NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

Bishop's Dyke, Penny Moor, New Forest

Fieldwork Report for Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority

for

Forestry England and the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme
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Document Information

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1 Introduction

1.1 This work was carried out ahead of wetland restoration as part of the Forestry England and the Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme, which has an aim to restore and enhance the internationally important habitats of the New Forest and is a partnership between the Verderers of the New Forest, New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry England and Natural England. The New Forest National Park Authority Archaeology Team are the HLS Archaeological Advisors.

1.2 To enable vehicle access to the mire, in August 2024 the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) Archaeology Team carried out an archaeological watching brief on the construction of a protective surface and temporary roadway over an already heavily eroded and badly damaged section of the Bishop's Dyke Park Pale Scheduled Monument (1009324), a banked earthwork located at Penny Moor, Hampshire (centred on NGR: SU 35313 04383; Fig. 1 and 2).

1.3 As part of the initial stages of the project the HLS Archaeological Advisors produced a Heritage Assessment (NFNPA 2023, 2024). To prevent further damage to the Scheduled Monument and enable vehicle access of machinery and transport of materials for vital wetland restoration work on the nearby mire at Penny Moor a protective surface was constructed over the damaged section of the bank. On top of this a 50m long and 3m wide temporary roadway was established across Bishop's Dyke and extending on both sides, to ensure minimal impact to habitat and heritage.

1.4 The fieldwork monitored under this watching brief involved the layering of a geotextile membrane, a levelling hoggin layer, a geogrid layer, a hoggin layer and the temporary track matting on top of the damaged section of banked earthwork without intruding into the monument.

1.5 Scheduled Monument Consent (S00245971) was gained in July. Cotswold Archaeology conducted measured surveys before and after groundworks and produced a Heritage Impact Assessment report (Cotswold Archaeology 2024).

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 The aims of the watching brief were to meet the requirements of the Scheduled Monument Consent by monitoring groundworks to prevent damage to the Scheduled Monument.

2.2 The specific aims of the watching brief were as follows:

- to create a photographic record of the monument before the start, during and after completion of the works;
- to monitor the creation of the protective surface and temporary roadway to assess if the ground works had the potential to damage underlying archaeological features;
- to assess the impact that this particular type of access road creation work might have on both standing and buried archaeological remains to inform future work.

3 Methodology

3.1 Following consultation with the HLS Archaeological Advisor, an access point across the Scheduled Monument's earthwork bank was selected (Fig 1). The selected location offered the most efficient and least damaging connection between a surfaced forest track

to the south and the mire to the north. This section of the Scheduled Monument already heavily eroded and badly damaged, and it was felt that the creation of the protective surface here would improve the Monument's condition and prevent any further damage to it (Fig. 3, 4 and 5).

3.2 Following consultation with Historic England and agreeing proposed scheme, Scheduled Monument Consent (S00245971) was gained in July. Cotswold Archaeology conducted measured surveys before and after ground works. (Figs 7, 15-18), as well as producing a Heritage Impact Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2024).

3.3 A multi-layered protective surface was installed over the breach in Bishop's Dyke to stabilise the earthwork and safeguard the monument during the wetland restoration project, and to protect the monument from further damage caused by the regular use of the breach by livestock, Commoners and other land users.

3.4 To enable access of heavy machinery and transport of materials to the working area, a temporary roadway, made from interlocking Grassform HD 3m x 2.5m composite heavy duty roadway mats, was placed over the protective surface. The temporary roadway was 50m long and 3m wide, extending on both sides of and across the Scheduled Monument to ensure minimal impact on habitat and heritage.

3.5 The works involved the layering of a geotextile membrane, to prevent any fine mixing with the remains of the damaged monument, a hoggin layer to form a level surface followed by a geogrid layer, to provide reinforcement and help hold the final hoggin layer in place. A layer of hoggin or granular infill was then placed over the top of the geotextile membrane and geogrid layer to create the level protective surface (see Fig. 8-12). Finally, the temporary matting was laid on top of the protective surface which would later be replaced with turves, a requirement of Natural England (see Fig. 13 and 14).

3.6 No intrusion or digging of the soil took place on or near the Scheduled Monument during the groundworks. Bog mats were placed to prevent ground disturbance and provide a level surface for the 360 tracked excavator (Fig. 9).

3.7 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (CIfA 2014).

4 Results

4.1 The groundworks did not damage the Scheduled Monument, and no finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

4.2 A protective surface was established which has stabilised the breach across Bishop's Dyke and will safeguard the Scheduled Monument from further damage.

5 Discussion

5.1 Cotswold Archaeology produced a Heritage Impact Assessment report in November 2024, establishing that the safeguarding works had a beneficial effect on the overall heritage significance of Bishops Dyke Park Pale Scheduled Monument.

5.2 This was identified to be mainly the result of the protection provided by the newly made ground to any surviving buried archaeological deposits within the breach, as well as a reduction in general erosion to the monument.

5.3 It is likely that the safeguarding works will help significantly reduce erosion and damage to the bank terminals in future.

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7 References

Cotswold Archaeology, 2024. *Bishop's Dyke Park Pale, New Forest, Hampshire: Heritage Impact Assessment.* CA Report AN0878_1.

New Forest National Park Archaeology, 2023. *Penny Moor - HLS Archaeological Constraints Evaluation.*

New Forest National Park Archaeology, 2024. *Penny Moor v1.2i - HLS Archaeological Constraints Evaluation*

8 Illustrations

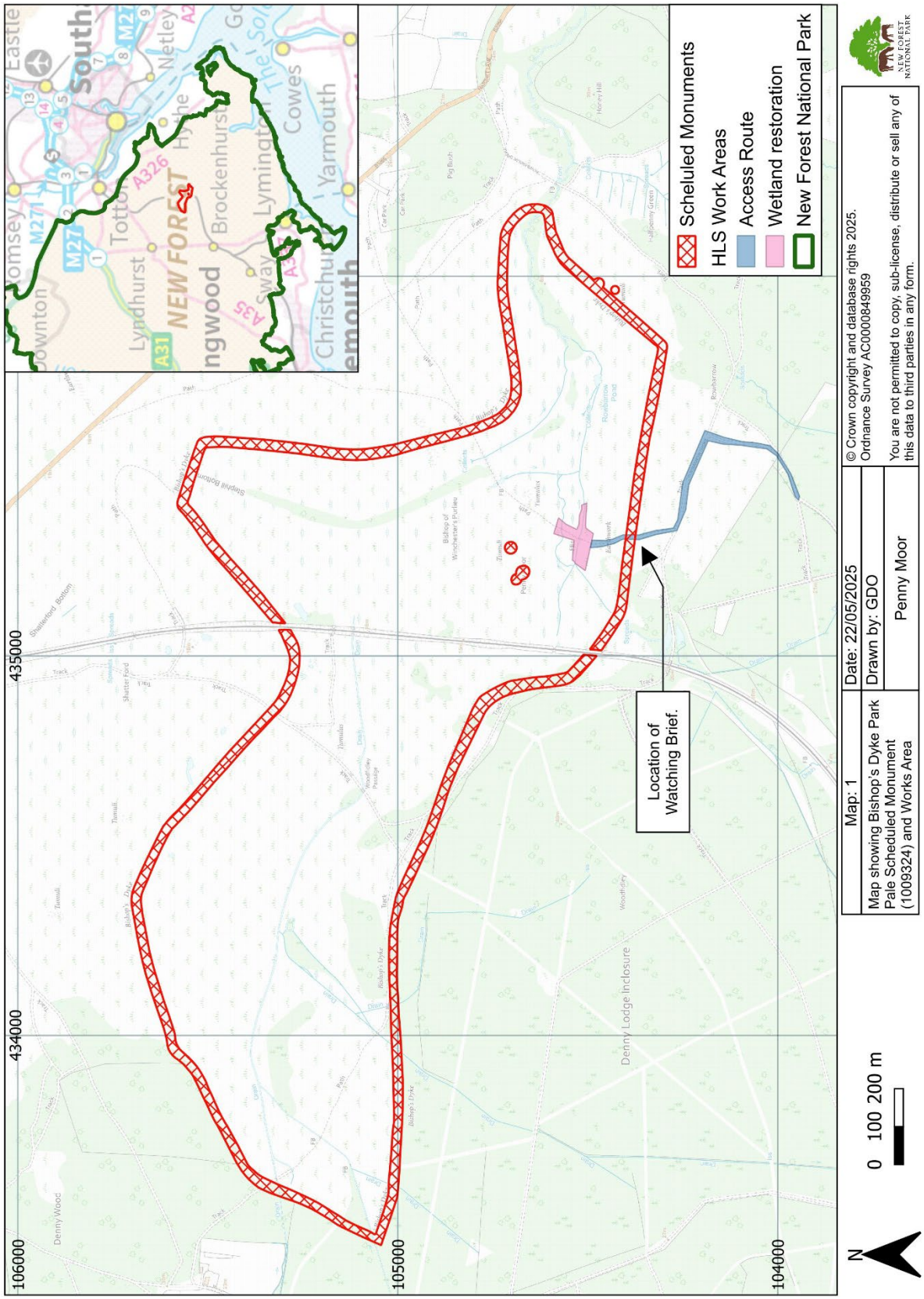

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: HLS Operations map (Forestry England 2023)

Figure 3: Breach in Bishops Dyke, facing N, April 2024 (1m Scale)

Figure 4: Breach in Bishops Dyke, facing NE, April 2024 (1m Scale)

Figure 5: Breach in Bishops Dyke, facing E, April 2024 (1m Scale)

Figure 6: View north across mire area within Bishops Dyke

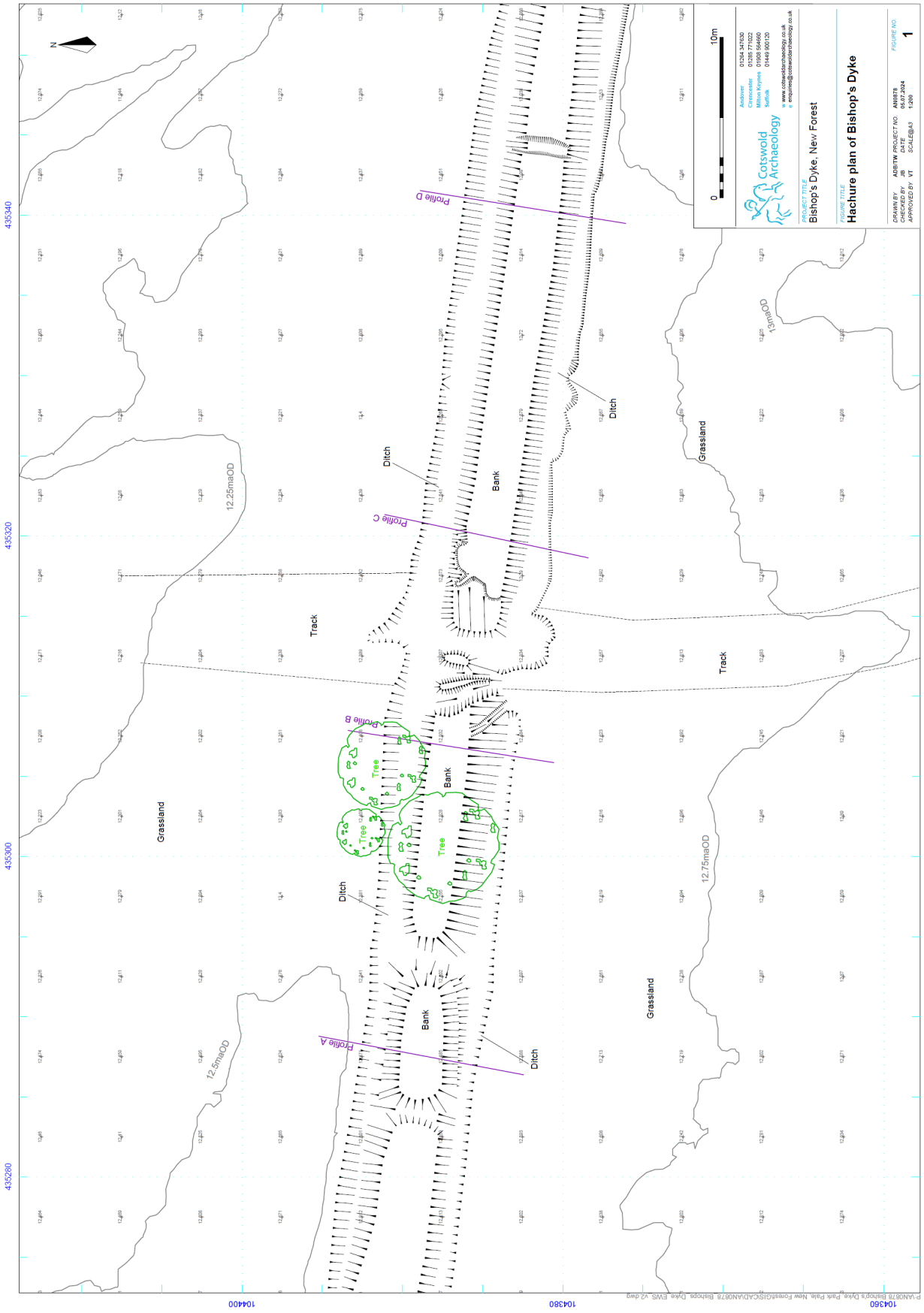

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Figure 11: Site after watching brief

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Figure 13: Site post turf restoration, looking SW (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

Figure 14: Site post turf restoration, looking E (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

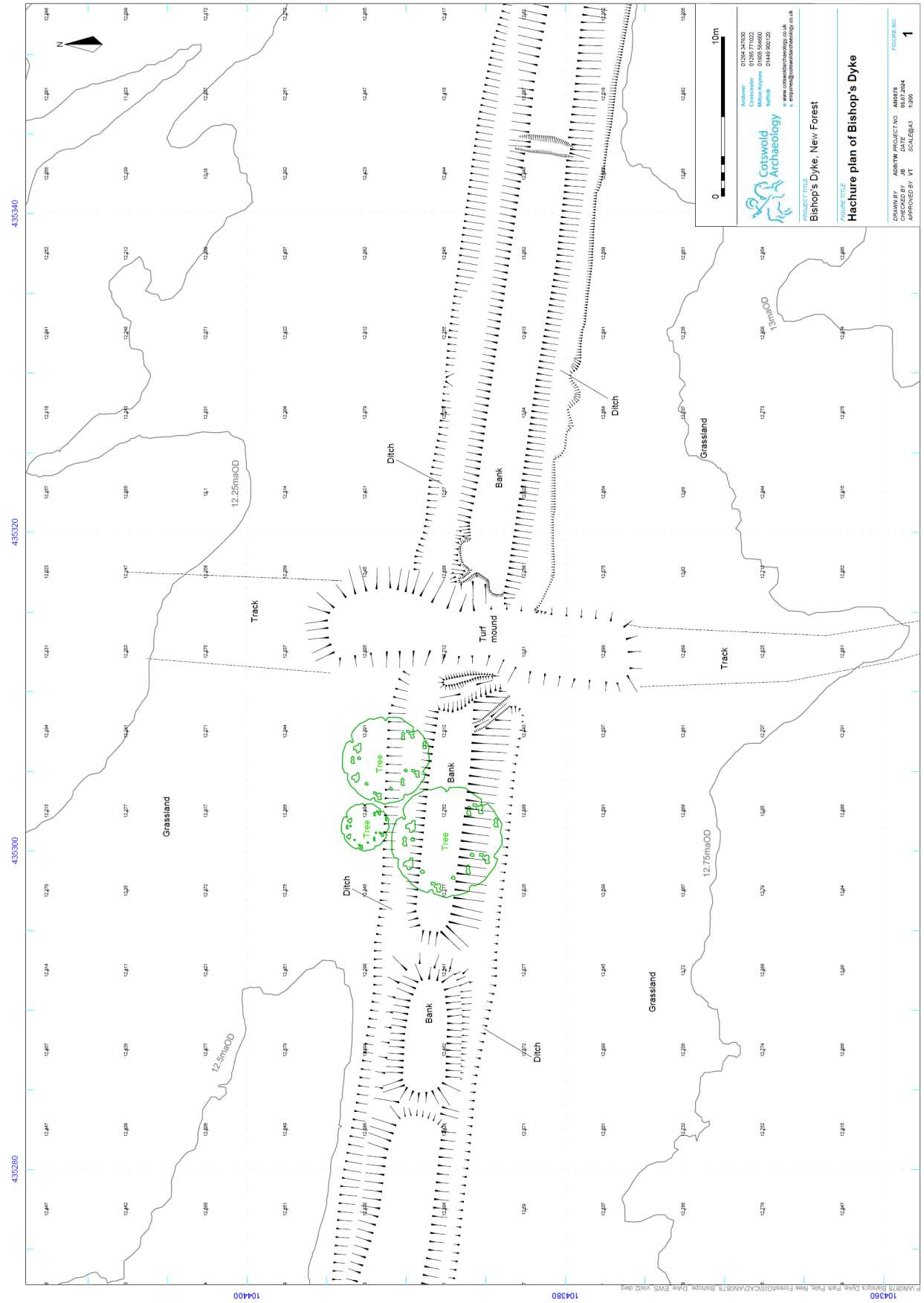

Figure 15: Post-works measured survey (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

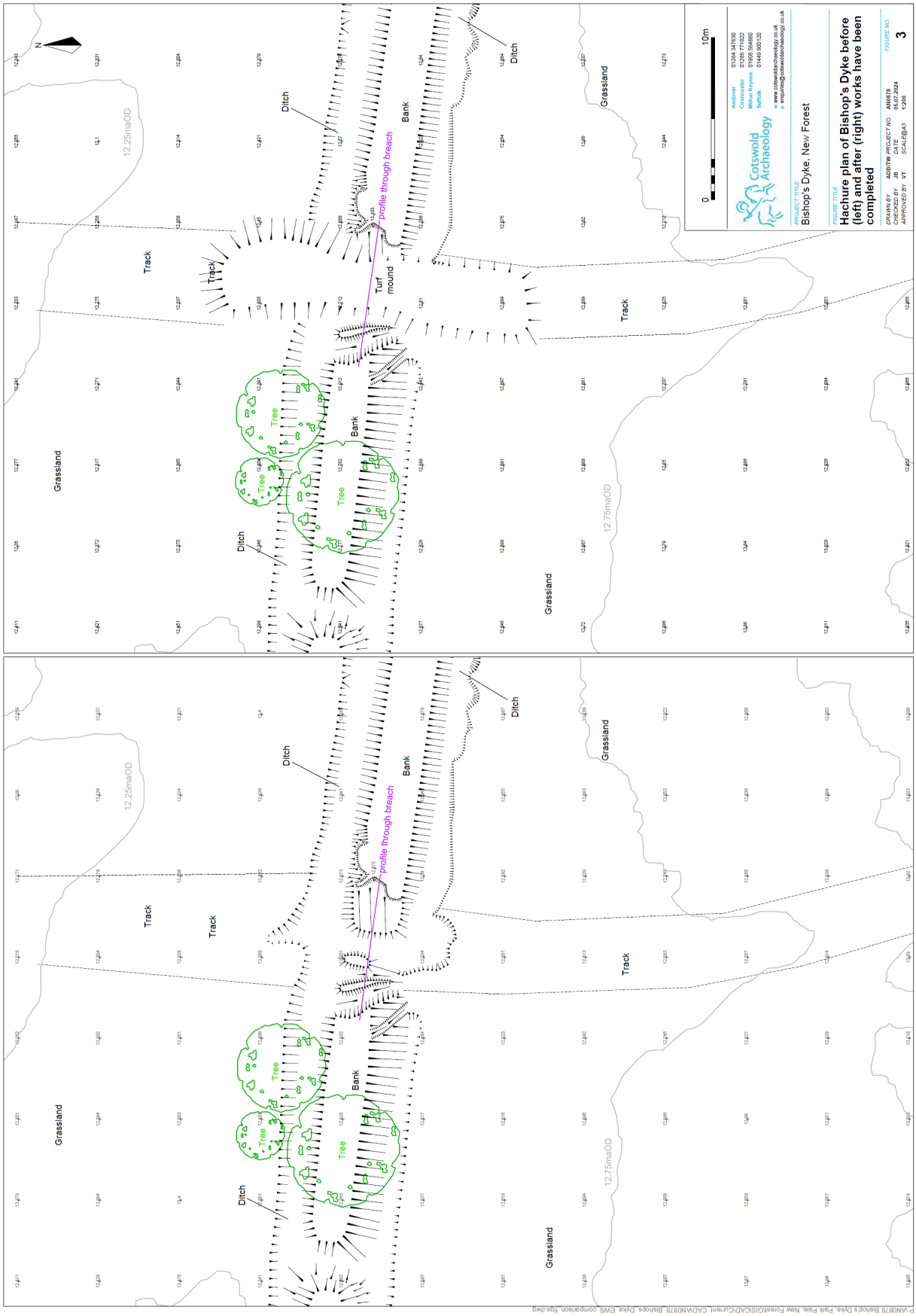

Figure 16: Pre and post works measured surveys of Bishop's Dyke (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

Figure 17: Pre and post works measured surveys of Bishop's Dyke (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

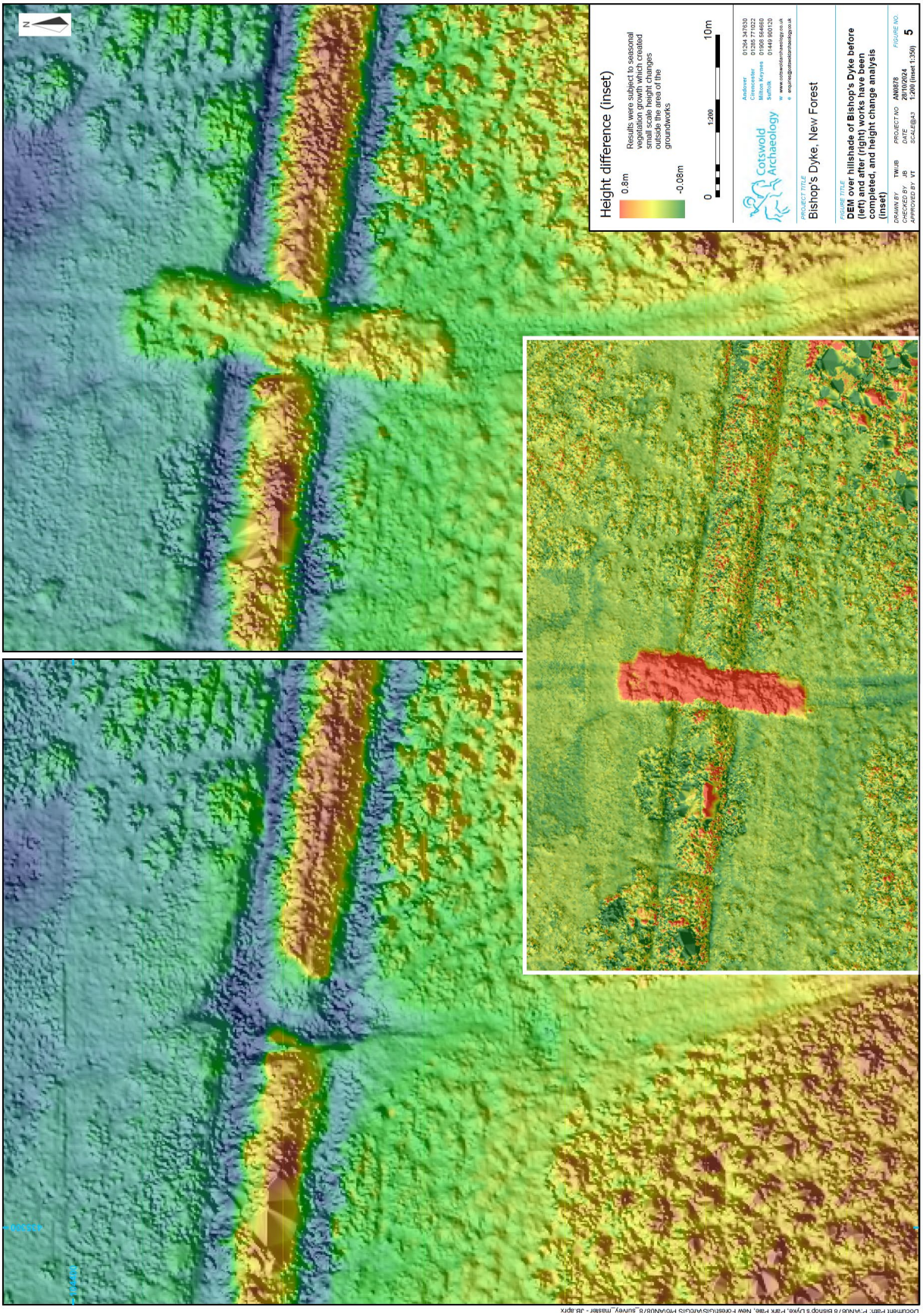

Figure 18: Pre and post works DEM over LiDAR (Cotswold Archaeology 2024)

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