



Surveying for potential archaeological sites

Anyone who plans a major construction project has to be careful where they dig to avoid damaging any important archaeological remains.

We review historical information to determine possible sites in the area that may need to be explored.

We also employ experts to carry out non-intrusive surveys of land which use geophysical survey methods such as magnetometry to examine what is under the ground, without the need for any digging.

How it works

Magnetometry is a type of non-intrusive archaeological survey technique which measures differences in the magnetic properties of different soils. All soils have unique magnetic properties

and measuring the spaces and contrast between them can indicate where the ground has been disturbed in the past. Ancient activity, particularly burning, leaves magnetic traces that show up today when detected with the right equipment.

The results of these surveys will tell us where potential archaeological features are and where we need to carry out further surveys. However a negative result does not rule out archaeological trial trenching (a method used to estimate the archaeological potential of a site). The geophysical survey shows us where to target trenching and aids understanding of the extent of any archaeological remains present.

What will happen on site?

Magnetometry surveys will take place first and are expected to last between 3 to 14 days, depending on the area of land to be covered. For smaller sites, surveyors will set out a grid formation using canes and walk along these grids with hand-held equipment in corridors approximately 1m wide. Although possible to hand propel, for larger areas of land, surveyors will use an instrument cart hitched to a quad bike and drive it across accessible fields in a series of grids. The results, which will take a few days to analyse, will then be used to decide if, and where, we need to carry out any more investigations (such as archaeological trial trenching targeting the results of the geophysical survey). The archaeological works usually take place one to 2 weeks after the magnetometry surveys have finished.

We will work closely with landowners and tenants to arrange our work and keep them in touch with our progress throughout.

We aim to carry out all the surveys on week days (Monday-Friday) between the hours of 8am and 4pm, unless otherwise agreed.

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