

Desk Based Assessment for Land at

DELAMERE FOREST VISITORS HUB

For Forestry Commission

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Desk Based Assessment for Land at

DELAMERE FOREST VISITORS HUB

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Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester Council

NGR: 355004,370202

Planning App: Pre Planning

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Abstract

A site to the south of Delamere Forest, currently used as a nursery and visitors hub, has been proposed for upgrading works. This document outlines the archaeological potential for the site.

Historic research has shown that within a 1km radius of the site there has been human activity since at least the Neolithic period. It is known that in the wider area evidence of Mesolithic activity has also been identified.

Neolithic polished stone axes have been found to the south of the site. A Bronze Age mace head and other finds have also been recovered from land to the south of the site.

Eddisbury Hillfort lies within 1km to the south of the site. This is a large Iron Age defensive enclosure that also has evidence of Roman and Saxon activity. Saxon finds have also been recovered from just south of the site.

In the Medieval period the site was located within the forest of Mara, a hunting forest. The site lies within the Old Pale, a Medieval hunting enclosure. Other Medieval finds have been recovered from within a 1km radius of the site.

The site area is first developed in the Post Medieval period. First, with the construction of a railway line and station around 1869. Subsequently with the construction of Linmer Cottage at the northwestern corner of the site. Both Linmer Cottage and the station are locally listed buildings. Two marl pits were located on the site during this period. The land was taken over by the Forestry Commission in 1942 and following this a nursery, office and visitor centre was established on the site.

The majority of the site area has not been developed. As such any potential archaeology may be located at shallow depths. Due to the potential shallow nature of the archaeological resource it is suggested that archaeological monitoring take place on groundworks.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This archaeological desk based assessment has been researched and prepared by Blair Poole of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of the Forestry Commission.
- 1.2. The report considers land to the south of Delamere Station encompassing the forestry depot and leisure facilities. It is centred on National Grid Reference 355004,370202 (FIGURE 1). The site lies on the outskirts of the main body of Delamere forest, however it falls within the catchment area of the forest.
- 1.3. The area currently houses the forestry commission nursery, visitor hub, cafe and office as well as an open air venue. These elements are designated for improvement works.
- 1.4. The site is bounded to the north by a railway line, to the west by woodland and fields to the south and east (FIGURE 2).
- 1.5. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council who take archaeological advice from Cheshire Shared Service.
- 1.6. The assessment is based on the results of documentary and cartographic research as well as published and unpublished literature.

2. Planning Background

2.1. In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). This document sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment and replaces all previous Planning Policy Guidance, specifically PPS5. Section 12 of this document sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.

2.2. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF indicates planning decisions should be made based on the significance of Heritage Assets. These are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.

2.3. In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority is the Cheshire West and Chester Council. However, this authority has only recently been formed it does not yet have an agreed planning framework. As such Cheshire West and Chester revert to earlier plans, in this case the Vale Royal Borough Local Plan.

2.4. The relevant policy within the Local Plan are as follows;

Policy BE14

development proposals which could affect local ancient monuments and sites of archaeological importance, including sites and areas of archaeological potential and those identified in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey, will not be allowed unless it can be demonstrated, as part of the submitted planning application, that the particular site or monument will be satisfactorily preserved in situ or where it is not feasible, by record.

2.5. On matters concerning archaeology and the historic environment Cheshire West and Chester take advice from Mark Leah, Cheshire Shared Service.

2.6. In accordance with government guidelines and best practice, this report has been completed prior to the planning process to accompany a future planning application and to inform all parties of any archaeological concerns affecting the development site.

2.7. The study site does not lie within any Areas of Archaeological Importance or

Conservation Areas. There is a scheduled monument within 500m of the site, however no scheduled monuments are located within the site area. There are no nationally Listed Buildings within the site area, however several locally listed buildings are present on the site and in the vicinity.

3. Aims of the Assessment

3.1. It is not the aim of this assessment to present a complete history of Delamere Forest, nor is it the intention of this report to examine every artefact found in the local area. Rather, the aim of this assessment is to review the available data and use it to construct a model of the potential archaeology within the study site.

3.2. The assessment seeks to address the following issues:

- ◆ To assess the potential for archaeology.
- ◆ To assess the significance of potential archaeology.
- ◆ To assess the condition of potential archaeology.
- ◆ To assess the impact of the proposed development on the potential archaeology.

4. Methodology

4.1. This report has been researched and written to conform to L – P : Archaeology's Standards and Guidance for Desk Based Assessment. These standards in turn comply with the Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (DCLG, EH, DCMS 2010) and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS 2008).

4.2. A site visit was undertaken on Thursday 24th November 2011.

4.3. The following sources were consulted:

- ◆ Cheshire Record Office.
- ◆ Chester Archives and Local Studies Library.
- ◆ 1km radius search of the Cheshire Historic Environment Records (HER).
- ◆ Aerial Photographs held at the Cheshire HER.
- ◆ L – P : Archaeology's in house library.
- ◆ Internet sources and databases.

5. Site Background

5.1. GEOLOGY

- 5.1.1. The site lies along the Mid Cheshire Ridge, a formation of Triassic sandstone bedrock with undifferentiated mudstones and siltstones (BGS SHEET 109).
- 5.1.2. The area is known for its glacial geology with glacial meltwaters responsible for the formation of much of the current landscape. There are distinct areas of glacial and fluvioglacial sand and gravel in the area (LEAH ET AL 1997). However, it should be noted that the forest has a variety of superficial deposits including brown earths, podsol, peats and gleys which can all appear within very small areas (BUREK 2005).

5.2. TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.2.1. The site lies within the southern extent of Delamere Forest, 3km to the northeast of the village of Kelsall. The forest is the remnant of the ancient forests of Mara and Mondrem. The site area lying within the former. Although originally these forests covered a vast area, estimated to be around 16,000 hectares, it now comprises 972 hectares of mixed deciduous and evergreen woodland. This makes Delamere the single largest wooded area in Cheshire. Since the early 20th century the area has been used for recreation.
- 5.2.2. The site area has minor undulations, however lies relatively flat at approximately 80mOD.
- 5.2.3. The site extends over an area 23 hectares in size.

6. Archaeological and Historical Background

TIMESCALES USED IN THIS REPORT:

PERIOD	FROM	TO
PREHISTORIC		
PALAEOLITHIC	450,000	12,000 BC
MESOLITHIC	12,000	4,000 BC
NEOLITHIC	4,000	1,800 BC
BRONZE AGE	1,800	600 BC
IRON AGE	600	43 AD
HISTORIC		
ROMAN	43	410 AD
EARLY MEDIEVAL	410	1066 AD
MEDIEVAL	1066	1485 AD
POST MEDIEVAL	1485	PRESENT

Table 1 - Timescales used in this report

6.1. Information from the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is referenced with the Monument ID in brackets e.g. (CHER908). Due to the size of the site area the following analysis is from a 1km radius search of the HER, based on the centre point of the site (FIGURE 3).

6.2. The area is thought to have developed as woodland pasture in the post glacial period, containing hardy primary species such as oak and hazel.

6.3. PREHISTORIC

PALAEOLITHIC

6.3.1. There is no evidence of Palaeolithic activity on the site, which is typical for this area. The closest activity dating from this period is located 7.5km to the northwest of the site and is represented by flint flake material at Harrol Edge near Frodsham (NEWSTEAD 1957).

6.3.2. No Palaeolithic findspots or sites are recorded on the CHER within a 1km search radius of the site.

6.3.3. There is a low potential for archaeology dating to this period to be found on

the study site. However, any finds dating to this period would be of national significance.

MESOLITHIC

- 6.3.1. There is known Mesolithic activity within Delamere forest and finds of flint scatters have been recorded at various locations within the forest as well as in the surrounding area, such as within the village of Ashton, 5km to the west (CROSBY 1996 & LEACH 1942).
- 6.3.2. During this period the economy was based around a Hunter Gatherer lifestyle. Communities were highly mobile and hence have left limited evidence of their activities. As the climate altered, the area around Delamere is thought to have developed in a pine and birch forest suitable for wild ox, red deer, roe deer and wild pig (HIGHAM 1993).
- 6.3.3. No Mesolithic findspots or sites are recorded on the CHER within a 1km radius of the site.
- 6.3.4. There is low potential for Mesolithic finds to be present on the site. If these were to be identified they would be of regional significance.

NEOLITHIC

- 6.3.5. With the development of the Neolithic, mobile groups settled in disparate agricultural communities. Land clearance for settlements and fields was undertaken as was the growth of crop domestication and cultivation. Evidence for forest clearance during the Neolithic can be seen around Delamere forest and it has been shown that cereal crops were being grown in the forest between 4,200 and 3,500BC (CROSBY 1996). The settlements dating to this period have been suggested as mainly being located on more fertile soils outside the forest itself and often on higher ground (SHRUBSOLE 1892).
- 6.3.6. There are no HER records relating to Neolithic activity within a 1km radius of the site. However, recent excavations on Eddisbury Hill, 500m to the south, have produced Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age grooved Ware (GARNER 2011). At the base of Eddisbury hill a series of five polished stone axes were also found (OSWALD 2000) which could indicate Neolithic activity in the area .

6.3.7. The site has a low potential for finds dating to the Neolithic period. Finds of this date would have regional significance.

BRONZE AGE

6.3.8. The area around Delamere forest has significant Bronze Age monuments and find spots spread over a wide area. It is clear that Bronze Age activity was present across much of the forest area. Many of the sites recorded in the area relate to funerary practices (MULLIN 2003). There are a number of significant burial mounds at Seven Lows, Gallows cob, Rough low, Houns low, Oulton low, Glead Hill and Castle cob (SHRUBSOLE 1892, LEAH ET AL 1997).

6.3.9. Within 50m of the southern boundary of the site (FIGURE 3) a cremation urn has been recovered (CHER929). Close to this, within 25m of the southern boundary of the site, a perforated stone mace head dating to the Bronze Age was found (CHER910).

6.3.10. Finds from Eddisbury Hill, 500m to the south, such as a barbed and tanged arrowhead and also date to the Bronze Age (GARNER 2011).

6.3.11. The site has a high potential for finds dating to the Bronze Age period. Finds of this date would have regional significance.

IRON AGE

6.3.12. The landscape around this area is dominated by a number of impressive Iron Age hill forts. These are large scale earthworks situated on elevated positions overlooking the landscape and, although often dated to the Iron Age, may have their origin in the Late Bronze Age (FORDE-JOHNSTON 1976).

6.3.13. Approximately 500m south of the site area is one of the most impressive hill forts in the area, Eddisbury Hillfort (CHER866/1). This is also a scheduled monument (25692) and as such is afforded statutory protection.

6.3.14. The hillfort at Eddisbury is a promontory defensive site and is a large fortification commanding extensive views of the surrounding area (PEVSNER & HUBBARD 1971). It is a bivallate, or double rampart, hill fort located on an outcrop of the sandstone ridge, which slopes steeply to the north east and south and is connected to the Pale Heights on the north west side (FORDE-

JOHNSTON 1976). The ramparts have been shown to have been revetted with stone (HARRIS & THACKER 1971).

6.3.15. Excavations on the site have produced evidence of activity from at least the Bronze Age within the enclosure, including a cup and ring decorated boulder at the eastern gateway (GARNER 2011). Recent excavations have attempted to clarify the phasing of the hillfort. The first occupation was possibly in the Late Bronze Age and appears to have been unfortified. This was followed by Early Iron Age settlement which constructed a univallate (single rampart) fortification comprising parallel bank and ditch defence (GARNER 2011). The defences were subsequently extended over the western half and reinforced with dry stone walling. The outer rampart and ditch are thought to date to 400-200 BC.

6.3.16. It is clear that the wider area was occupied during the Iron Age as hillforts did not exist in isolation (FORDE-JOHNSTON 1976)) and as such there is moderate potential for finds dating to the Iron Age on the site. Any find dating to this period will be of regional significance.

6.4. ROMAN

6.4.1. The area between Chester and Manchester is known to have been of importance during the Roman period (MARGARY 1957). One of the major Roman Roads leading from Chester runs along an east west alignment just over 1km to the south of the site (FIGURE 3).

6.4.2. A possible Roman structure was identified in 1974 at Primrose Hill, 3km to the south of the site, however its function has not been ascertained (THOMPSON WATKIN 1974).

6.4.3. The site area is thought to have been within a natural woodland during the Roman period and limited finds have been recovered. Approximately 3km northwest of the site a find of Roman Grey ware was identified close to a fragment of sandstone quern and pestle (AHP & KHC 2005).

6.4.4. A Roman Bow brooch, or fibula, was found 1.5km north of the site in 2004 (HEREPATH 2004). This brooch type was not only decorative but served to fasten clothing and is seen to be a replacement to the earlier straight pins that were

used in the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age.

6.4.5. A possible Roman lead ingot is recorded in the HER as being found 600m south of the site area (MCH14242). However, this has also been interpreted as a possible Post Medieval trapezium weight.

6.4.6. It has been suggested that Eddisbury hillfort was slighted by the Romans, however finds from the site indicate that there is potential for a Romano British farmstead being located within the enclosure dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries (GARNER 2011). As such the potential for Roman finds on the site is low. Finds of this date will have regional significance.

6.5. EARLY MEDIEVAL AND MEDIEVAL

6.5.1. The southern extent of the forest, close to the site area, is thought to have marked an early border with the kingdom of Powys until at least the 7th century (LATHAM 1991). The village of Kelsall has been suggested as having Welsh origins and lies within the extent of the early forest area (LATHAM 1991). By the 9th century the forest had been brought wholly within the kingdom of Mercia (LATHAM 1991).

6.5.2. The forest of Mara is almost always mentioned in tandem with the forest of Mondrem. These twin forests were classed as one of three great Medieval Cheshire forests, the others being Macclesfield and Wirral (DARBY & MAXWELL 1962). Both Macclesfield and Wirral have since receded. The designation of the forests of Mara and Mondrem is thought to have Medieval origins. The existing woodland, which appears to have been sparse, was designated as a Saxon hunting forest (BU'LOCK 1972). The forest appears to have developed into an oak, ash, birch and pine wood by the 10th century (LATHAM 1991).

6.5.3. In 914 Ethelfleda refortified the existing Iron Age fort at Eddisbury Hill (GARNER 2011). This is recorded in the 10th century chronicles, which state that 'Upon the highest hill stood the Saxon fortress of Finborrow, and near it a city, both of which are said to have been founded by Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great; the latter, called Eadesbury' (LEWIS 1848). The fort was short lived and quickly moved to Runcorn to oversee activity along the Mersey (LATHAM 1991).

- 6.5.4. A Saxon dagger has been recorded as being found in Delamere forest, however the exact location of this find is not known (ORMEROD 1882).
- 6.5.5. The forests of Mara and Mondrem were divided by a road running between Tarporley and Weaverham, known as *Pytefinsty*, or Potevin's way (HUSSAIN 1973). Mara occupied the area to the northwest, containing the site area, and Mondrem to the east (HUSSAIN 1973). The extent of the forest of Mara encompassed the area from Tarporley to the River Mersey (COX 1905).
- 6.5.6. The suffix *sty* is of Saxon origin and refers to a way or route (LEWIS 1848). In general the suffix *straet* was used in reference to older Roman roads, so it is likely that this track is of Medieval date (DORE 1977).
- 6.5.7. The Saxon deer hunting ground was taken over by the Normans following the conquest (KELSEY 1911). This area of the forest is recorded in the Domesday Book as being within the *Roelau* Hundred and comes under Earl Hugh's entry (MORRIS 1978). It should be noted that the term forest was a definite legal entity and not necessarily referring to a wooded area (ORMEROD 1848). Delamere was designated as a Royal Forest, meaning it fell outside of normal legal jurisdiction and had its own laws and courts. Forests set aside for hunting and timber production and would have had open areas, heath and ground cover as well as wooded areas. This would have all aided the rearing of hunting animals for the aristocracy.
- 6.5.8. Research into the wetlands of Cheshire has shown that at the time of the Domesday survey the land was scarcely wooded with numerous pools and several late glacial lakes (LEAH ET AL 1997). The name Delamere is thought to come from the Norman name for the area as 'forest of lakes', a reference to this landscape (DODGSON 1971).
- 6.5.9. Following the Norman Conquest this section of the forest passed from the Saxon Godwin to Earl Hugh D'Avrache, Earl of Chester (LATHAM 1991). At this time jurisdiction for managing the forest fell to four families until the early 12th century when the role of Master Forester passed to the Done family (COX 1905).
- 6.5.10. Around 1180 to 1200 the Hundred of Eddisbury was formed. This new administrative district included the site area (LATHAM 1991). Settlements within

the forest would have been for those people working or overseeing the forest (DARBY & MAXWELL 1962).

6.5.11. The site lies within the Old Pale (CHER837/1/1), a Medieval hunting enclosure. Pales date to the Medieval period and are large earthworks with banks and internal ditches (AHP & KHC 2005). This layout allows an enclosure for hunting stock, such as deer to roam, without escaping into the wider area. Around 1237 John Done, Master Forester, was instructed to make a chamber in the forest for the protection of vert and venison. This is thought to be the formation of the Old Pale.

6.5.12. Located 600m to the south of the site a Medieval spindle whorl (CHER4958) has been recovered (FIGURE 3). Approximately 500m to the south of the site a lead weight in the shape of an acorn was recovered (CHER4961). This may date to the Medieval period, however it has also been suggested that it may date to the Post Medieval period.

6.5.13. In 1354 Edward, the Black Prince, ordered an unroofed chamber to be moved from Peckforton and erected on Eddisbury Hill (GARNER 2011). This is known as the chamber in the forest on Merricks Hill (CHER837/1/2). This lodge was rebuilt on several occasions and was occupied through to the 19th century.

6.5.14. It is clear that the area functioned as a hunting forest and Royal Forest throughout the Early Medieval and Medieval periods. The potential for Medieval archaeology to be present on the site is moderate. Any finds or features dating to this period will have local significance.

6.6. POST MEDIEVAL

6.6.1. Recent archaeological and palaeoenvironmental work within the forest has shown that the woodland would have been sparse, with much of the area scrub or rough grassland, during the Post Medieval period (BUREK 2005). A reference dated to 1530 refers to Delamere forest as somewhat hilly and wooded (DORE 1977).

6.6.2. This reference should not take anything away for the woodland as there must have been enough timber production to warrant its designation. In 1583 a

major fire destroyed much of Nantwich which led to over £2,000 worth of timber being used from Delamere forest to help reconstruct the town (BECK 1969).

- 6.6.3. When James I passed through Cheshire in 1617 a chase with the royal stag hounds was put on for his amusement in the forest (ORMEROD 1882). The event is recorded with reference to the high number and quality of the deer, both red and fallow, as well as fish and fowl (ORMEROD 1882). It is of note that the area is described at this time as being made up of vale, fern and heath on the plains and wood on the hills (ORMEROD 1882).
- 6.6.4. Cartographic research revealed a vast array of maps showing a basic view of the county, however the early maps are of limited detail and only show major settlements and landmarks. Sexton's map of 1577 does indicate that the site lies within the extent of the forest but is not detailed enough to allow any more assessment of the site. Both Drayton's map of 1622 and Van der Keere's map of 1627 are not detailed enough to supply any additional information, other than the fact that the site lies within the forest.
- 6.6.5. Allen and Daines' plan of Delamere Forest dated 1627 shows the site as being within the extent of the woodland. Jansson (1640), Blaeu (1645) and Blome (1677) show limited detail on their maps, but do indicate that the site lay within the forest extent, as do the maps of Morden (1695) and Bowen (1720).
- 6.6.6. Burdett's plan of the forest dated 1777 shows the site as lying wholly within the forest area and as being undeveloped.
- 6.6.7. A cast copper alloy button (CHER4959) was found 600m to the south of the site. The button is circular in form with a concave reverse and decorated front, showing an eight pointed star, with each point divided by a heart motif. This find has been dated to the 17th to 18th century.
- 6.6.8. An undated stone bowl (CHER4950) was found 500m to the south of the site. This bowl measures approximately 350mm by 240mm and is hexagonal in shape with formed rim and straight sides. Although no date has been given it is thought that the find is part of a Post Medieval bird bath.

- 6.6.9. An survey of 1808 focussing on the agricultural potential of Cheshire indicated that the soil around the site area was of poor quality and that the wood was limited to interspersed trees on gravel and sand broken up by peat moss (HOLLAND 1808). It was stated that the area was waste and of no discernible profit, suggesting that woodland plantation would be the best use of the area (HOLLAND 1808).
- 6.6.10. In order to further protect the forest, which was almost wholly common land and extra-parochial, it was enclosed and the parish of Delamere was formed in 1812 (LEWIS 1848). The earliest detailed map of this area of the forest comes from Davies' map of 1813. This map shows the site as lying within the forest with no development present.
- 6.6.11. Almost 1km to the south of the site is Eddisbury Hill Farm, a locally listed building (CHER6387). This building is obscured from the site by Eddisbury Hill. The farm building is thought to be 17th to 18th century in date and certainly exists prior to the enclosure award of 1819 (CHTS 2002).
- 6.6.12. Swire and Hutching's map of Cheshire dated 1830 shows the site area as within the forest and no development can be seen within the site area.
- 6.6.13. As the forest was crown property there is no coverage of this area of the Forest on the Tithe maps of the area dating to the 1830s and 40s. An Ordnance Survey surveyors draft of the area dated to 1839 shows the site as being undeveloped.
- 6.6.14. Following the incorporation of the West Cheshire Line (WCL) in 1861 a rail link between Chester and Northwich was proposed. The WCL was replaced around 1865 by the Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) and it is thought that it was under the CLC that the station was constructed around 1869. The station lies at the northeast corner of the site (CHER6377, CHER2267/1/31). The station is also a locally listed building and is a two storey structure with a series of 12 light sash windows and distinctive architraves.
- 6.6.15. To the west of the station is a large goods shed (CHER2267/1/32) and signal box (CHER2267/1/33). These are thought to be contemporary with the construction of the station around 1869 and are both locally listed structures. It is possible that the goods shed relates to the forest economy and served as a way to move

materials out of the forest. The sidings leading to the goods shed are still present, however the shed was dismantled in the 1970s.

6.6.16.The 1875 Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the site in much greater detail than the previous maps (FIGURE 4). The site is made up of several field enclosures with what appear to be two marl pits, located centrally to the site. The site is devoid of development, however the railway is clearly present to the north of the site including the station and goods shed noted above.

6.6.17.The 1881 OS map (FIGURE 4) shows little change from the 1875 edition. The marl pits are still visible to the centre of the site. A single trackway can be seen marking the eastern extent of the site area. The railway line, station, signal box and goods shed are all prominent on this map to the north of the site. There is no development shown on the site at this time.

6.6.18.The Severn Vyrnwy Aqueduct (CHER2655/0/0) passes along a north south alignment at the eastern extent of the site area. This aqueduct was built as part of the Vyrnwy Large Diameter Trunk Main (LDTM) supplying fresh water to Merseyside from Lake Vyrnwy. The LDTM covers nearly 110 km in total and dates to between 1888 and 1896.

6.6.19.Lake Vyrnwy, located in Powys, is a Victorian reservoir with a stone-built dam, built in the 1880s. It was the first of its kind in the world and was constructed to supply Merseyside with fresh water. It was famously built by constructing a large dam and flooding the Vyrnwy Valley including the village of Llanwddyn. The reservoir was designed by Dr George Deacon in 1879 and was built between 1881 and 1888.

6.6.20.The 1898 OS map of the site (FIGURE 5) again shows no development within the site area, however only a single marl pit appears in the centre of the site. The trackway at the eastern boundary of the site appears to have been turned into a more formal roadway by this date. There also appears to be a linear structure at the southeastern corner of the site with a Bench Mark of 273.9ft (83.48mOD) on its northern face. It is likely that this is an agricultural building.

6.6.21.This building is still present on the 1910 OS map (FIGURE 5) as is a new

structure, Linmer Cottage, at the northwestern corner of the site. Linmer Cottage is a locally listed building built between 1898 and 1904 (CHER6396).

6.6.22.No mapping of this section of the forest appears to have been carried out between 1910 and 1954. However it is known that in 1942 the newly created Forestry Commission were granted control of the Forest and it has been used as plantation and for leisure activities since this time.

6.6.23.The 1954 edition OS mp (FIGURE 6) shows the site as following the same layout as seen on the 1910 edition. The marl pit at the centre of site and the station and its associated structures are still visible, as is Linmer Cottage. However, a new structure is visible to the east of Linmer Cottage. This is the Forestry Commission building which would date from post 1942.

6.6.24.The 1968 edition OS map (FIGURE 6) shows the development of the Forestry Commission building to the east of Linmer Cottage. At this time the marl pit appears to have been filled in. There is still no development on the site beyond the structures noted above.

6.6.25.Approximately 500m to the southeast of the site is a red K6 style telephone kiosk (CHER6920) dating to the 20th century.This is a locally listed structure.

6.6.26.The 1985 OS map of the site shows that the Forestry Commission buildings have been extended and new structures have been built to the south of Linmer Cottage and a nursery has been formed (FIGURE 7). No other development has been undertaken on the site.

6.6.27.The 2010 OS map (FIGURE 7) shows that the nursery has undergone rapid expansion and now occupies a large area to the south of the access road. A new building has also been erected on the site to the south of the junction crossing the railway line along the northern boundary of the site. This is named as Linmer Farm on the map.

6.6.28.Post Medieval development on the site relates activity associated with the Forestry Commission. Potential for archaeological features of this date will be low. The significance of any features will be local.

6.7.AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

6.7.1. The aerial photographic database held by the Cheshire Historic Environment Record was examined. These included the following references;

- ◇ 1945-48 RAF national survey
- ◇ 1971-73 County survey
- ◇ 1970-75 Engineering survey
- ◇ 1983-85 County survey
- ◇ 1991 Geonex/NRSC Mersey Barrage Feasibility survey
- ◇ 1992-93 County survey
- ◇ 1999-2000 Millennium National survey
- ◇ 2005-06 County Survey
- ◇ 2010 – Ordnance Survey aerial photography

6.7.2. No features were identified on the site after examination of the aerial photography repository.

7. Site Conditions and Proposed Development

7.1.SITE CONDITIONS

7.1.1. The site is currently used by the Forestry Commission as a nursery. The site also houses a visitor hub, café and office as well as an open air concert venue.

7.2.PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

7.2.1. A final design for the site has now been formalised and can be seen reproduced in **FIGURE 8** of this document. These proposals entail the upgrading of a number of the existing facilities including access road improvements, new road access, additional parking area and landscaping. They will also include the relocation of the existing visitors hub, the construction of a new purpose built facility (**FIGURE 8**). The new visitors centre will incorporate a café, retail area, booking/reception area, new toilet facilities and a meeting room. The proposals will also entail improvements to pedestrian and cycle links within proximity of the building and the creation of a hardstanding plaza as public outdoor space.

7.3.IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

7.3.1. The proposals have been designed to have as limited as possible and impact on the landscape and any *in situ* buried archaeology. However, as the site has not been previously developed it is possible likely that archaeological deposits survive *in situ* at shallow depths.

8. Summary & Conclusions

- 8.1. A site to the south of Delamere Forest has been proposed for the upgrading of existing facilities by the Forestry Commission.
- 8.2. This document has been compiled by Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of the Forestry Commission.
- 8.3. A study of available historic and archaeological information has been used to develop a site development chronology. It is thought that following the post glacial period the area became forested, albeit sparsely. The site area lies at the current southern extent of this forested area. At present the site falls outside the forested area, however would once have been within the body of the forest proper.
- 8.4. Historic research indicates that the site lies in an area that has seen human activity since the Prehistoric period. Although evidence of Mesolithic activity is present in the wider area it has not been identified within a 1km radius of the site area. Dispersed Neolithic finds have been recovered within a 1km area as have Bronze Age finds.
- 8.5. An impressive Iron Age Hillfort, Eddisbury Hill, lies within a 1km radius of the site. This is a scheduled monument that may date as far back as the Late Bronze Age and shows activity through the Iron Age, Roman Period and into the Medieval period. The closest Roman Road runs east west just over 1km to the south of the site.
- 8.6. In the Early Medieval period the hillfort to the south of the site was refortified, however this was short lived evidenced by a Saxon dwelling crossing the defensive ditch. The area would have fallen within the Saxon hunting forest of Mara. Mara was one of the tandem Medieval forests of Mara and Mondrem.
- 8.7. These hunting forests were turned over to the crown following the Norman conquest and was subsequently overseen by the master foresters. During the Medieval period the Old Pale, a hunting enclosure was constructed, which houses the site. During this period the site would have fallen within the extent of the forested area. Finds from the Medieval period have been recovered from within a 1km radius of the site.
- 8.8. The site area appears to have been undeveloped, still forming part of the forest, until the 19th century, when the railway was constructed to the north of the site, around

1869. At the northeastern corner of the site is Delamere station, a locally listed building, which is thought to be contemporary with the construction of the railway. Within 1km of the site, to the east, lies the Severn Vyrnwy aqueduct, dating to between 1888 and 1896.

8.9. At the northwest corner of the site Linmer Cottage, another locally listed building, can be seen. This dates to between 1898 and 1904 and is first shown on the 1910 edition OS map. The Forestry Commission take over the site, along with control of the rest of the forest, in 1942.

8.10. During the Post Medieval period the site lies mainly undeveloped with the exception of two marl pits located centrally. The only development of the site relates to Linmer Cottage and 20th century Forestry Commission activity, including the construction of several buildings on the site and the establishment of a nursery.

8.11. No features were identified from a search of aerial photography.

8.12. The designs indicate limited intrusive groundworks across the site, however the visitors hub is to be relocated and a hardstanding area is to be formed along with improvements to pedestrian and cycle links. As archaeological deposits are thought to be shallow in nature, due to the limited historic development on the site, any groundworks may encounter archaeological remains *in situ*.

8.13. Due to the potential shallow nature of the archaeological resource it is suggested that archaeological monitoring take place on groundworks.

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Ordnance Survey Map, 1881 Sheet XXXII (12) SE 1:2500

Ordnance Survey Map, 1898 Sheet XXXII (12) SE 1:2500

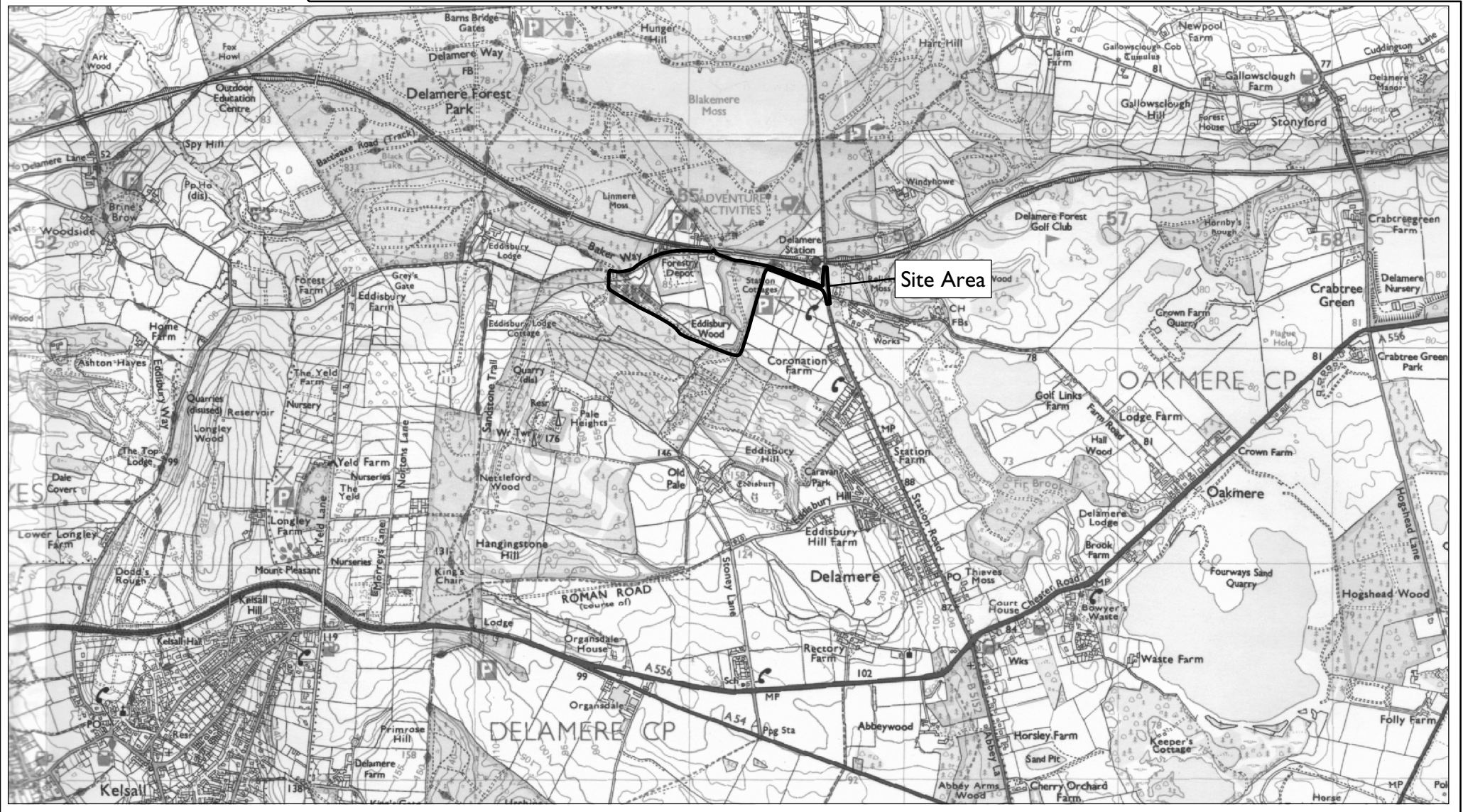
Ordnance Survey Map, 1910 Sheet XXXII (12) SE 1:2500

Ordnance Survey Map, 1954 Sheet XXXII (12) SE 1:2500

Ordnance Survey Map, 1970 Sheet XXXII (12) SE 1:2500

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location General



Scale 1:25,000 @ A4

0 1,000m



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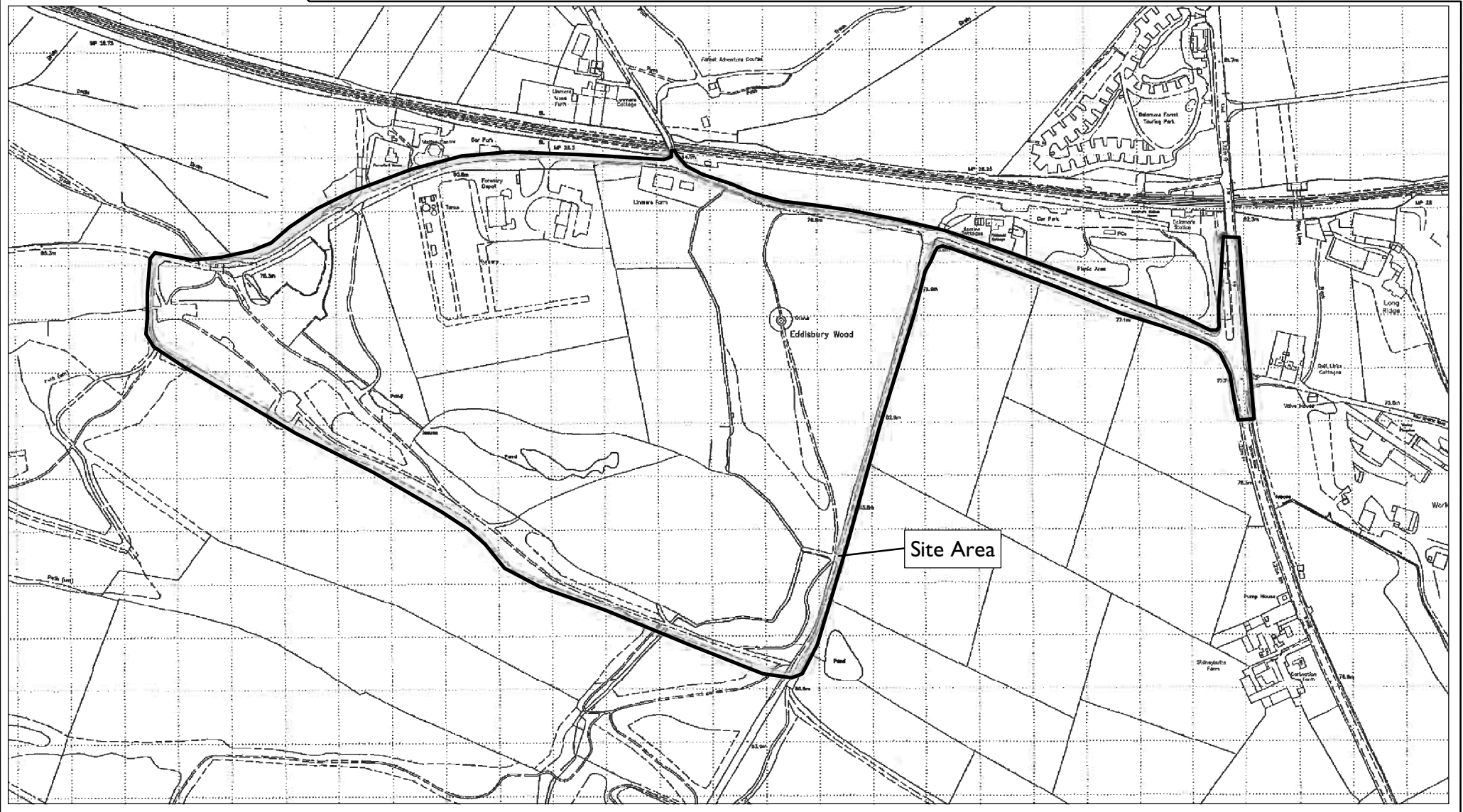
DESCRIPTION // Site location general

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location Detail



Scale 1:5,000 @ A4



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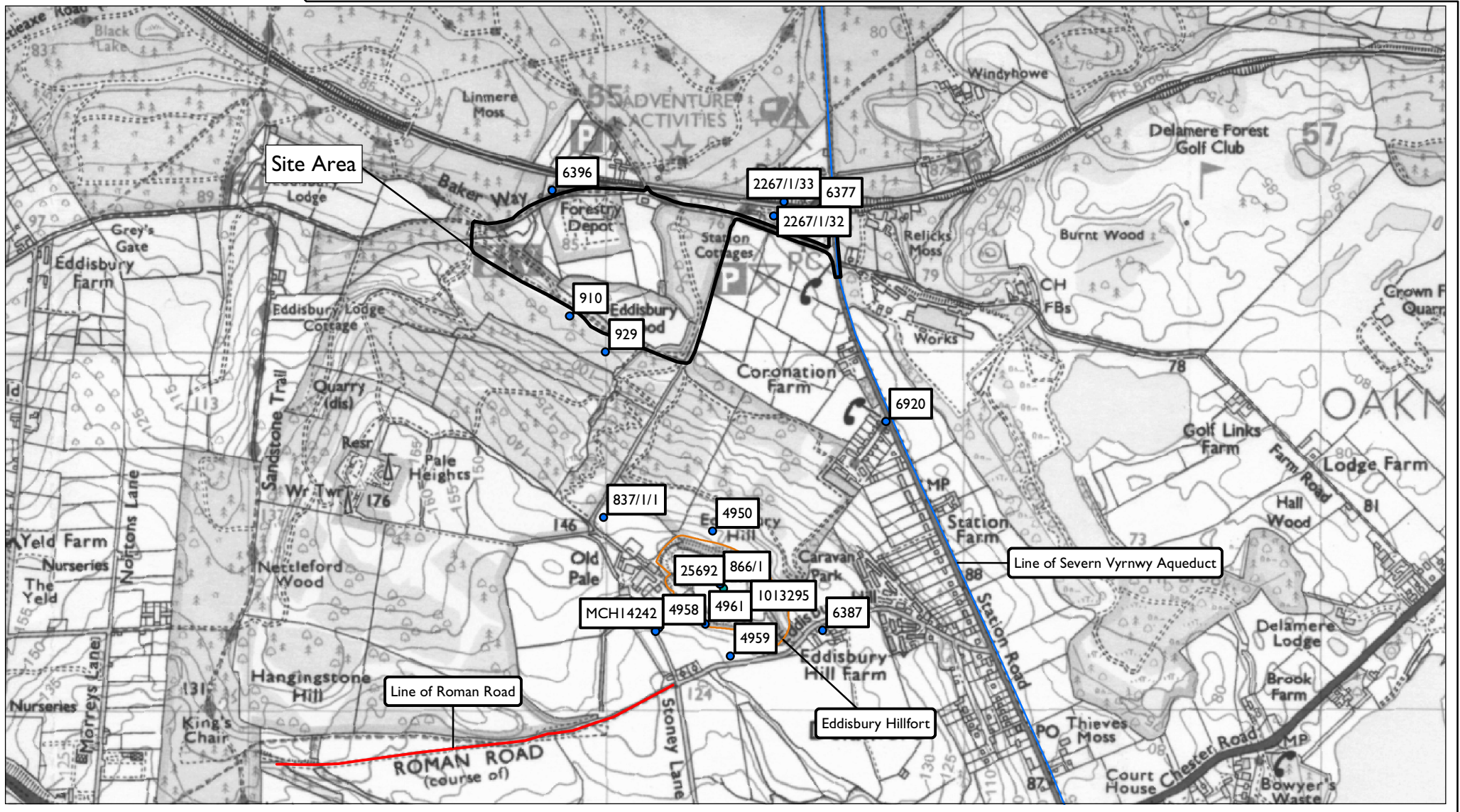
DESCRIPTION // Site location detail

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FIGURE 3 // HER Data



Scale 1:15,000 @ A4

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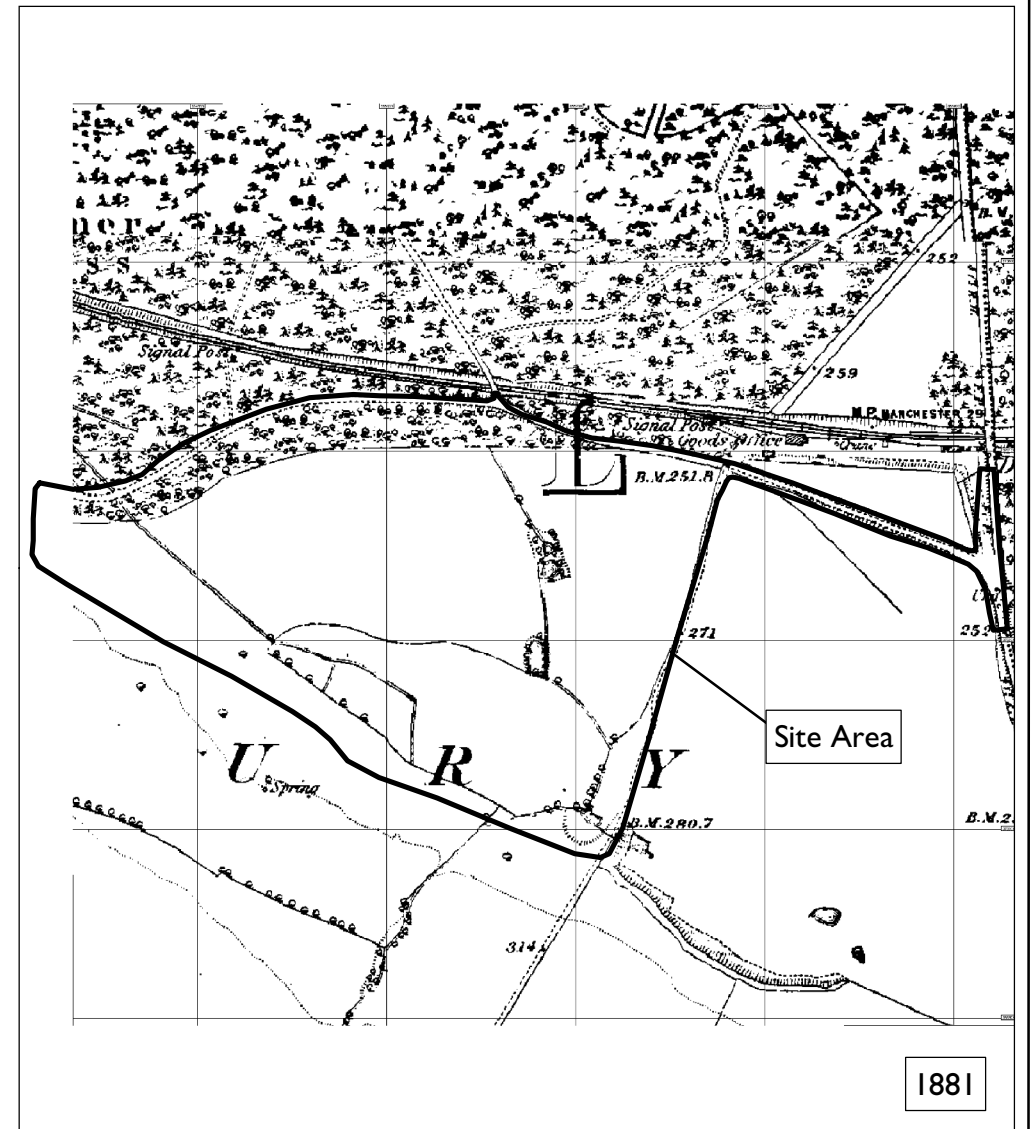
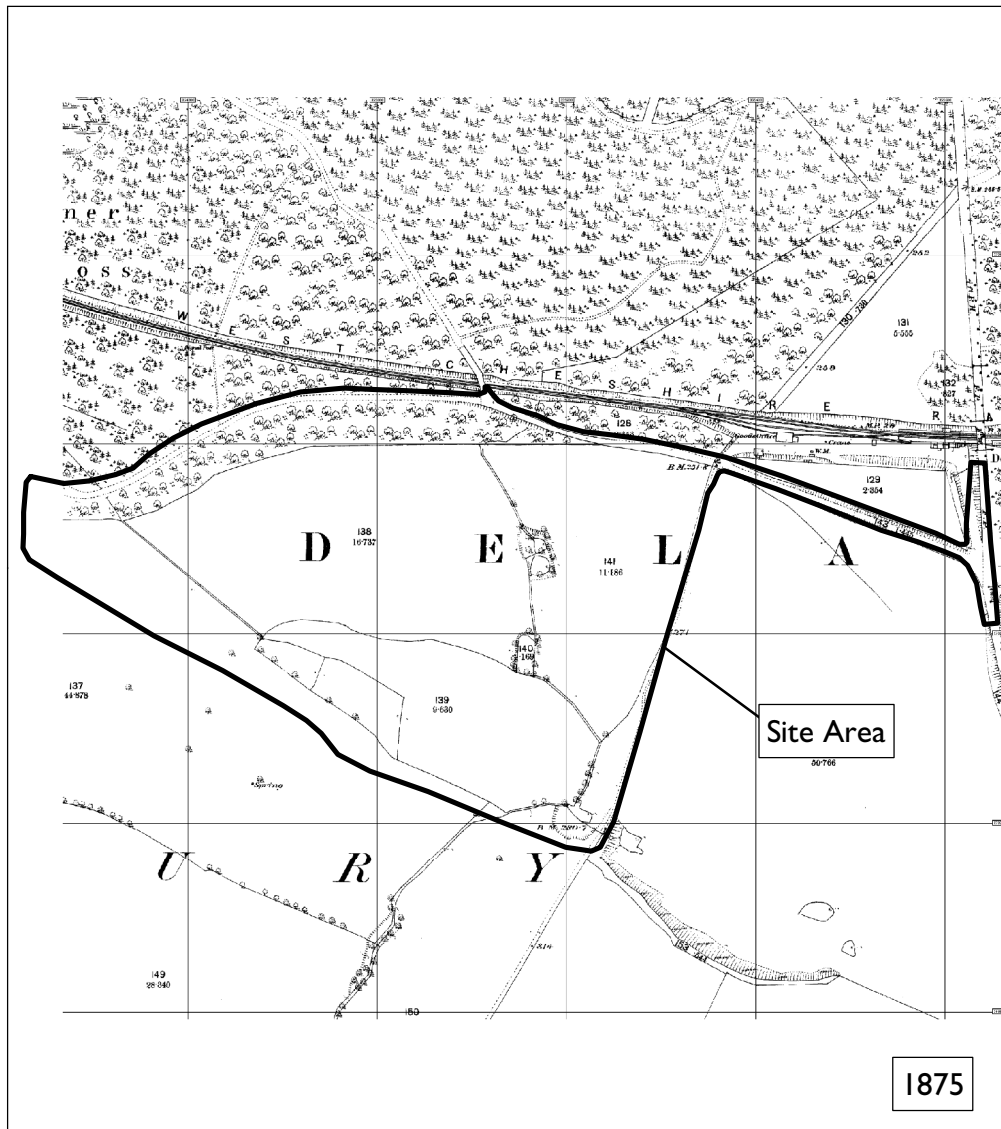
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FIGURE 4 // 1875 & 1881 OS Maps



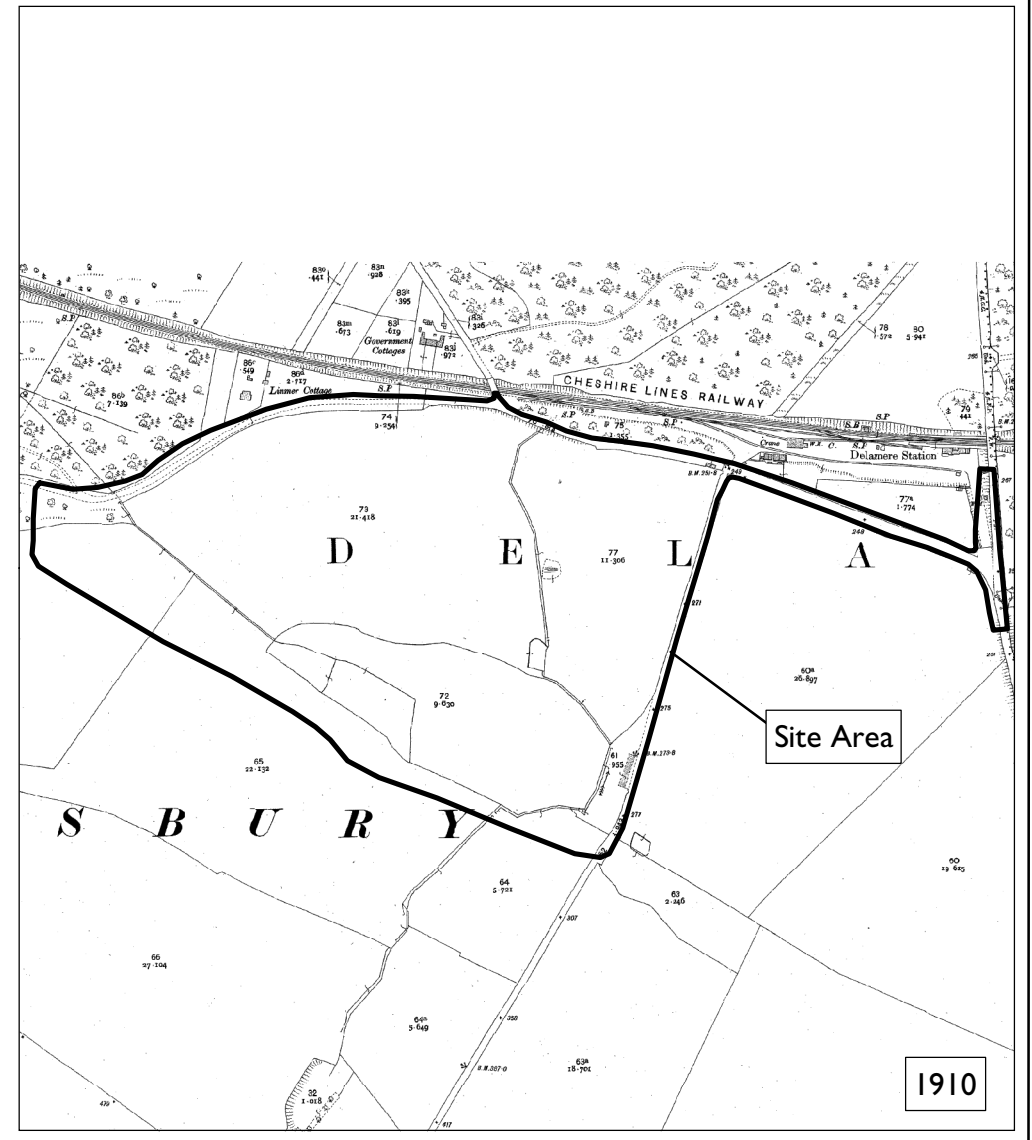
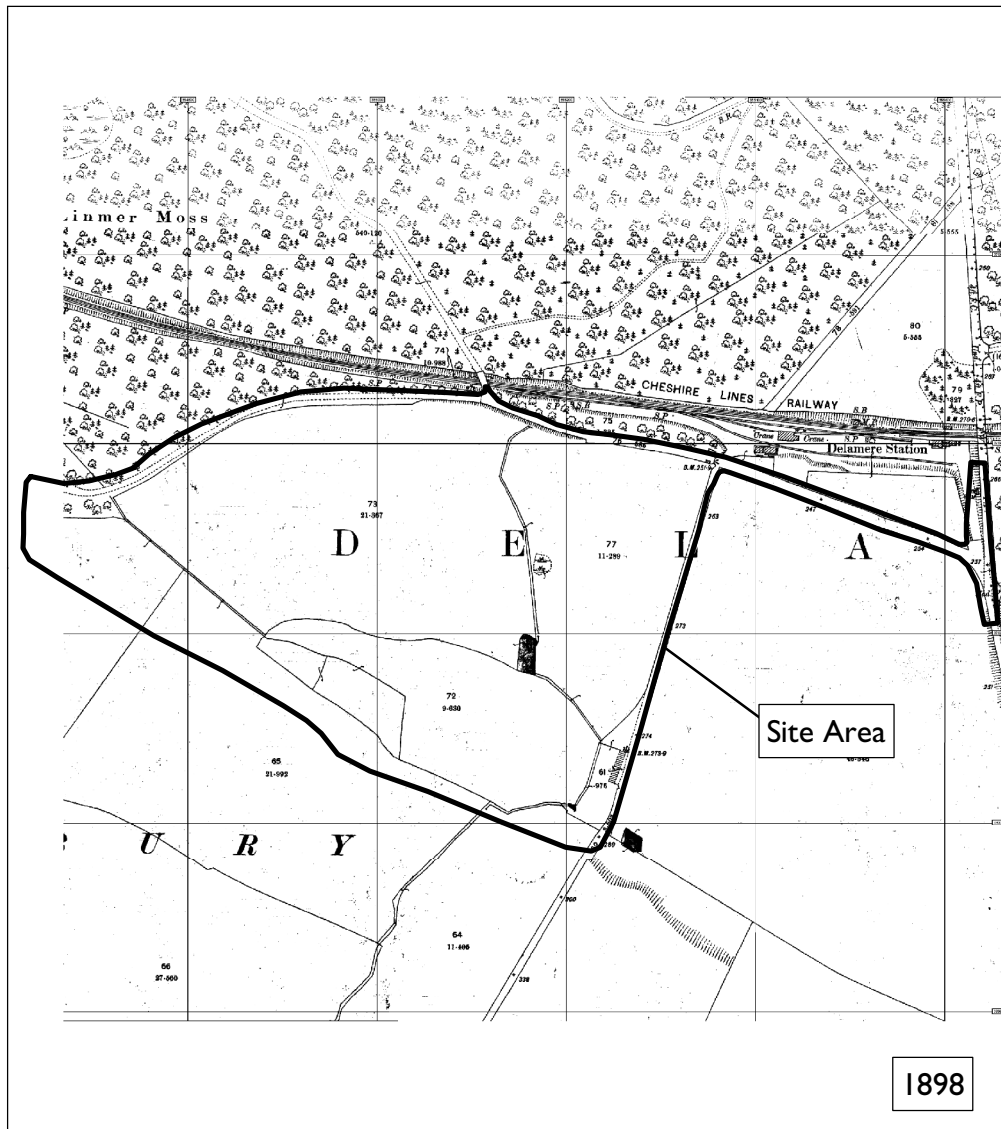
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DESCRIPTION // 1875 & 1881 edition Ordnance Survey maps

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FIGURE 5 // 1898 & 1910 OS Maps



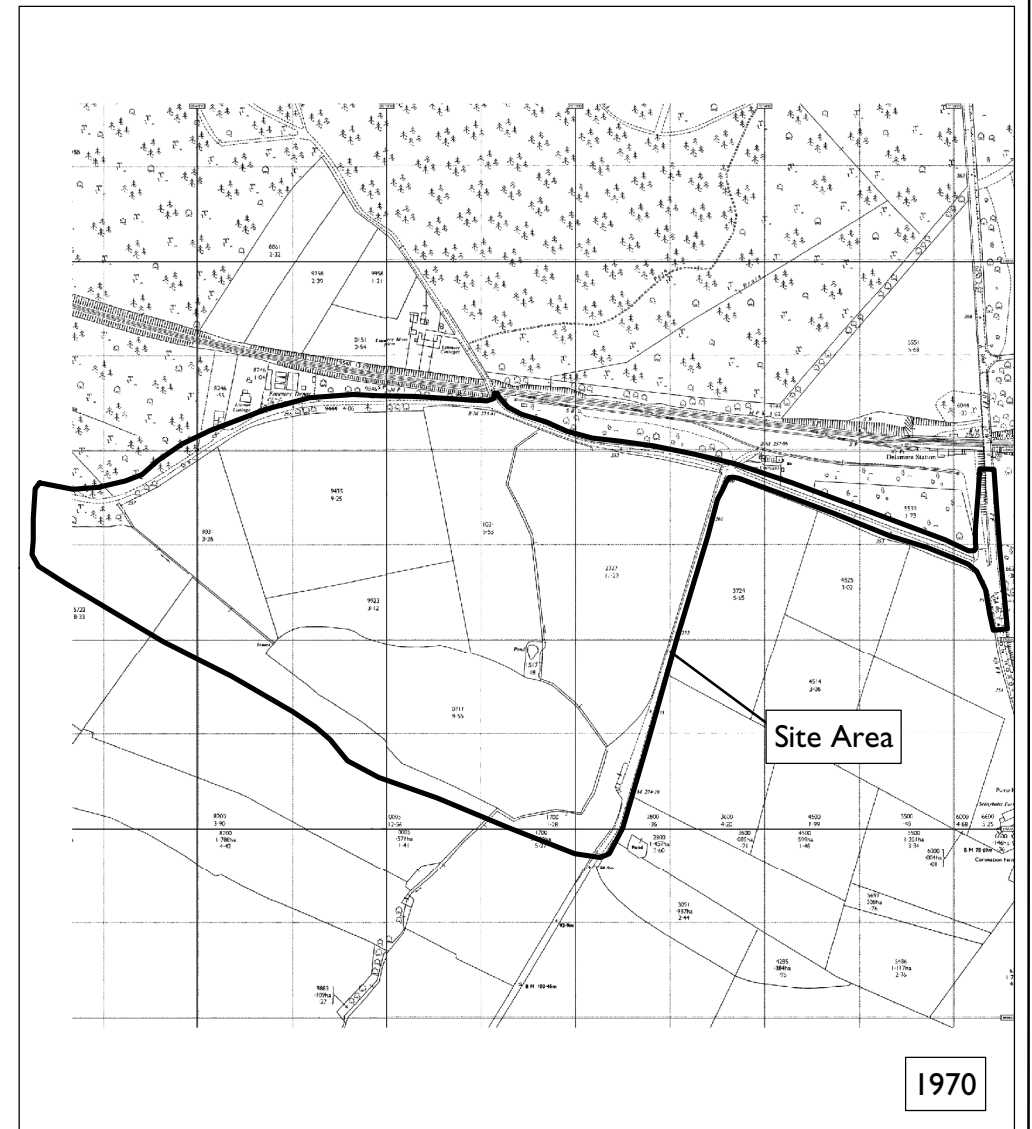
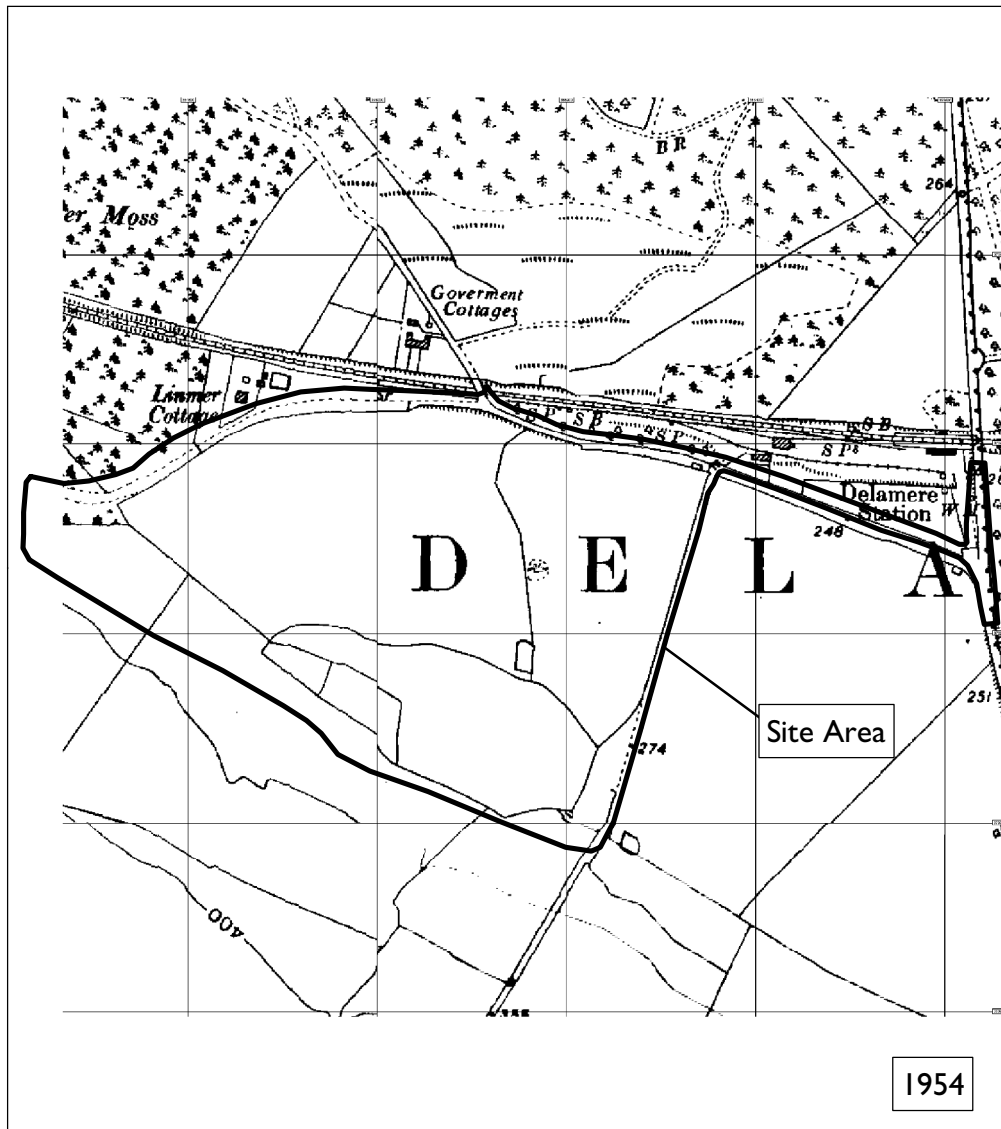
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DESCRIPTION // 1898 & 1910 edition Ordnance Survey maps

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FIGURE 6 // 1954 & 1970 OS Maps



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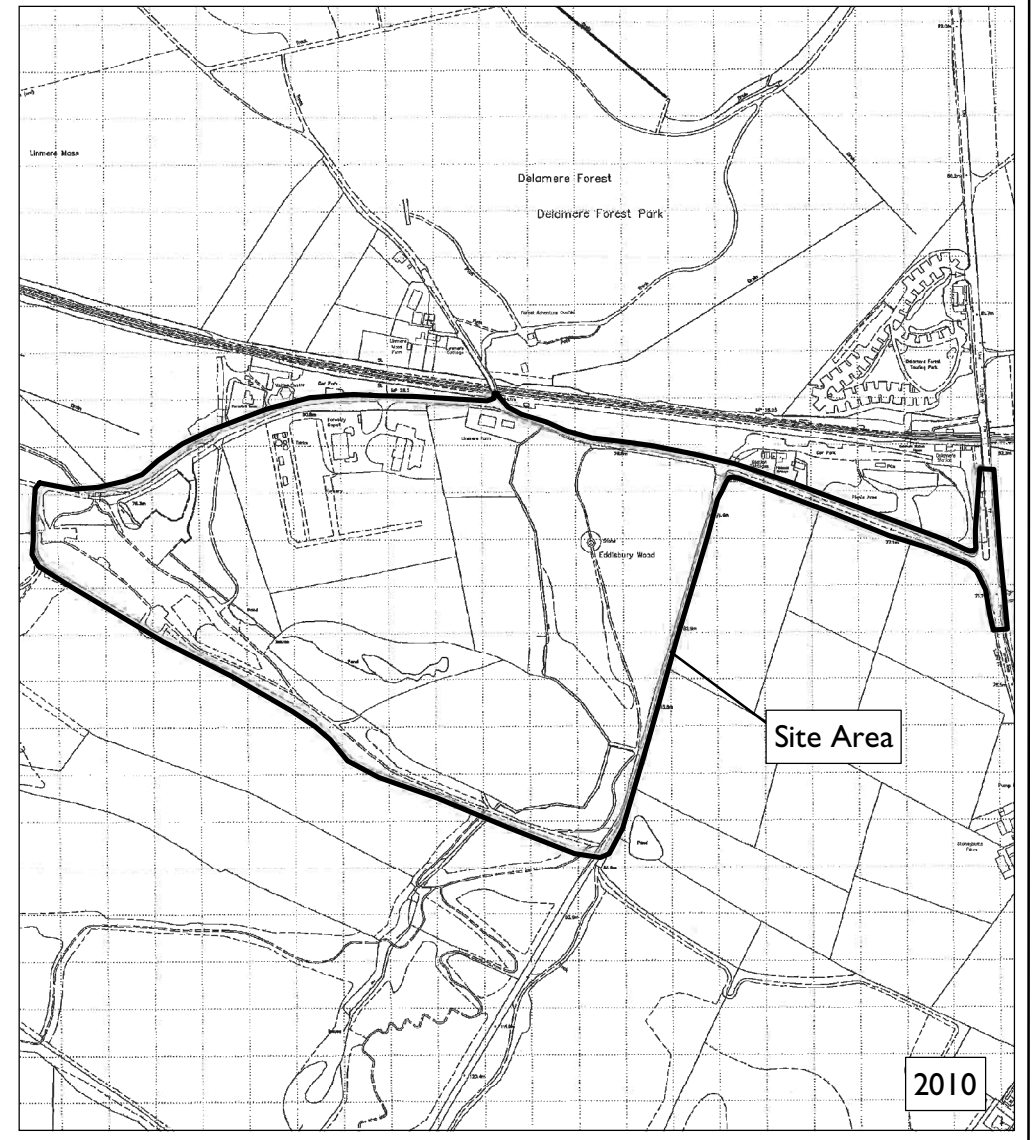
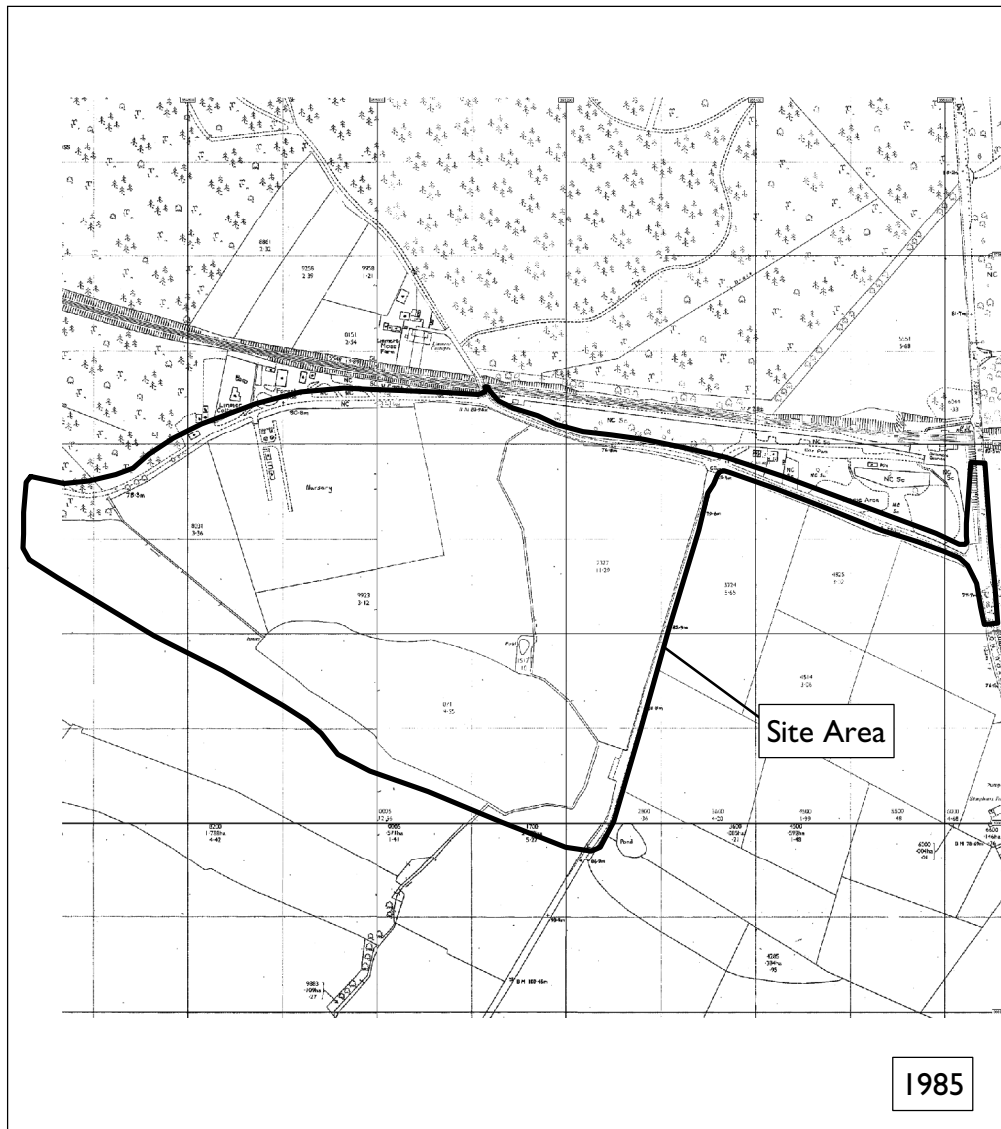
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FIGURE 7 // 1985 & 2010 OS Maps



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DESCRIPTION // 1985 & 2010 edition Ordnance Survey maps

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FIGURE 8 // Proposed Development

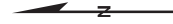


KEY:

- (A) New Visitor Centre**
New 10,000 sqm visitor centre, including a cafe, museum and shop, with bus stop.
- (B) New Visitor Car parking**
200 spaces including 10 car and 20 large spaces for coaches and 150 bays for motorbikes. 100 spaces reserved for disabled visitors. 500 cycle spaces and 100 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (C) Green Events Parking**
For use with large events.
- (D) New Forest Approach**
Landing platform and outdoor seating from the new visitor centre.
- (E) Coach Parking and Taxi Drop-off**
For use with large events.
- (F) Widened Existing Road**
For use with large events.
- (G) Forestry Commission Offices**
New 2,500 sqm office building for staff. 100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (H) New Cycle Trails**
New 1.5 km cycle trail, 100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (I) New Pedestrian Forest Trails**
New 1.5 km pedestrian trail, 100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (J) Concert and Events Arena**
Surface to be installed on existing public ground.
- (K) Natural Play Area**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (L) Picnic Meadow**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (M) Events Parking**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (N) Forestry Commission Nursery**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (O) Read Bed**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (P) Pay and Display Machines**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (Q) Pedestrian Wayfinding**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (R) Vehicle Wayfinding**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (S) Trailheads**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.
- (T) Delivery drop off bay**
100 cycle spaces and 50 motorbikes and 500 cycle spaces.

CENTRAL FOREST DISTRICT

Delamere Forest Project Planning Proposals

Not to scale. For illustration only



PROJECT // 1286C - Delamere Forest Visitors Hub

DESCRIPTION // Proposed development

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 1

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-116673

Project details

Project name	Delamere Forest Visitors Hub
Short description of the project	Archaeological Desk Based Assessment on land to the south of Delamere Station.
Project dates	Start: 24-11-2011 End: 05-01-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/DVH 12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	LP1286C - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Desk based assessment
Site status	None
Current Land use	Woodland 5 - Undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Aerial Photography - interpretation','Aerial Photography - new','Documentary Search','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Not recorded
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE VALE ROYAL DELAMERE Delamere Forest Visitors Hub
Postcode	CW8 2HZ
Study area	23.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	SJ 355004 370202 52.9263947886 -2.9595711317 52 55 35 N 002 57 34 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 80.00m Max: 85.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)

Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Matthew Williams
Project supervisor	Blair Poole
Name of sponsor/funding body	the Forestry Commission

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Aerial Photograph','Map','Report'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Delamare Forest Visitors hub
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Poole, B.
Other bibliographic details	LP1286C-DBA-V1.4
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	L - P : Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Chester
Description	Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of land to the south of Delamere Station, housing Delamere Visitors Hub and Forestry Commission nursery.
Entered by	B Poole (b.poole@lparchaeology.com)
Entered on	5 January 2012

OASIS:

Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice

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