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**QUEEN ELIZABETH
DIAMOND JUBILEE WOOD
Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leics.**

HN1108 / HN1163

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT***

HERITAGE NETWORK

Registered with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Managing Director: David Hillelson, BA MCIfA

QUEEN ELIZABETH DIAMOND JUBILEE WOOD Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leicestershire

Project nos.: HN1108 / HN1163

Accession no.: X.A21.2014

LPA ref.: 13/00658/FUL

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of The Woodland Trust

By

Helen Ashworth BA (Hons) ACIfA

Report no.908

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The cover photograph shows the junction of the three paths under excavation, looking north

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Robin Densem and Greg Jones. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Helen Ashworth, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to: Paul Bunton, The Woodland Trust; Leo Phillips, FPCR Environmental & Design Ltd, 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:	Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Heather Lane, Ravenstone, Leics.		
County:	Leicestershire	District:	North West Leicestershire DC
Village/town:	Ravenstone	Parish:	Ravenstone with Snibston
Planning reference:	13/00658/FUL; 14/00245/FUL	NGR:	SK 3868 1233 SK 38515 12305
Client name and address:	The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincs. NG31 6LL		
Nature of work:	New woodland visitor facilities	Existing land use:	Fields
Site status:	Archaeological Areas	Reason for investigation:	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in planning process:	After full determination	Project brief originator:	Local Authority
Size of affected area:	c. 1533.5m ²	Size of area investigated:	c. 1533.5m ²
Site Code:	HN1108/HN1163	Museum accession no:	X.A21.2014
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service
Start of work	20/03/2014	Finish of work	29/01/2015
Related HER Nos:	MLE4345; MLE6403	Periods represented:	
Oasis UID	heritage1-165957	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	Snee, J, 2012. <i>Archaeological Evaluation Report: Diamond Wood, Normanton Le Heath, Leicestershire</i> . Heritage Network Report No.749		

Synopsis:

In response to an archaeological condition on the planning consents for the provision of new visitor facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by The Woodland Trust to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring on the groundworks for the new features where they crossed areas of archaeological potential.

The study area crossed two known areas of archaeological activity, including the postulated line of a Roman road and an area of possible prehistoric enclosures, associated with a number of finds of prehistoric artefacts. It was, therefore, considered that the present investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of archaeological activity in the region from the prehistoric period onwards.

The groundworks on the site were largely shallow, consisting of a topsoil strip for new paths, bases for art installations and a Welcome Hub. These did not breach the overburden and any potential buried archaeological features were not disturbed. Where the natural clay was exposed, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of The Woodland Trust, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording of works to create new visitor facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Ravenstone, Leicestershire.

1.2 The planning permissions for the development (refs: 13/00658/FUL & 14/00245/FUL), granted by North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC), were subject to archaeological conditions issued in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF).

1.3 In line with the conditions, and in line with current professional practice as defined in the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* published by English Heritage, and *Standard and Guidance* documents published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), the programme of works on the present site has included field investigation and mitigation, together with analysis and report preparation, leading to the publication of the findings and the deposition of the project archive with an approved repository.

1.4 The proposed development lies to the south-east of Normanton-le-Heath, to the north-east of Heather Lane, centred on NGR SK 386 123 (Figure 1). The site is currently an area of open agricultural land off Heather Lane, surrounded by fields that are being replanted as woodland. It lies close to Roman and Iron Age farmsteads and a number of find scatters that could indicate prehistoric settlement. The line of a Roman road, known as the 'Via Devana' crosses part of the study area (Figure 1).

1.5 The proposed development was carried out in two stages. The first stage entailed the formation of aggregate pathways and the installation of two brick plinths to support artwork (Figure 1). The second stage entailed the formation of a reinforced concrete base to support a sectional timber superstructure to be used as a Welcome Hub.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site of the new Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood lies within a gently rolling landscape, at approximately 140m AOD, to the south of Ravenstone and south-east of Normanton-le-Heath. It is currently open fields to the north-east of Heather Lane (Plate 1).

2.2 Locally the soils belong to Soilscape 6, described as free draining slightly acid loamy soils (<http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/ukso/home.html?layer=NSRISoilscales>).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of siltstones, mudstones and sandstones of the Tarpoley Siltstone Formation, sedimentary bedrocks formed approximately 237 to 250 million years ago in the Triassic period (www.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). The landscape at the period was dominated by rivers and lakes.

METHODOLOGY

2.4 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. A number of site visits were made to monitor the groundworks for the new paths, the paved area for the art installation and the stripping of the footprint for the Welcome Hub.

2.5 The groundworks were undertaken using an 8-tonne 360-degree tracked excavator, fitted with a 1.50m toothless ditching bucket.

2.6 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved Project Designs, current health and safety legislation, and both CIFA and ALGAO standards.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.7 The monitoring programme at the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood covered the groundworks where they crossed two defined archaeological areas. These included the ground reduction for a series of new paths and the Welcome Hub within a 50m wide study zone centred on the Roman road (MLE4345) known as the 'Via Devana' (Figure 2). To the north, a new path and the foundations for two plinths were located within a defined area of possible prehistoric enclosures associated with finds of flint implements and a Bronze Age palstave (MLE6403).

Archaeological Area MLE4345 (Figure 3)

2.8 This comprised a 50m wide zone centred on the postulated line of the 'Via Devana'. All groundworks within this area were carried out under close archaeological supervision. Those outside the zone were not monitored.

Paths

2.9 The path from the car park ran north-east to meet the line of the Roman road. At that point the path branched, with the western arm, running NNE and the eastern arm running north-east (Figure 3). The combined length of all three arms was 194m, with each trench measuring 2.30m in width and excavated to a depth of 0.10m.

2.10 The stratigraphy revealed in the sections comprised dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) firm silty clay topsoil with occasional sub-angular flints and charcoal flecks (Plate 2). The underlying natural clay was not reached at any point.

2.11 An area of modern hardstanding, composed of brick fragments and lumps of asphalt, was encountered within the topsoil adjacent to the point where the paths branched. It was observed in the trench for the southern arm of the footpath and measured 21m in length. This is associated with an existing field barn (Plate 3), subsequently demolished for the Welcome Hub.

2.12 The only finds observed within the topsoil consisted of abraded fragments of post-medieval and modern tile, indicative of field manuring. These were noted, but not collected. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in this area.

Welcome Hub

2.13 The visitor centre is located across the postulated line of the Roman Road, on the western side of the point where the path from the car park branches. The footprint of the building, an area measuring 12.70m in length and 8.50m in width, was reduced by between 0.10m and 0.40m. This revealed a layer of yellowish red (5YR 4/6) clayey silt topsoil, 0.04m in depth, above a layer of reddish yellow (5YR 7/6) sandy clay silt subsoil, over 0.05m in depth (Plate 4). The underlying natural clay was not reached.

2.14 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in this area.

2.15 A soakaway was located 2m to the north of the Welcome Hub. The trench for this measured 1.20m square and was excavated to a depth of 1.00m. The stratigraphy revealed in the sections comprised a layer of yellowish red (5YR 4/3) clayey silt topsoil, 0.05m in depth, above reddish yellow (5YR 7/6) sandy clay silt subsoil, 0.10m in depth (Plate 5). This directly overlay the natural red clay.

2.16 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in this area.

Archaeological Area MLE6403 (Figure 4)

2.17 This is separated from the study zone for the Roman Road by a distance of approximately 77m to the north.

Path

2.18 The line of a new path crossed the south-eastern corner of archaeological area MLE6403. It ran on a curving south-west to north-east alignment, approximately parallel with an existing hedge line, for approximately 294.40m. The line of the path was not required to be monitored outside this defined area.

2.19 The trench measured 3.20m in width and was excavated to an average depth of 0.10m. The stratigraphy revealed in the trench comprised dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) firm silty clay topsoil, with moderate sub-angular flints and charcoal flecks. The underlying natural clay was not reached at any point along the length of the trench.

2.20 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within the trench. Abraded fragments of post-medieval brick and tile were noted in the topsoil, but these were not collected. No other finds were present.

Art installation trenches

2.21 Two small trenches, for the plinths for art installations, were excavated on the eastern side of the new path. The northern trench measured 4.50m in length, 3.00m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.30m. The stratigraphy revealed in the sections comprised dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) firm silty clay topsoil, with moderate sub-angular flints and

occasional charcoal flecks. The natural yellowish red (5YR 4/6) clay was exposed at the base of the trench.

2.22 The southern trench measured 6.40m in length, 3.50m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.30m. The stratigraphy revealed in the sections was identical to that observed in the northern trench.

2.23 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in either trench.

3. Discussion

Historical and Archaeological Setting

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 development. These records and previous archaeological work in the area 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), lies close by, and 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 southeast of the study area, comprising rectilinear enclosures and a possible field system (MLE4604). Geophysical investigations have provided little information about the 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 (MLE4345) known as 'Via Devana', traverses the parish on an approximately northwest-southeast alignment, following the approximate line of Public Footpath 055, which flanks the present site to the south. 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 700m 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 to the south west of the site, which is fairly typical and probably represents casual loss and the manuring of fields with domestic refuse.

3.7 In October 2012, the Heritage Network carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Heather Lane, for a new car park situated at the southern extent of the present site. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during this work.

3.8 In March 2014, the Heritage Network monitored the installation of a number of new footpaths radiating out from the present site, but no significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered within the limited depth of the groundworks.

Collected Data

3.9 The study area crossed two known areas of archaeological activity, including the postulated line of a Roman road and an area of possible prehistoric enclosures, associated with a number of finds of prehistoric artefacts. It was, therefore, considered that the present

investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of archaeological activity in the region from the prehistoric period onwards.

3.10 The groundworks on the site were largely shallow, consisting of topsoil strips for new paths, bases for art installations and a Welcome Hub. These did not breach the overburden and any potential buried archaeological features remained undisturbed. Where the natural clay was exposed, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

Conclusions

3.11 It was considered that the present investigation could have the opportunity to expand the understanding of:

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

3.12 As the groundworks did not breach the overburden no significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered in the course of the project.

Confidence Rating

3.13 In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
20/03/2014	RGD	9	Monitoring strip of paths within 50m zone of MLE4345 & path within Archaeological Area MLE6403
21/03/2014	RGD	6	Monitoring strip for bases for new art installations
21/01/2015	GAJ	7	Monitoring topsoil strip for Welcome Hub
29/01/2015	GAJ	2	Monitoring excavation of soakaway

5. Bibliography

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6. Illustrations

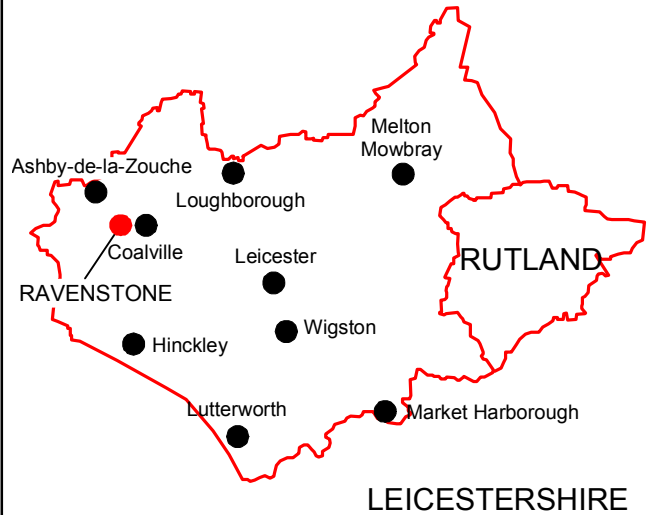
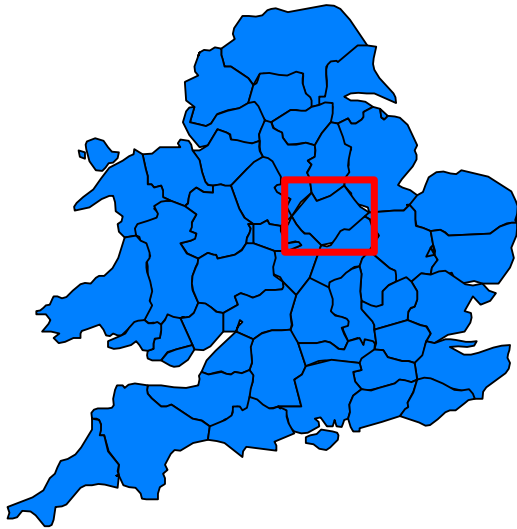
Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Site layout
Figure 3 Groundworks within 50m zone surrounding MLE4345
Figure 4 Groundworks in Archaeological Area MLE6403

Plate 1 Pre-excavation shot of 50m zone to MLE4345
Plate 2 General shot of western path, looking N
Plate 3 Area of modern intrusion, looking N
Plate 4 Stripped footprint of the Welcome Hub, looking W
Plate 5 Soakaway trench, looking SE
Plate 6 New path in MLE6403, Looking NE
Plate 7 S trench for art installation during excavation, looking NW
Plate 8 Trenches for art installation bases, looking N

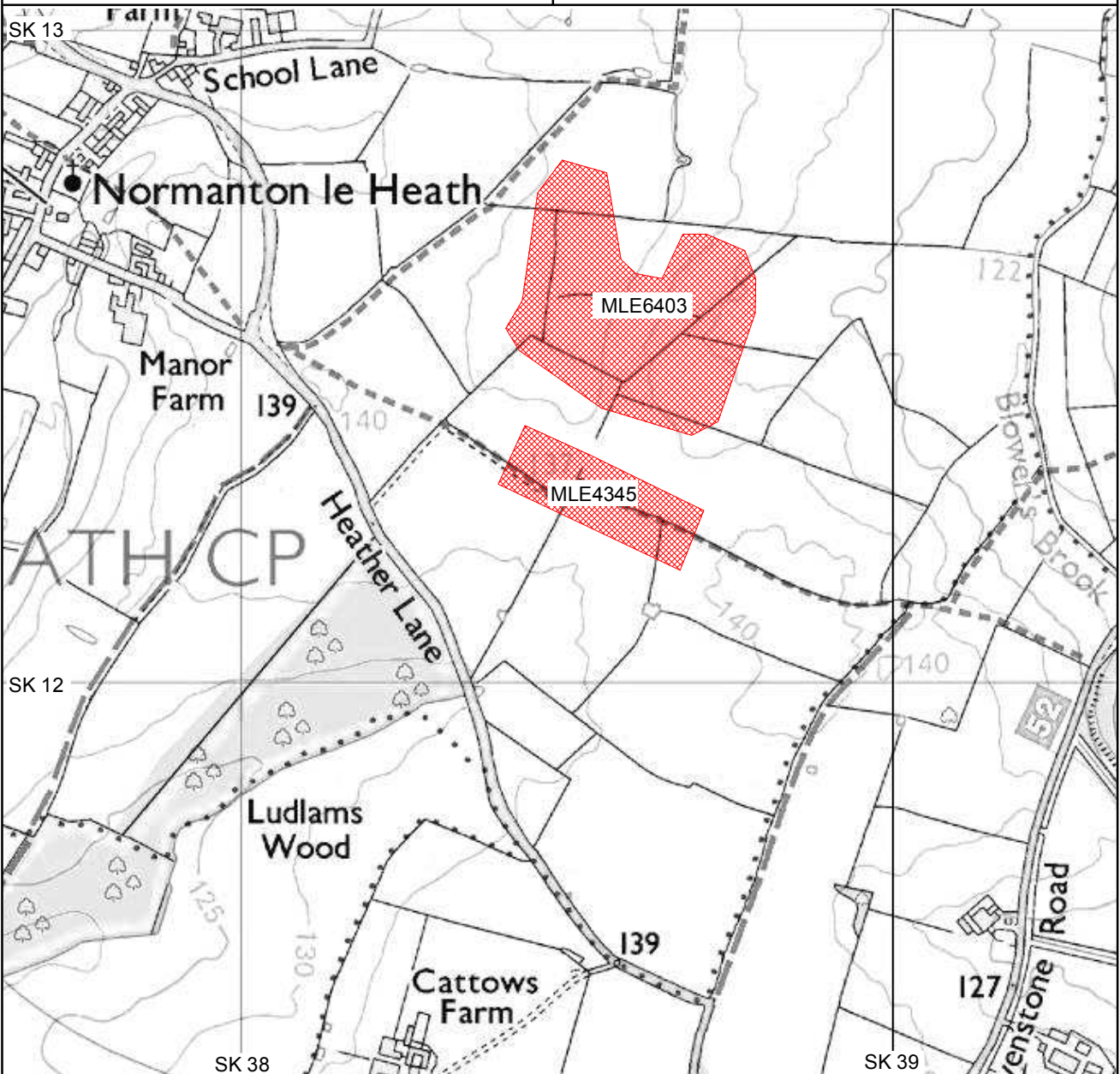
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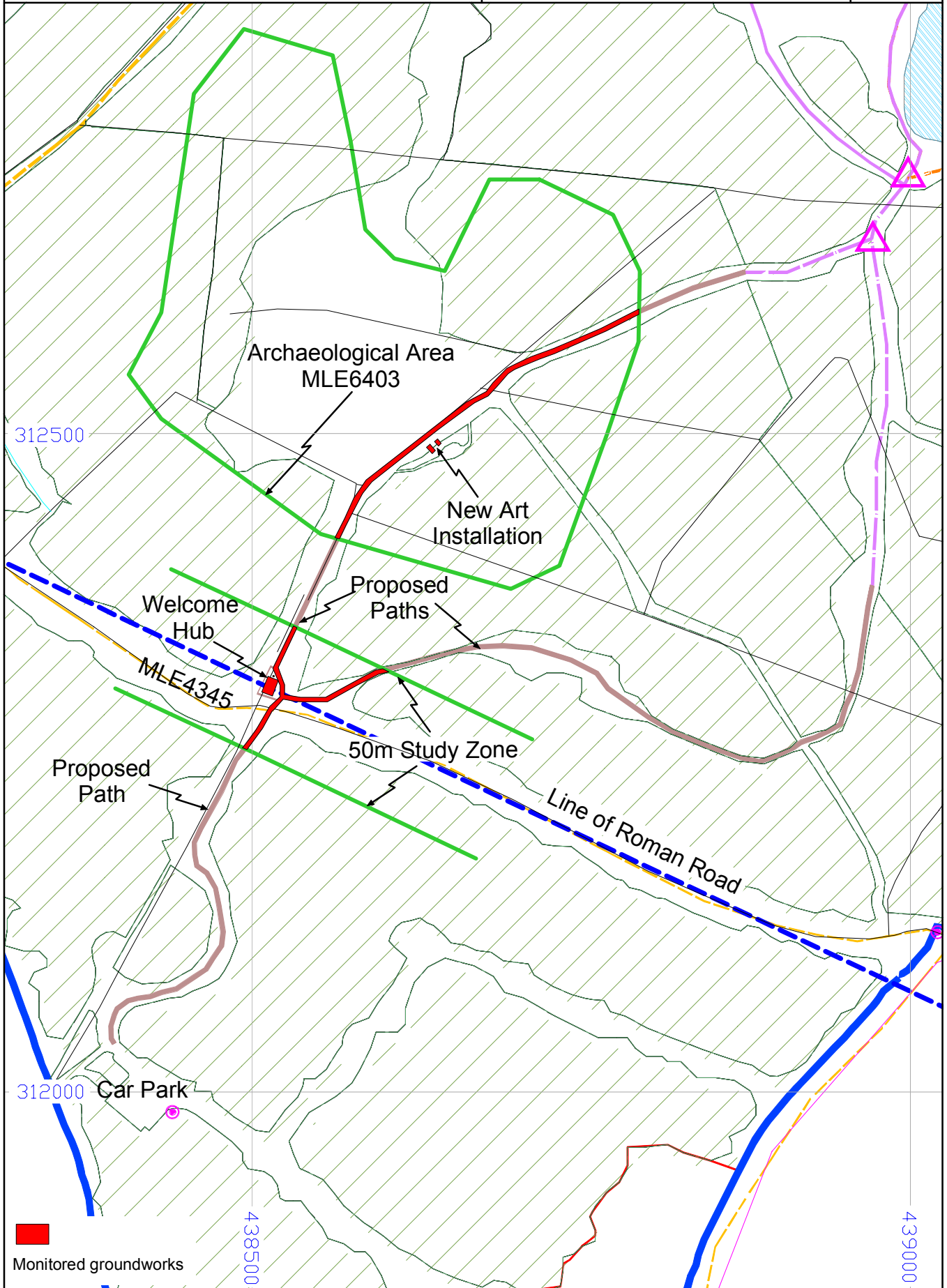


Site Location

Scale 1:10000

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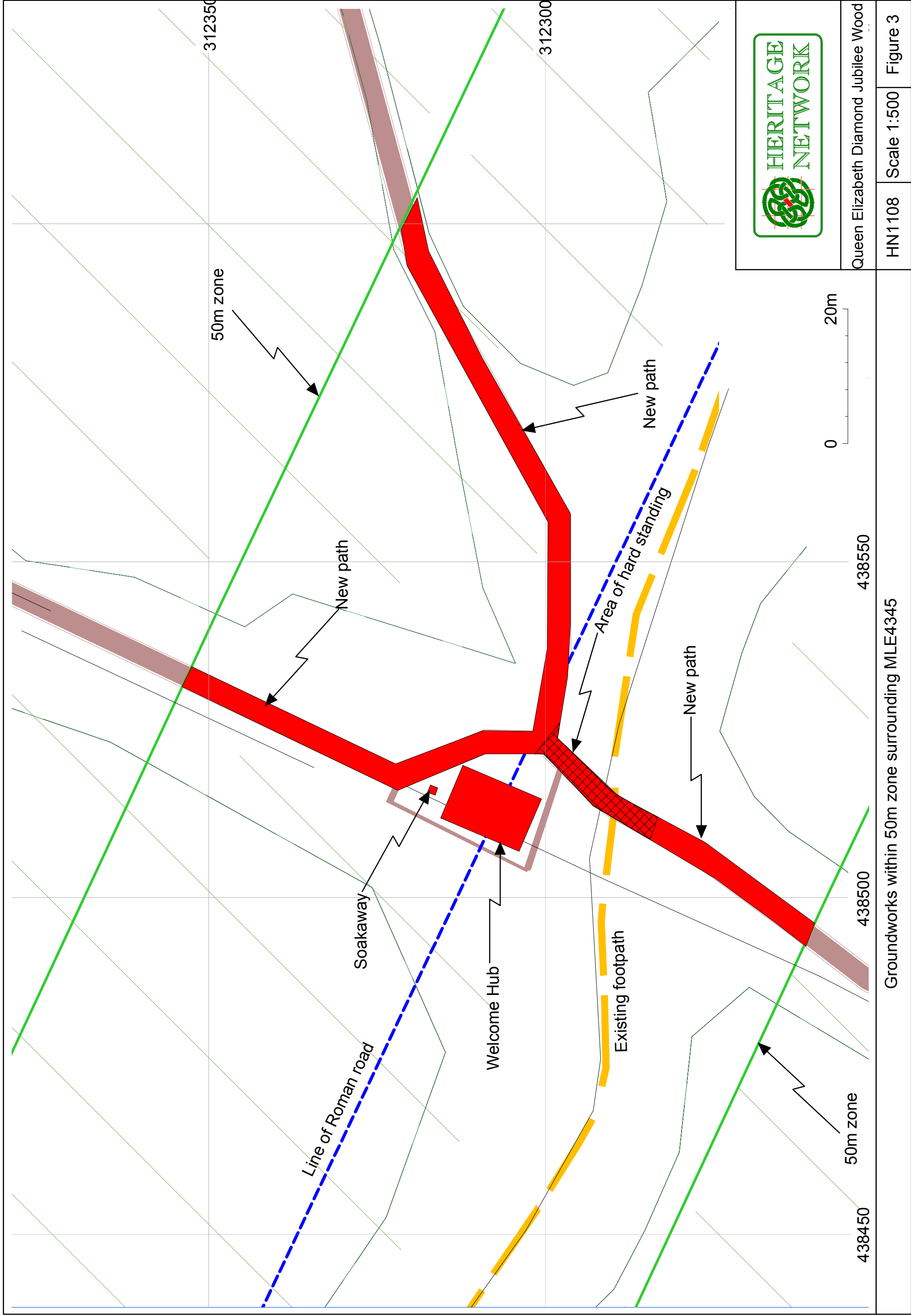
Figure 1

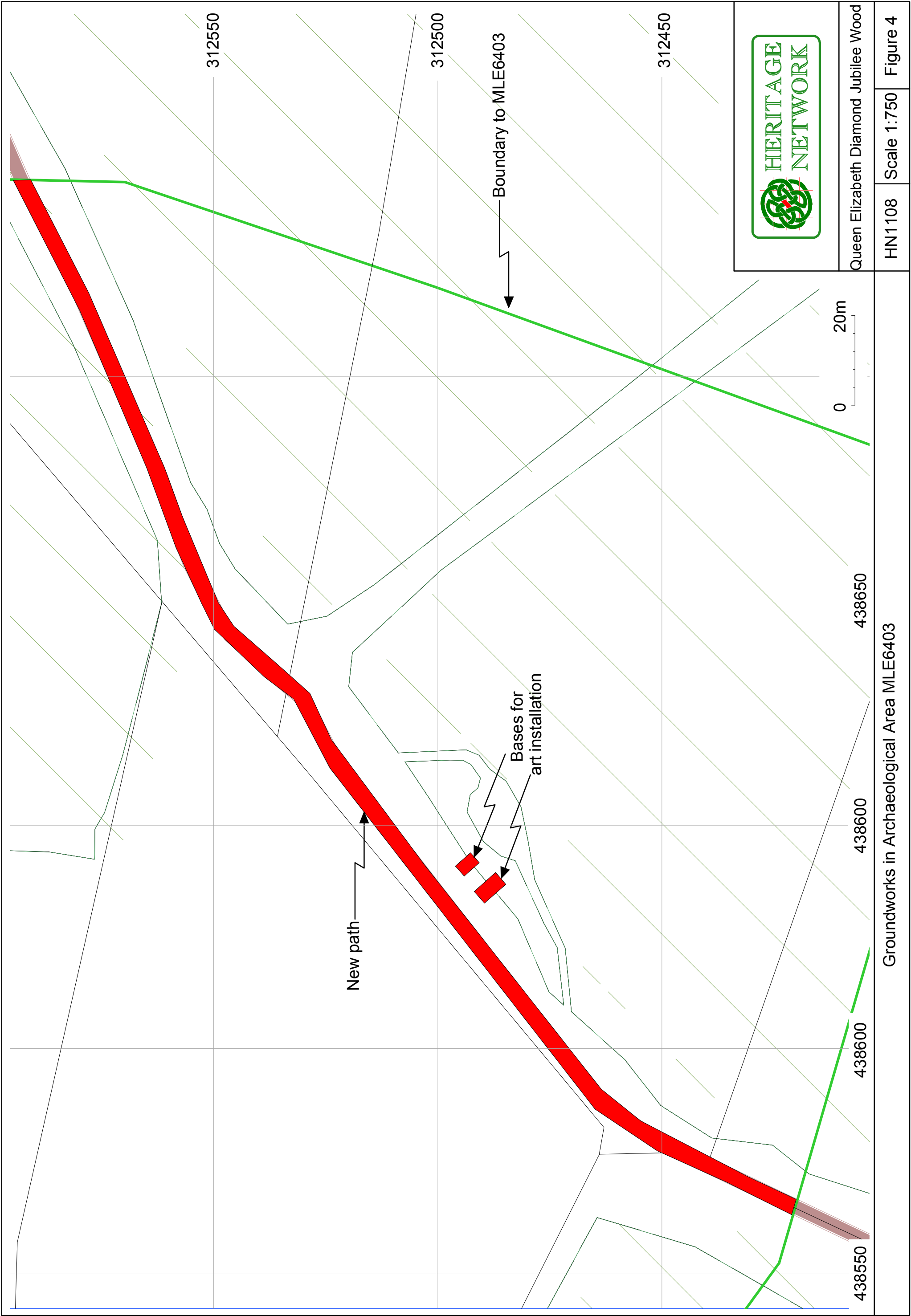


Site Layout

Scale 1:4000

Figure 2





Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood

HN1108 Scale 1:750 Figure 4

Groundworks in Archaeological Area MLE6403



Plate 1: Pre-excitation shot of the 50m zone to MLE4345, looking N



Plate 2: General shot of western arm, looking N



Plate 3: Area of modern intrusion, associated with existing barn, looking N



Plate 4: Stripped footprint of Welcome Hub, looking W



Plate 5: Soakaway trench, looking SE



Plate 6: New path in MLE6403, looking NE



Plate 7: S trench for art installation during excavation, looking NW



Plate 8: Trenches for art installation bases, looking N

Appendix

OASIS data entry form

<i>OASIS ID: heritage1-165957</i>	
Project details	
Project name	Ravenstone, Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Heather Lane
Short description of the project	<p>In response to an archaeological condition on the planning consents for the provision of new visitor facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by The Woodland Trust to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring on the groundworks for the new features where they crossed areas of archaeological potential.</p> <p>The study area crossed two known areas of archaeological activity, including the postulated line of a Roman road and an area of possible prehistoric enclosures, associated with a number of finds of prehistoric artefacts. It was, therefore, considered that the present investigation had the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of archaeological activity in the region from the prehistoric period onwards.</p> <p>The groundworks on the site were largely shallow, consisting of a topsoil strip for new paths, bases for art installations and a Welcome Hub. These did not breach the overburden and any potential buried archaeological features were not disturbed. Where the natural clay was exposed, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.</p>
Project dates	Start: 20-03-2014 End: 29-01-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN1108 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	HN1163 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	X.A21.2014 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE RAVENSTONE WITH SNIBSTONE Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Heather Lane
Postcode	LE67
Study area	1533.50 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 38 12 52.7039921108 -1.43755079512 52 42 14 N 001 26 15 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	Robin Densem
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	The Woodland Trust
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Digital Archive ID	X.A21.2014
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service
Paper Archive ID	X.A21.2014
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Diary", "Plan", "Report", "Unspecified Archive"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood, Ravenstone, Leicestershire: archaeological monitoring report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ashworth, H.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.908
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, green cover, comb bound, 10 text pages, 4 figures, 8 plates