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DIAMOND WOOD **Normanton le Heath, Leics.**

HN1012

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

DIAMOND WOOD Normanton Le Heath, Leicestershire

Project ref.: HN1012
LPA ref.: 12/00572/FUL

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of the Woodland Trust.

by

James Snee BSc AIFA

Report no. 749

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Contents

	Summary	Page i
Section 1	Introduction	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork.....	Page 2
Section 3	Discussion	Page 5
Section 4	Bibliography.....	Page 7
Section 5	Illustrations.....	<i>following</i> Page 8
Appendix 1	OASIS data record.....	Page 9

The cover illustration shows the proposed development area looking west

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones and James Snee. The report text and illustrations were prepared by James Snee and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Toby Bancroft and Chris Williams, The Woodland Trust; and Richard Clark, Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Diamond Wood, Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire, LE67 2TD		
County:	Leicestershire	District:	North West Leicestershire District Council
Village/town:	Normanton le Heath	Parish:	Normanton le Heath
Planning reference:	12/00572/FUL	NGR:	SK 38402 12002
Client name and address:	Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincs, NG31 6LL		
Nature of work:	Car park.	Current land use:	Agricultural
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPS5)
Position in planning process:	Post Determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	<i>c.</i> 3000m ²	Size of area investigated:	150m ²
Site code:	HN1012	Museum accession no.:	TBA
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Field evaluation	Archive Recipient:	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Start of work:	4/10/2012	Finish of work:	4/10/2012
Related HER nos:	n/a	Periods represented	None
OASIS UID:	heritage1-133333	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None.		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new car park at Diamond Wood, Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake an archaeological field evaluation. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority.

Three trial trenches were excavated across the areas of greatest potential impact. The trial trenches revealed a layer of ploughsoil between 0.25 and 0.30m thick over a natural horizon of silty clay.

No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the evaluation.

On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of The Woodland Trust, as part of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out as part of a proposed development at Diamond Wood, Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire.

1.2 The work has been carried out as a requirement of the planning consent for the development (ref: 12/00572/FUL) granted by North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), following the provisions set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF). The extent of the present work was defined in correspondence from the Historic and Natural Environment Team (HNET) at Leicestershire County Council, acting as adviser to the NWLDC (ref: CLE0000/RC, 29 August 2012). A full specification for the investigation was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated September 2012.

1.3 The proposed development lies to the southeast of Normanton le Heath, on the east side of Heather Lane, centred on NGR SK 38402 12002 (Figure 1). The site is currently an area of open agricultural land off Heather Lane, surrounded by fields that are due to be replanted as woodland over the next three years. It lies close to the line of a Roman road, Roman and Iron Age farmsteads and a number of find scatters that could indicate prehistoric settlement.

1.4 The proposed development entails the formation of a 53 space car park with 2 coach parking spaces and associated landscaping and access.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Normanton le Heath lies within a landscape of shallow valleys and ridges defined as the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield (Character Area 71). The underlying geology of the area consists of Tarporley Siltstone Formation – Sandstone, overlain by Oadby Member – Diamicton (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/>).

2.2 Locally, soils are described as slowly permeable fine clayey gley soils subject to seasonal waterlogging (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>).

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Design, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.4 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures. They were excavated using a JCB 3CX machine fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural geological horizon, as appropriate.

2.5 The trenches were cleaned by hand, and inspected for any potential archaeological features and deposits.

2.6 The stratigraphy within the trenches was photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Plans were drawn on drafting film at a scale of 1:20, and sections at a scale of 1:10.

RESULTS

Trench 1

2.7 Trench 1 was located across the line of the proposed access road at the northern end of the site (Figure 2, Plate 1). It was oriented approximately northeast to southwest and measured 25m in length, 1.8m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.35m.

Trench data:

Length (m):	25	Width (m):	1.8	Maximum Depth (m):	0.35	Orientation	NE-SW
Level at NE End of Trench (mOD)		Top	131.59	Level at SW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	131.01
		Base	131.31			Base	130.77
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones.	25	1.8	0.30		
-	Layer	10YR 5/8 yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small to medium stones.	25	1.8	> 0.05		

2.8 The stratigraphy in Trench 1 comprised 0.30m of dark greyish brown clayey silt ploughsoil over a natural layer of yellowish brown silty clay.

2.9 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed in Trench 1.

Trench 2

2.10 Trench 2 was located across an area of proposed car parking in the centre of the site (Figure 2, Plates 2 & 3). It was oriented approximately northwest to southeast and measured 25m in length, 1.8m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.35m, with a 1m deep sondage at the southwest end.

Trench data:

Length (m):	25	Width (m):	1.8	Maximum Depth (m):	1.0	Orientation	NW-SE
Level at NW End of Trench (mOD)		Top	130.34	Level at SE End of Trench (mOD)		Top	130.71
		Base	130.09			Base	129.69
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones.	25	1.8	0.25		
-	Layer	10YR 5/8 yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small to medium stones.	25	1.8	> 0.75		

2.11 The stratigraphy in Trench two comprised 0.25m of dark greyish brown clayey silt ploughsoil over a natural layer of yellowish brown silty clay.

2.12 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed in Trench 2.

Trench 3

2.13 Trench 3 was located across an area of proposed car parking in the southern end of the site (Figure 2, Plate 4). It was oriented approximately north to south and measured 25m in length, 1.8m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m.

Trench data:

Length (m):	25	Width (m):	1.8	Maximum Depth (m):	0.40	Orientation	N-S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	130.60	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	130.39
		Base	130.22			Base	130.09
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Layer	10YR 4/2 dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones.	25	1.8	0.30		
-	Layer	10YR 5/8 yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small to medium stones.	25	1.8	> 0.10		

2.14 The stratigraphy in Trench three comprised 0.30m of dark greyish brown clayey silt topsoil over a natural layer of yellowish brown silty clay.

2.15 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed in Trench 3.

3. Discussion

Archaeological Background

3.1 The proposed development lies in an area of known archaeological activity dating from the prehistoric period to the late post-medieval.

3.2 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted for a list of all heritage assets within 1000m of the site. This includes 43 entries and has been used to create an overview of the archaeological and historical context of the proposed development site.

3.3 An area of possible prehistoric enclosures, associated with finds of flint implements and a Bronze Age palstave (MLE6403), has been identified approximately 500m north of the study area. Additional find spots of prehistoric flint implements, which could range in date from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, have been recorded to the southeast (MLE6402), the south (MLE20451 & MLE20457) and southwest (MLE 20454 & MLE20466).

3.4 A possible Iron Age settlement has been identified approximately 400m southwest of the study area, comprising rectilinear enclosures and a possible field system (MLE4604). Geophysical investigations have provided little information about this site, but a beehive quern of Iron Age date was found in the vicinity (MLE9133). Other cropmarks of probably Iron Age date have been identified to the south (MLE4592 & MLE4593) and southwest (MLE4910 & MLE4918) of the study area.

3.5 The Roman road, known as 'Via Devana', traverses the parish on an approximately northwest-southeast alignment, 200m north of the study area. Possible Romano-British settlement has been identified at a number of locations to the southeast (MLE4606) and west (MLE4776), and a general scatter of Romano-British finds has been recorded across the landscape (MLE8047, MLE8058, MLE8062, MLE8145, MLE20455, MLE20447, MLE20452, MLE20458, MLE20464 & MLE20467).

3.6 The village of Normanton le Heath, approximately 500m northwest of the study area, is known to have originated in the early medieval period (MLE16886) and is known to contain a number of significant post-medieval buildings (MLE12355, MLE12356, MLE12357 & MLE12358). A scatter of medieval and post-medieval finds has been recorded in the general vicinity of the site, which is fairly typical and probably represents casual loss and the manuring of fields with domestic refuse.

Research aims

3.7 The aims of the investigation have been to establish the location, depth, extent, date, character and condition of any remains that could be threatened by the development, to consider the local and regional archaeological and historical context of such remains, and their significance and quality, in relation to the current published regional research agenda (Cooper 2006; Knight, Vyner and Allen 2012), and to provide sufficient information to ensure that an appropriate strategy for the mitigation of damage or destruction of such remains by the development could be adopted.

3.8 On the basis of the known archaeological potential of the site, as extrapolated from the HER, it was considered that archaeological investigation of the site had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of:

- an understanding of patterns of activity, settlement and land use across the prehistoric period, including the transition from nomadic to settled communities;
- an understanding of the transition in settlement form and distribution from the Iron Age to the Roman period;
- an understanding of the transition from the Roman to the medieval periods.

Collected Data

3.9 The trial trenches were excavated across the areas of the site subject to the greatest impact by the proposed development.

3.10 The trial trenches revealed a layer of ploughsoil between 0.25 and 0.30m thick over a natural horizon of silty clay.

3.11 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the evaluation.

Conclusions

3.12 Although the site lies in an area of defined archaeological potential, no evidence of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval activity was revealed during the investigation.

3.13 On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be *Low* for all periods.

Confidence Rating

3.14 In the course of the fieldwork the weather, ground and light conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.15 There are no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Bibliography

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Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record

5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Trench Location

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking northeast

Plate 2 Trench 2, looking northwest

Plate 3 Trench 2 sondage, looking northeast

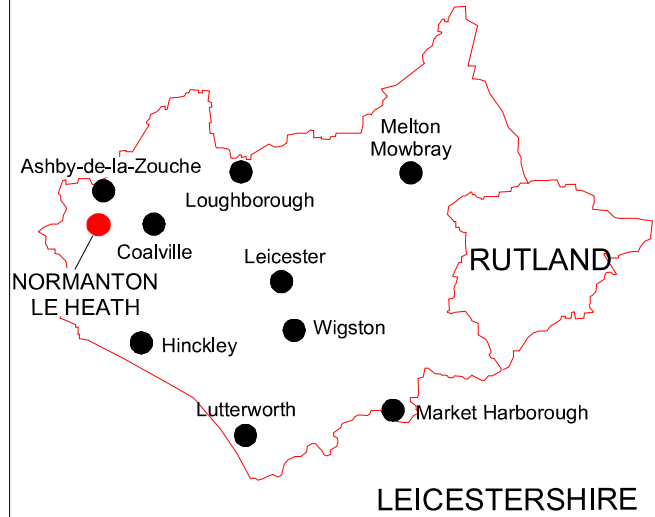
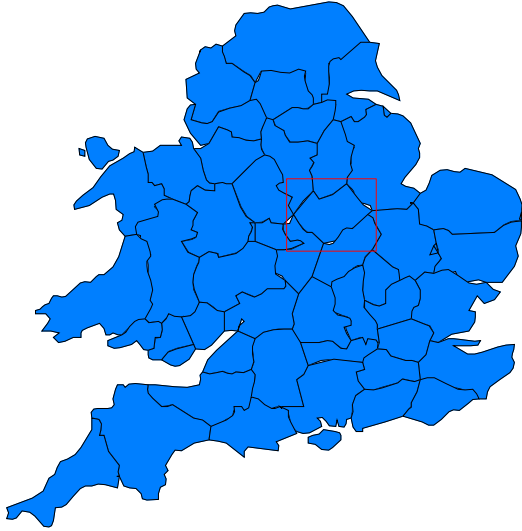
Plate 4 Trench 3, looking south

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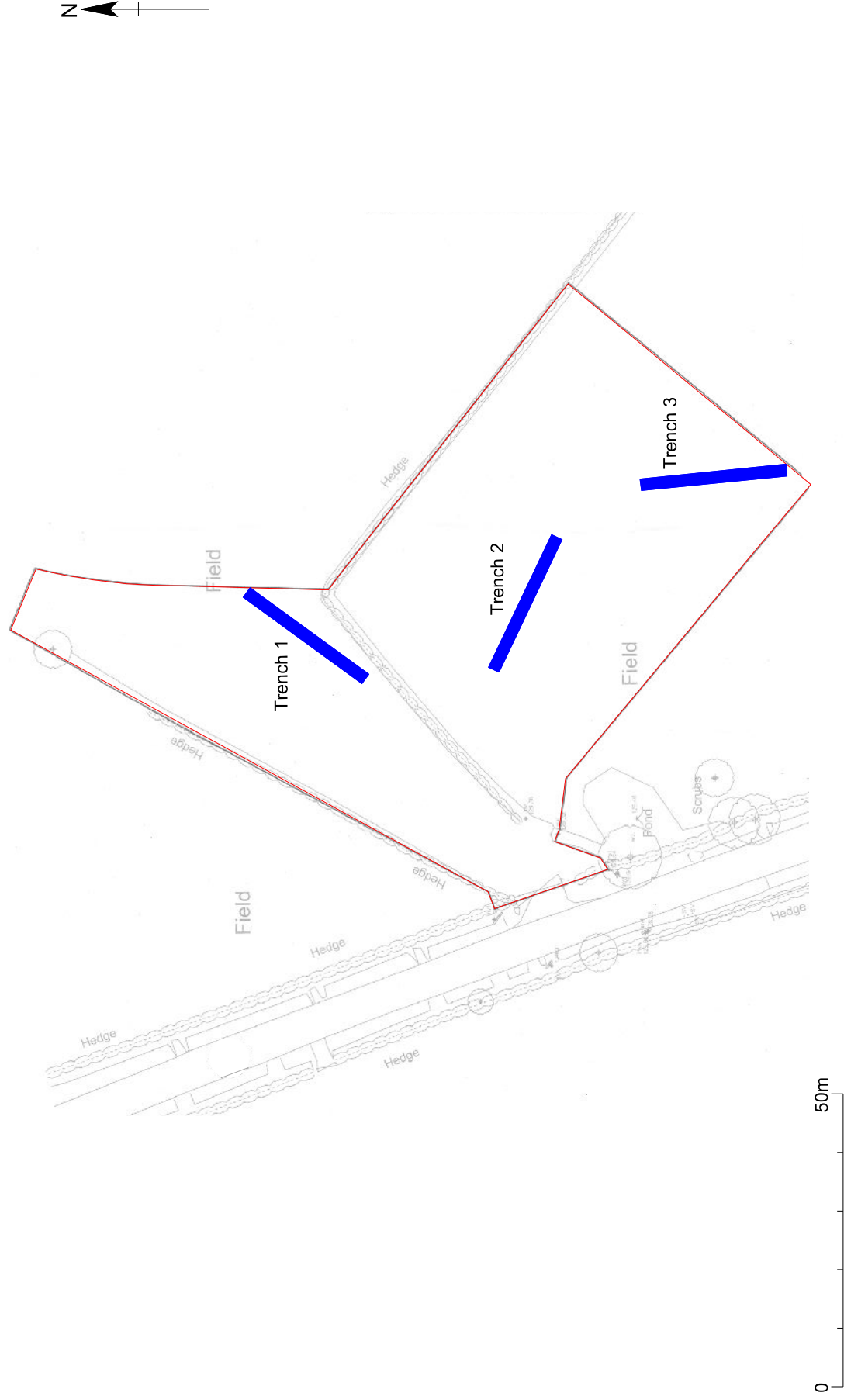
Diamond Wood,
Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire

HN1012



Site Location

Scale 1:10000



Trench location



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking northeast



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking northwest



Plate 3: Trench 2 sondage, looking northeast



Plate 4: Trench 3, looking south

Appendix

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: heritage1-13333	
Project details	
Project name	Normanton Le Heath, Heather Lane, Diamond Wood
Short description of the project	<p>In order to characterise the archaeological potential of the site of a proposed new car park at Diamond Wood, Normanton le Heath, Leicestershire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake an archaeological field evaluation. This work was a requirement of the planning consent granted by the local planning authority.</p> <p>Three trial trenches were excavated across the areas of greatest potential impact. The trial trenches revealed a layer of ploughsoil between 0.25 and 0.30m thick over a natural horizon of silty clay.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the evaluation.</p> <p>On the basis of the results of the evaluation, the risk that the proposed development might disturb archaeological remains of any significance may be considered to be <i>Low</i> for all periods.</p>
Project dates	Start: 04-10-2012 End: 04-10-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Associated project reference codes	HN1012 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Car park (flat)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE RUTLAND NORMANTON Diamond Wood, Heather Lane, Normanton le Heath
Postcode	LE67 2TD
Study area	150.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 38402 12002 52 -1 52 42 14 N 001 25 53 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network

Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	James Snee
Type of funding body	Developer
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Physical Contents	'none'
Digital Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography', 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	"Diary","Photograph","Report","Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	DIAMOND WOOD Normanton Le Heath, Leicestershire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Snee, J.
Other bibliographic details	Heritage Network Report No. 749
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth Garden City
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 pages, 2 figures, 4 plates