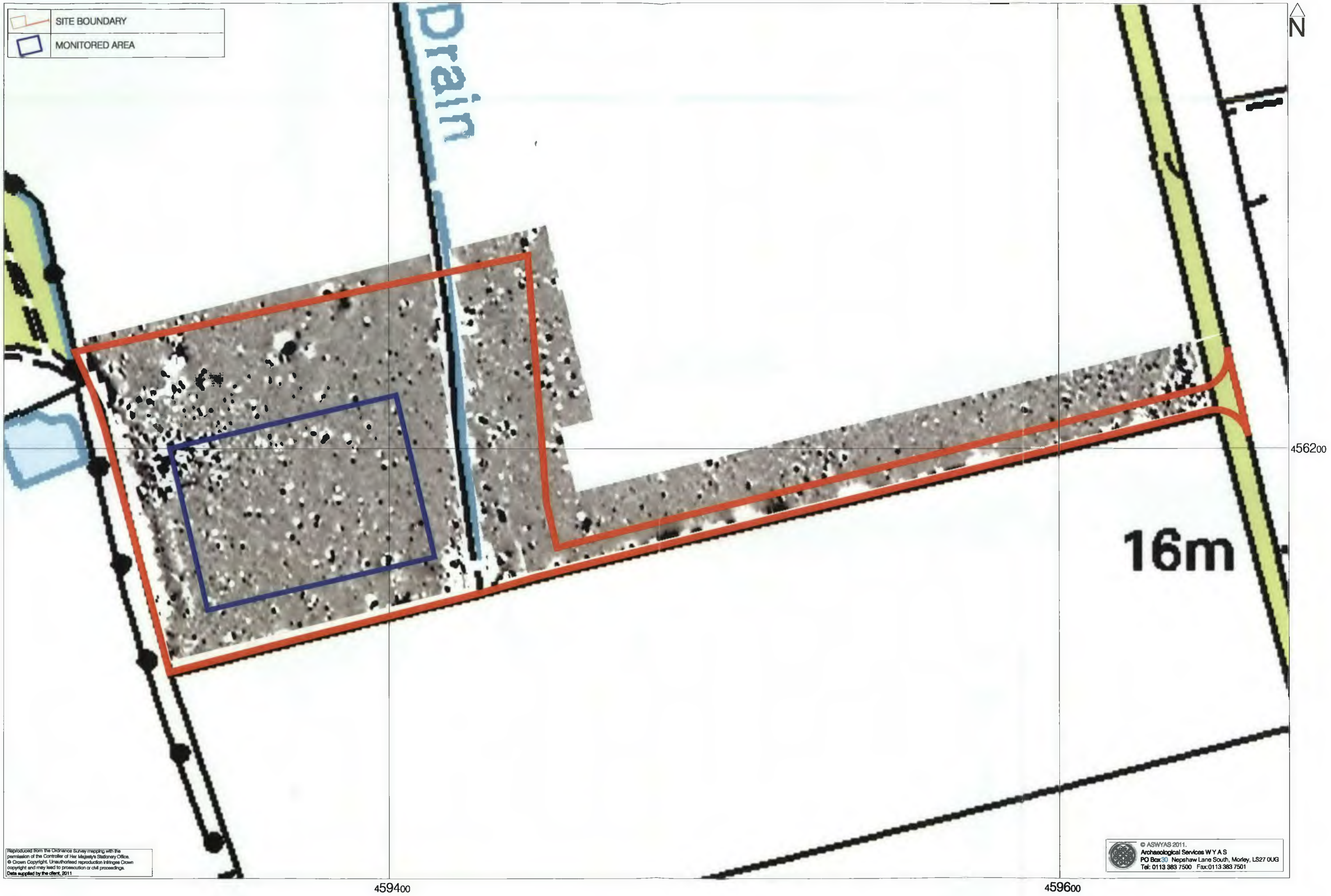

Fig. 3. Detailed site plan with greyscale magnetometer data and monitored area (1:1000 @ A3)

Plate 1. General site shot during topsoil strip, looking north

Plate 2. Final strip over area of spikes revealed in the geophysical data for the north-west corner of site, looking north

Plate 3. Western side of the site, looking north

Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive

Phase	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
Watching brief	File no.1	Context register sheets	1
		Context card (no. 100)	1
		Digital Photo register sheets	1
		Digital contact sheets	1
		Daily record sheets	2

Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts yielding artefacts

Context	Description	Artefacts
100	Topsoil	Modern pottery (11); Glass marbles (2); Clay pipe stems (2)

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